

# Personality orientations, emotional states, customer satisfaction, and intention to repurchase

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Received 1 June 2005; received in revised form 1 October 2005; accepted 1 August 2006

## Abstract

This paper explores how personality orientations and emotions influence consumer's service perceptions in the airline industry. Emotions and their relationships to satisfaction, and marketing in general, is an important yet under researched area in consumer behaviour thus limiting our understanding of consumer's emotional experiences during their interactions with service providers [Bagozzi, RP, Gopinath, M. The role of emotions in marketing. *Acad Mark Sci* 1999; 27(2):184–206.]. Little research investigates the relationships between personality differences, emotional states, and individual consumer behaviour [Levenson RW. The intrapersonal functions of emotions. *Cogn Emot* 1999;13(5): 481–504.]. [Verbeke, W. Individual differences in emotional contagion of salespersons: it's effect on performance and burnout. *Psychol Mark* 1997; 14 (6):617–636.] investigates the effects of personality differences and emotional contagion of sales personnel in a service setting and suggests that both need consideration because they influence service performance outcomes. However, little research, in marketing looks at the differences of consumers' emotional experiences in a service setting according to their personality characteristics. This study examines the relationships between tourism consumers' emotions, personality orientations and service satisfaction. The research findings suggest a direct relationship between the consumers' personality orientation, emotional characteristics and self-reported satisfaction of the service experience.

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*Keywords:* Personality; Emotions; Emotional contagion; Satisfaction

## 1. Background to personality and emotions research

Many researchers agree that a link exists between personality and emotions. Personality according to Hjelle and Ziegler (1992) is the overarching construct that includes emotional/affect and other personality characteristics. Pervin (1993) suggests that affect is part of all major personality theories in varying degrees. Affect or emotional predispositions are extensions of, or closely related to a range of personality traits (Watson et al., 1988). The question of whether personality or affect is superordinate or subordinate depends on the approach used by the researchers and/or theorists. Which construct comes first, or which one subsumes the other appears to be somewhat subjective and the literature search did not reveal a definitive paradigm, which clarifies this

question. Once personality traits have formed, they tend to influence, emotional activation and emotional regulation (Izzard et al., 1993). Larsen (1987) and Larsen and Ketelaar (1991) suggest that according to personality characteristics, people (consumers) experience and demonstrate variable behaviours and emotions. Tellegen (1985) suggests that emotional predispositions are the results of a cluster of personality traits and affect is another expression or description of certain personality traits. Consumer reactions to affective experiences vary according to the situational context and the complex interpretations or appraisals of the events by the individual (Izzard, 1977; Plutchik, 2003; Tomkins, 1980).

Verbeke (1997: 622) provides research with sales people and identified four emotional types: the Charismatics, Empathetics, Expansives and Blands. The Charismatic emotional types are able to transmit and receive emotions. They are able to infect others with emotions and catch others' emotions. The Empathetic types are receptive to emotions by other people (susceptible to emotional contagion) but are unable to influence

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the emotions of other people, i.e., unable to infect others. The expansive types are able to influence other’s emotions i.e., they are able to infect others. However the Expansives are not able to feel empathy and they do not feel nor receive emotions from others, that is, they are unaffected by emotions. The Blands are neither influenced by, nor, influencing other people’s emotions (neither infecting nor infected by emotions). The four emotional types responded differently in work settings. Verbeke (1997) reports that the Charismatics and Empathetics are better performers in sales. The Expansives were more vulnerable to emotional burnouts and produced lower sales results. From the consumers’ side of the service interaction, it is reasonable to assume that personality differences cause consumers to experience different responses to emotional influences (positive and negative); and also that some consumers are capable of influencing the emotional experiences of others (other consumers and service providers involved in the service interaction). Extensive research identified two separate and independent dimensions of affective factors labelled as positive and negative emotionality/affect (Watson et al., 1988; Watson et al., 1999). Positive and negative affect factors correlate differentially with other psychological and social constructs. Levenson (1999) suggests that there is a need for more research to understand how personality influences emotional responses. Such knowledge would be extremely useful in designing service settings and developing appropriate marketing strategies to suit different personality orientations. Emotions constitute a major part of individual personality and affective experiences influence consumer’s behaviour and perception during consumption interactions.

**H<sub>1</sub>.** Consumers’ personality orientations relate differentially to positive and negative emotional states during the service interaction.

Several researchers call for further research concerning emotions that arise during and post-product/service consumption (Bagozzi and Gopinath, 1999; Richins, 1997; Mattila and Enz, 2002). Bagozzi and Gopinath (1999), suggest that, emotions are important influences on the actions of consumers and marketing professionals need to consider them as essential variables to include in services marketing operations. Most of the major emotion/affect theories when tested in a variety of consumer behaviour studies but the findings indicate different degrees of successful application regarding validity and reliability. However, very little research in the tourism literature explores the relationships that may exist between the constructs of emotions and tourism service satisfaction.

Whether it is appropriate to label satisfaction as an emotion, or as an emotive quality, or as an outcome of a Positive Emotion is still debatable. Arieti (1974) and Fromme and O’Brien (1982) consider satisfaction as an emotion, whilst other researchers have stated that satisfaction is an expressed emotional reaction to a service context (Russell, 1980; Havlena and Holbrook, 1986). Preis (2003) suggests that the relationship between a service provider and the consumer has a positive impact on whether repurchase will occur. Therefore, personality as the antecedent influence of the interactions between consumers-

and-service providers may affect both the level of consumer satisfaction evaluation and the intention to repurchase.

**H<sub>2</sub>.** Consumer’s personality orientations relate differentially to overall service satisfaction as well as its components (i.e., the Tangible and Intangible Service aspects).

**H<sub>3</sub>.** Personality orientations relate differentially to intention to repurchase.

**2. Research method**

A service satisfaction survey conducted with a UK leisure airline during 2000–2001 produced *N*=2196 useable consumer responses. During a long period of qualitative and quantitative research work, the items of the four personality orientations used in the survey, were developed and refined. The four personality orientations items are an extension and adaptation of the four Jungian personality orientations (Gountas and Gountas, 2001). The original Jung (1971) conceptualisation has been adapted to form only four core personality orientations: the thinking or logical, the feeling or emotional, the material or physical and the intuitive or imaginative (Gountas, 2003). The conceptualisation of each personality orientation proposes four distinctive ways of perceiving the world and therefore consumers may have different preferences and attitudes towards tourism services. This includes different evaluative criteria that each personality orientation may use, expressed as different individual values, motives, emotions and appraisals of experiences.

To measure consumer’s service interaction emotions the researchers used Plutchik’s (2003) scales that were adapted according to the primary exploratory research findings with representative groups of tourism consumers in the UK.

To measure service attributes, the SERVQUAL instrument items were adapted and grouped to assess Company Image, Crew (Service) Performance and Tangible aspects of service. The decision to adapt the SERVQUAL instrument is in keeping with Parasuraman’s (1995) suggestion that the SERVQUAL is not appropriate for all types of research problems and it should be adapted to fit the characteristics of different industries and companies. Single statements measured overall satisfaction and likelihood of, or intention to repurchase. A ten point Likert scale measured the respondents’ level of agreement with the item statements.

**3. Research findings and discussion**

Reliability analysis of the emotion constructs and service-evaluation was acceptable: Positive Emotions (*a* = .62), Negative

Table 1  
Personality factor correlations

| Table 1   | Thinking          | Material | Feeling | Intuitive |
|-----------|-------------------|----------|---------|-----------|
| Thinking  | 1                 |          |         |           |
| Material  | .448 <sup>a</sup> | 1        |         |           |
| Feeling   | .496**            | .629**   | 1       |           |
| Intuitive | .633**            | .361**   | .563**  | 1         |

<sup>a</sup> Significant at .01.

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