

1 Attribution Theory and Negative Emotions in Tourism Experiences

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16 17 18 19 **Abstract**

20 Existing tourist emotion studies are biased toward examining tourists' positive
21 emotions due to their positive influence on a range of post-consumption behaviors.
22 Tourists' negative emotions have potentially a stronger influence on future behaviors,
23 with a significant omission being how tourists explain their own and others' behavior.
24 Using attribution theory and the psychological constructivist view of emotions, we
25 evaluate the relationship between nine main categories of tourists' negative emotions

26 identified in travelogues (disgust, distress, anger, fear, sadness, regret, shame,
27 boredom, and shock) and their attributions (locus of control and stability). By
28 analyzing 298 travelogues via an *a priori* approach, and using correspondence
29 analysis, the results show that feelings of shame are attributed to self-control while
30 feelings of distress, regret, and sadness are attributed to the behavior of other tourists.
31 Negative emotions such as anger and disgust are attributed to stability while the
32 negative emotion of shock is ascribed to instability. Theoretical and managerial
33 implications are provided.

34

35 **Keywords**

36 Negative emotions; negative tourism experiences; attribution theory; tourist behavior

37

38 **1. Introduction**

39 Emotions are at the core of the tourist experience, which has led to the
40 significant role and influence of emotions in tourism experiences being assessed in
41 extant studies. In particular, tourists' positive emotions affect a range of
42 post-consumption behaviors, such as revisit (e.g., Grappi & Montanari, 2011; Pestana,
43 Parreira, & Moutinho, 2019) and recommendation intentions (Sukhu, Choi, Bujisic, &
44 Bilgihan, 2019; Wen, Hu, & Kim, 2018; Prayag, Hosany, Muskat, & del Chiappa,
45 2017). Existing studies are biased toward examining tourists' positive emotions (e.g.,
46 Mitas, Yarnal, Adams, & Ram, 2012; Mitas, Yarnal, & Chick, 2012; Prayag, Hosany,
47 & Odeh, 2013), given the hedonic nature of tourism experiences (Nawijn, Mitas, Lin,
48 & Kerstetter, 2013; Otto & Ritchie, 1996) and how positive emotions can contribute
49 to the formation of memorable tourism experiences (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Albeit
50 the growing literature on dark heritage experiences (Nawijn, Isaac, Gridnevskiy, &
51 Van Liempt, 2018), lesser attention has been devoted to understanding the causes and
52 consequences of negative emotions experienced by tourists (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010;
53 Hosany & Prayag, 2013; Nawijn & Biran, 2019), and whether differences in
54 attributing causes exist for Chinese tourists in comparison to the western-centric
55 literature on tourist emotions. Negative emotions can have a greater impact on
56 tourists' behavioral intentions than positive emotions (Han & Back, 2007; Nawijn et
57 al., 2018), leading to multiple undesirable behaviors (e.g., negative word-of-mouth,
58 switching and complaints) (Hosany, Prayag, Van Der Veen, Huang, & Deesilatham,
59 2017; Min & Kim, 2019; Nawijn & Biran, 2019; Sánchez-García & Currás-Pérez,
60 2011). Recent studies suggest that potential travelers pay more attention to negative
61 online reviews induced by negative emotions rather than positive online comments

62 (Lee, Jeong, & Lee, 2017; Wang, Tang, & Kim, 2018). Furthermore, greater memory
63 associations result from negative rather than positive feelings (Kensinger,
64 Garoff-Eaton, & Schacter, 2006; Levine & Bluck, 2004). Hence, the importance of
65 understanding tourists' negative emotions, given their implications for tourism
66 experience design and management, and for destination marketing purposes, is
67 highlighted. However, existing studies on negative emotions are primarily confined to
68 either special interest tourism, such as dark tourism (e.g., Nawijn & Fricke, 2015;
69 Nawijn, Isaac, Van Liempt, & Gridnevskiy, 2016; Nawijn et al., 2018), conceptual
70 frameworks (Nawijn & Biran, 2019) and the examination of negative emotions as part
71 of a broader assessment of tourists' hedonic experiences (Hosany & Prayag, 2013;
72 Hosany et al., 2017). Specifically, this literature is western centric, focusing on using
73 cognitive appraisal theories (CAT), with constructivist theories of emotions rarely
74 applied. Thus, examining negative emotions in generic tourism experiences is worthy
75 of attention by researchers (Nawijn & Biran, 2019) for a better understanding of their
76 causes and consequences as well as for the identification of similarities and
77 differences in experiences of emotions across cultures (Niedenthal & Ric, 2017).

78 Existing studies draw mainly from CAT, which posits that the appraisal and
79 interpretation made by individuals toward certain circumstances, rather than the
80 events themselves produce emotions (Roseman, 1984; Bagozzi, Gopinath, & Nyer,
81 1999). Accordingly, several studies elaborate on the causes of emotions in tourism
82 and hospitality contexts (e.g., Cai, Lu, & Gursoy, 2018; Hosany, 2012; Kim, Wang, &
83 Song, 2020; Lin, 2004; Watson & Spence, 2007; Zheng, Ritchie, Benckendorff, &
84 Bao, 2019). The fundamental assumption in these studies is that emotions are more
85 directly attributed to appraisals than they are to attributions (Smith et al., 1993). CAT
86 is particularly relevant when one seeks to understand how emotions guide decisions

87 (cognition), including judgments and choices (Passyn & Sujana, 2012). Emotions are
88 described along appraisal dimensions such as certainty, responsibility, control and
89 valence, and these core relational themes of emotions influence actions (Lazarus,
90 1991). Attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), on the other hand, describes why an
91 individual experiences a given emotion in a certain way with individuals seeking to
92 identify the factors that led them to experience a given distinct emotional episode
93 (Gill, Warburton & Sweller, 2020). As one causal event can elicit several emotions
94 and one emotion can be attributed to several causes, causes of emotions can be better
95 captured by attribution rather than appraisal theory. This is because appraisal theory
96 tends to focus more on one's own emotions while attribution theory also captures the
97 emotions observed in others in assigning causality (Becker et al., 2018). Causal
98 attributions play an essential role in determining negative reactions to the events
99 (Hastie, 1984; Kelley & Michela, 1980), among which negative emotions are typical
100 examples (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Snead, Magal, Christensen, & Ndede-Amadi,
101 2015). Despite a growing number of studies using attribution theory to understand
102 tourist behavior (Choi & Cai, 2016; Jackson, 2019; Su, Gong & Huang, 2020; Su,
103 Lian & Huang, 2020), surprisingly, the relationship between attribution and tourists'
104 negative emotions is rarely discussed. Moreover, given that emotions vary across
105 cultures, the use of a psychological constructivist lens (Barrett & Russell, 2015) can
106 highlight similarities and differences in emotions between cultures (Niedenthal & Ric,
107 2017). Yet, few studies have investigated tourists' psychological explanations for
108 what causes negative emotions in tourism experiences (Jackson, 2019; Choi & Cai,
109 2010).

110 Therefore, this study employs attribution theory the psychological constructivist
111 view of emotions to investigate the negative emotions in tourism experiences and

112 their associated attributions among Chinese tourists. Based on Chinese travelogues
113 from Mafengwo, one of the most popular Chinese online tourism websites that
114 provides trusty online data (Wu & Pearce, 2016), this study aims to 1) identify the
115 negative emotions reported by travelers in travelogues; and 2) examine the
116 relationship between attribution (i.e., stability and locus) and negative emotions. Next,
117 the literature on attribution theory and negative emotions is reviewed.

118

119 **2. Literature review**

120 2.1. Attribution Theory

121 Attribution theory is a class of theories that address causal explanations and
122 reasoning about another person's actions and expressions. It provides a rich account
123 of both self and social attributions (Martinko, Harvey & Dasborough, 2011), and
124 therefore, offers an understanding of how individuals interpret incidents based on
125 their causal inferences (Kelley & Michela, 1980). Two frameworks have been utilized
126 in the literature for attribution processes. The first framework, based on Weiner's
127 attribution theory (1985) and its related extensions is a theory of motivation and
128 emotion, which assumes that emotions are determined by beliefs and causality (Hareli,
129 2014). However, "individuals share a naïve understanding of this linkage between
130 causal attribution and emotions and use it in order to draw inferences from and
131 influence others' emotions" (Hareli, 2004, p.336). The second framework links
132 attribution theory to appraisal theories of emotion. Appraisal theory, including CAT,
133 tends to focus more on ones' own emotions whereas attribution theory is also useful
134 for interpreting emotions observed in others (Becker et al., 2018). While CAT focuses
135 on the cognition-emotion link, attribution theory focuses on the emotion-task/action
136 link (Passyn & Sujana, 2012). In this study, we draw primarily on attribution theory

137 because an individual's causal understanding typically is not limited to figuring out
138 what causes events, but also leads to reactions that include inferences, emotions, and
139 behavior (Hareli, 2014). Alongside attribution theory, we utilize the psychological
140 construction of emotions lens to understand cultural similarities and differences in the
141 causes and components of emotions (Niedenthal & Ric, 2017). As Weiner (2014)
142 suggests, attribution theory is a variant of the appraisal theory of emotion and the
143 latter is focused on identifying variations and not sameness in emotional episodes
144 (Frijda, 1986; Niedenthal & Ric, 2017).

145 While appraisal theories of emotions (see Frijda, 1986) argue that emotions are
146 elicited and differentiated through a series of appraisals of internal and external
147 stimulus events, and can reconstruct the appraisals, including making inferences about
148 the person expressing the emotion and/or the situation that gave rise to this affective
149 response (Hareli, 2014), attribution theory can also assess this link between causal
150 attributions and emotions (Becker et al., 2018; Hareli, 2014; Weiner, 2014). A clear
151 strength of attribution theory is the provision of a mechanism for how interpersonal
152 attributions lead to subsequent behaviors and outcomes (Becker et al., 2018). By
153 complementing attribution theory with the constructivist view of emotions, we
154 highlight the causal link between attributions and emotions for Chinese tourists, in
155 contrast to the western centric studies on tourists' emotions. We examine this link
156 through travel blogs, where tourists have engaged in blogging behaviors as
157 exemplifiers of a task and outcome. CAT alone cannot explicate when an individual
158 will or not appraise a situation as significantly impacting their wellbeing, while
159 attribution theory argues that individuals need to identify the causal agents because
160 doing so serves to defend or enhance self-esteem, public identity, and/or positive
161 emotions (Shepperd, Malone & Sweeny, 2008).

162 Attribution consists of three dimensions, namely locus of control, stability, and
163 controllability (Weiner, 1985, 2000). However, researchers have utilized different
164 dimensions of this theory (Kelley & Michela, 1980) to fit their study contexts and
165 research questions. For instance, in tourism studies, Coffee and Rees (2008) employed
166 controllability, stability, globality and universality; Choi and Cai (2017) used stability
167 and globality; while Chang, Tsai, Wong, Wang, and Cho (2015) incorporated locus
168 and controllability in their study. Importantly, Jackson et al. (1996) and Jackson (2019)
169 reduced these dimensions to two dimensions of locus and stability in studying tourism
170 experiences, which shares the same research setting as the current study. Specifically,
171 stability indicates whether the causes are perceived as relatively stable (a frequent
172 occurrence) or variable (a one-time-only incidence) (Browning, So, & Sparks, 2013).
173 Furthermore, the locus of control is related to who or what is to blame for undesirable
174 experiences. Tourists may attribute the origin of the negative incidents to themselves
175 (internal attribution). Alternatively, they might think others (e.g., company,
176 companions, and service staff, or any combination of those) should be responsible for
177 the outcome of the situation—referred to as external attribution (Jackson et al., 1996;
178 Ma, Gao, Scott, & Ding, 2013).

179 Besides, attribution theory is an effective approach to understand unfavorable
180 incidents (Hastie, 1984). By utilizing attribution theory, the extant literature examined
181 service failures (Chang et al., 2015; Wu, So, Xiong, & King, 2019; Hess, Ganesan, &
182 Klein, 2003; Sugathan, Ranjan, & Mulky, 2017), low destination loyalty (Choi & Cai,
183 2016), inappropriate visitor behavior (Tsang, Prideaux, & Lee, 2016), tourist
184 harassment (Otto, Badubaiden, & Kim, 2019), unethical destination incidents
185 (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016), and low integrity for travel service (Gong, Xie, Peng, &

186 Guan, 2015). This implies that negative incidents and experiences can be understood
187 from this theory.

188

189 2.2. Emotions and Human Behavior

190 The human mind has been understood in the western context from two different
191 perspectives. In the first, the human mind is viewed as consisting of separate and
192 independent abilities or faculties, that reflect separate processes, each with its own
193 physical properties that are innate. From the second perspective, the human mind is
194 viewed as an ongoing stream of physical activity or sequences of mental states that
195 are caused by a set of common processes (Barrett & Russell, 2015). This approach is
196 collectively referred to as psychological construction. In this approach, an emotional
197 episode is constructed rather than triggered (Barrett & Russell, 2015) but it remains
198 obvious that there is no agreed definition of emotion despite the large body of
199 scientific inquiry on the topic (Niedenthal & Ric, 2017). Nevertheless, there is
200 common agreement that the components of an emotional episode (non-verbal
201 expressions, physiological changes) are caused by and explained by a common agent,
202 which therefore defines the essence of different types of emotions. The different types
203 are fixed psychic and physical entities that are countable, classifiable, and definable
204 (Barrett & Russell, 2015). Existing emotion theories are diverse with three common
205 classifications: (i) the psychological constructionist approach discussed previously, (ii)
206 evolutionary theories and (iii) cognitive appraisal theories. Each group of theories can
207 be differentiated on the basis of the antecedents of an emotion (causes), biological

208 givens (innate emotional capacities) and integration of emotional experience (how the
209 components of emotion fit together) (Niedenthal & Ric, 2017).

210 Based on the approach that we are adopting in this study where both causes of
211 negative emotions and attributions, as well as similarities and/or differences in the
212 Chinese context to western tourists are considered, we define emotions as short-lived,
213 intense, and conscious responses of human beings to stimuli in their environment
214 (Nawijn et al., 2013; Niedenthal & Ric, 2017). They reflect a mental state that results
215 from processing or appraising personally relevant information (Roseman, 1984) and
216 prepare the person to act on situations (Niedenthal & Ric, 2017), driven by the
217 occurrences of these intense feelings. Therefore, emotions in this study are considered
218 as distinct affective episodes related to a specific incident (Cohen & Areni, 1991).

219 Given that communication of emotions is more difficult in computer-mediated
220 communications than face-to-face (Derks, Fischer & Bos, 2008), we focus on explicit
221 emotion communication, which involves references to discrete emotions through
222 verbal emotional labels (e.g., I am angry), appraisals (e.g., this was scary) and
223 expressions and/or tendencies to act (e.g., I will report it to the travel agent) in travel
224 blogs. Emotions, though stemming from an intensely personal experience, seem to
225 have an intimate relationship with other people's thoughts, words, and deeds, which
226 can have direct consequences on our own social relationships and experience
227 (Parkinson, Fischer & Manstead, 2005). Emotions are always produced in particular
228 contexts that give them their meaning and shape the ways in which they unfold

229 (Parkinson et al., 2005). It must therefore be recognized that the emotions reported in
230 the travel blogs evaluated in this study are subject to social influences.

231

232 2.3. Emotions in Tourism

233 The interchangeable use of the terms, emotion, affect and mood in consumer
234 behavior studies has limited the application of the concept of emotion in tourism
235 studies (Nawijn & Biran, 2019). Nevertheless, the causes and consequences of
236 emotions in tourism have been evaluated. For example, utilizing CAT, several studies
237 assessed tourists' appraisals of their experiences (e.g., outcome desirability, agency,
238 and internal self-compatibility) which constitute the major sources or determinants of
239 emotions (Hosany, 2012; Lin, 2004; Watson & Spence, 2007; Zheng, Ritchie,
240 Beckendorff, & Bao, 2019). Furthermore, prior research has also applied the
241 destination attributes model (Kim, Wang, & Song, 2020) and regulatory focus theory
242 (Song & Qu, 2019) to explore the reasons for emotions. With regards to the
243 consequences of emotions, existing research shows the close relationships between
244 tourist emotions and their behaviors across all stages of the decision-making process.
245 In the pre-travel stage, tourist emotions affect imagination proclivity (Hosany, Buzova,
246 & Sanz-Blas, 2020) and tourists' decision-making behaviors (Gnoth, 1997; Chuang,
247 2007). On-site emotions during the travel affect tourist satisfaction and loyalty
248 behaviors, such as willingness to revisit/switching intentions and positive/negative
249 word-of-mouth (Jiang et al., 2020; Lee, 2016; Min & Kim, 2019; Nawijn & Biran,
250 2019; Prayag et al., 2017; Sánchez-García & Currás-Pérez, 2011).

251 There are two main approaches to classifying emotions, namely the basic
252 emotion and the dimensional approach (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Li, Scott & Walters,
253 2015; Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1998). The basic emotion approach, also known as

254 the categorical approach or discrete approach classifies emotions as a group of
255 discrete affective episodes, which forms the basis of the Differential Emotion Scale
256 (Izard, 1997), Plutchik's (1980) scale, the Consumption Emotion Set (Richins, 1997),
257 and the modified Differential Emotion Scale (Cohn, Fredrickson, Brown, Mikels, &
258 Conway, 2009). On the contrary, the dimensional approach theorizes emotions by its
259 valence through either positive–negative or pleasure–unpleasure, adopted by the
260 Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) and Positive Affect
261 and Negative Affect Scales (Watson et al., 1988). In tourism studies, dimensional
262 approaches remain the most popular despite their limitations, but discrete approaches
263 are emerging as being more useful in understanding the tourist experience (Lin &
264 Nawijn, 2019; Prayag et al., 2017).

265 While the application of these two approaches has undoubtedly advanced our
266 understanding of the emotional (positive and negative) experiences of tourists,
267 emotions vary from one setting to another (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Parkinson et al.,
268 2005). Cultural differences affect how we label and communicate affect and
269 emotional meaning, and also shape the ways in which we experience, express,
270 organize and modulate our emotions (Parkinson et al., 2005). Extant studies on
271 cross-cultural evaluations of consumption emotions show significant differences
272 between Western and Asian consumers (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Specifically,
273 consumers from collectivist (e.g., Chinese consumers) and individualist (e.g.,
274 American consumers) cultural value systems vary in emotional expression (Oyserman,
275 Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002), felt emotions to atmospheric cues (Davis, Wang, &
276 Lindridge, 2008) and emotional accessibility (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For
277 example, in collectivist cultures such as China, social role and position are more

278 likely to influence expression and suppression of emotions as they are important
279 signifiers of social relations (Parkinson et al., 2005).

280 Several discrete negative emotions have been operationally defined (see Table 3)
281 and studied, such as guilt (Prayag & Soscia, 2016), embarrassment (Wu & Mattila,
282 2013), disappointment (Michalkó, Irimiás, & Timothy, 2015), hostility (Breitsohl &
283 Garrod, 2016), fear (Carnicelli-Filho, Schwartz, & Tahara, 2010; Fennell, 2017),
284 worry (Jiang, Li, Huang, & Scott, 2019; Mattila & Ro, 2008), regret (Jang, Cho, &
285 Kim, 2013), and anger (Jiang et al., 2019; Sánchez-García & Currás-Pérez, 2011).
286 However, most of the above studies are based on western tourists. Thus, the current
287 study adopts the basic emotion approach to identifying Chinese tourists' negative
288 emotions.

289

290 2.4. Negative Emotions and Attribution Theory

291 Negative emotions have been studied in various contexts such as solo holidays
292 (Bianchi, 2016), medical tourism (Um & Kim, 2018), museum experiences (Su &
293 Teng, 2018), restaurants (Jang, Cho, & Kim, 2013; Mattila & Ro, 2008; Min & Kim,
294 2019), and hotels (Lewis and McCann, 2004), among others. However, these studies
295 do not examine the causes of the negative emotions, while those examining the causes
296 by employing appraisal theories (Hosany, 2012; Lin, 2004) do not necessarily
297 examine specifically negative emotions. In the attribution process, people are actually
298 reflective witnesses of themselves and others when attempting to make sense of an
299 event (Weiner, 1985). The link between the perceived cause of a given outcome or
300 event (negative tourism experience) and its emotional (negative emotions) and
301 behavioral consequences (blogging about the negative tourism experience) are

302 indirect rather than direct, mediated by the perceived characteristics or dimensions of
303 the cause (e.g., a service failure or rude staff) (Hareli, 2014).

304 As discussed previously, attribution theory is useful for interpreting the
305 aftermaths of negative situations, among which negative tourism experiences are
306 examples. Jackson's (2019) study specifically examined attribution in relation to
307 tourist satisfaction, identifying internal and external attributions as well as the level of
308 stability associated with negative tourism experiences. When explaining such negative
309 experiences, there are usually more external attributions (i.e., others) than internal
310 attributions (i.e., self) (Choi & Cai, 2010). Previous studies on the relationship
311 between attributions and negative emotions suggested that controllability attributions
312 have a greater influence than stability attributions on negative emotions (Vaerenbergh,
313 Orsingher, Vermeir, & Larivière, 2014). Moreover, there are also linkages between
314 specific negative emotions and attribution dimensions. For example, worry is
315 typically generated by the attribution of uncontrollable causes (Yi & Baumgartner,
316 2004; Menon & Dubé, 2004), while fear often results from a stable attribution as
317 consumers are afraid of having the same occurrence again in future service encounters
318 (Weiner, 2000). Though previous studies have investigated associations between
319 negative emotions and responsibility attribution towards a specific negative tourism
320 incident (e.g., low integrity) (Breitsohl & Garrod, 2016; Gong, Xie, Peng, & Guan,
321 2015), attribution of stability and locus in relation to negative emotions aroused by
322 tourism experiences remains under-explored. Thus, our study aims to fill in this
323 paucity by identifying the negative emotions felt by tourists and follow this by
324 examining the nexus between tourists' negative emotions and their attributions (i.e.,
325 stability and locus).

326

327 **3. Methodology**

328 Research paradigms are the fundamental frames of reference we use to organize
329 our observations and reasoning, which determines research ontology, research
330 epistemology, and research methodology (Guba, 1990). Following the ontological
331 stance of “subtle realism”, the current study adopts an interpretivist paradigm, which
332 believes that reality is created by individuals in a society (Rossman & Rallis, 2003)
333 and knowledge is generated based on humans’ interpretations and understanding of
334 their “lived experiences” in the social world (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012; Ritchie
335 & Lewis, 2003). Therefore, a qualitative approach was employed to collect and
336 analyze data (i.e., travelogues), thereby providing the flexibility, adaptiveness, depth,
337 and realism that a quantitative approach cannot provide (Deery et al., 2012).
338 Analyzing travelogue content generated by tourists themselves is in line with the
339 theoretical view that emotions are a function of a ‘conceptual structure that is afforded
340 by language’ (Barrett et al., 2007, p. 304), and the view that an individual feels
341 emotion subjectively (Richins, 1997).

342

343 **3.1. Data Collection**

344 This study focuses on Chinese tourists as a significant global tourism market
345 segment (Wu & Pearce, 2016). According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of
346 China (2019) and China Tourism Academy (2014), the number of Chinese domestic
347 visitors steadily grew from 3.6 billion in 2014 to 6.0 billion in 2019. In terms of
348 outbound market, the number of Chinese outbound visitors increased to 149 million in
349 2018, representing a growth of 14.7% from that in 2017 (China Tourism Academy,
350 2019). In addition, travel blogs, which represent the narrative information capturing
351 tourists’ detailed travel experiences were used to identify a rich and authentic data

352 source as suggested in previous qualitative studies (e.g., Magnini, Crotts, & Zehrer,
353 2011; Sun, Ryan, & Pan, 2015; Pan, Maclaurin, & Crotts, 2007). Thus, we used the
354 travelogues posted on Chinese travel websites, specifically, on Mafengwo. According
355 to a report by Analysys (2017), more than 80% of Mafengwo users are between 25
356 and 40 years old. The top three areas from where users originate are Guangdong
357 province, Beijing, and Shanghai. Male users account for 47.55%, while the proportion
358 of female counterparts is 52.45%.

359 Followed prior research (e.g., Hunter, 2013; Kim et al., 2020), the keyword
360 search approach was used to retrieve online data, i.e., travelogues in the present study.
361 A primary codebook of negative emotions and their definitions (see Table 1) was
362 developed based on an extensive literature review. The emotional words in the
363 codebook were used as the keywords, such as angry (生气), sad (伤心), and fearful
364 (害怕). We searched for these negative emotional words on Mafengwo and scanned
365 the blogs' headlines to select negative travelogues. Eventually, we retrieved and
366 imported 298 travelogues to NVivo 12 for further data coding and analysis. These
367 blogs were posted by 298 bloggers, of which 99 were females, 126 were males, and
368 the rest had not disclosed their gender. Male bloggers were predominant probably
369 because females have greater privacy concerns when using social media sites (Dhir et
370 al., 2017).

371

372 3.2. Data Coding

373 Following an *a priori* approach, the current study adhered to the procedures with
374 two rounds of data coding as recommended by previous research to analyze data (e.g.,
375 Kim et al., 2020; Sparks & Bradley, 2017). Specifically, a primary codebook on

376 negative emotions and their attributions was developed based on an extensive
377 literature review in the first round of coding and new categories that emerged from the
378 dataset were added in the second round of coding.

379 In the first round of the data coding process (i.e., open coding), the first author,
380 who is a Chinese native speaker, extracted negative emotion descriptors from these
381 Chinese materials and coded the relevant part of the negative incident and its
382 attribution using a short sentence. These words and sentences were called nodes (e.g.,
383 unhappy). Since both written language and colloquialisms were used in the
384 travelogues (Sun et al., 2015), the written languages were directly extracted, while the
385 colloquialisms were converted into written language based on the context. For
386 example, ‘very down in spirits’ was interpreted as ‘unhappy’. Meanwhile, for
387 consistency with previous studies (Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988; Clore, Ortony, &
388 Foss, 1987; Shaver, Judith, Donald, & Cary, 1987), the list of descriptors was reduced
389 by eliminating those that referred to bodily states (e.g., physically tired) and that were
390 mainly cognitive in nature (e.g., confused). At the end of this stage, 714 nodes of
391 negative emotional adjectives were listed. In parallel, the third author, who is also a
392 Chinese native speaker, reviewed the current literature on tourists’ negative
393 experiences, negative emotions, and attribution theory, and subsequently generated a
394 primary codebook containing a list of negative emotions and attributions. The coding
395 of attribution was based on two dimensions, namely locus of control and stability. It
396 should be noted that the attribution process is subjective; therefore, we considered the
397 content of blogs to avoid any over-interpretation. For example, if the bloggers
398 mentioned that they should be responsible for their mistakes, then this travelogue was
399 considered as internal attribution (i.e., Locus of Control-Self). If bloggers complained
400 about the destination, travel agency, restaurant, and so on, and they didn’t mention

401 that the incidents resulted from their own actions, it was reasonable to regard this as
402 an external cause (i.e., Locus of Control-Others).

403 In the second-round coding (i.e., axial coding), negative emotions that conveyed
404 the same negative discrete emotion (e.g., upset, very upset, terribly upset) were
405 categorized under one theme. It was noted that this step was independently conducted
406 by two researchers to ensure a high level of inter-coder reliability. Subsequently, the
407 first author compared two separate coded documents to identify the similarities
408 (94.41%) and differences (5.59%). Next, the first and the third author discussed all the
409 differences several times until they reached an agreement. Through this process, a list
410 of 79 negative emotion descriptors was developed. Furthermore, in carefully
411 reviewing the descriptors and the literature, different words that conveyed similar
412 meanings were merged into super-level categories. After the categorization, 73
413 negative emotion descriptors were grouped into 30 negative emotions. Interestingly,
414 multiple new negative emotions emerged from the travelogues during this process,
415 e.g., boredom, distress, shock, and these were added to the codebook. After carefully
416 grouping the different emotions that described the same affective episode, e.g., scared
417 and afraid, sad and upset, the final codebook included nine primary negative emotion
418 categories. These were anger, sadness, fear, shame, disgust, distress, regret, shock,
419 and boredom. To check if the codes reached the point of saturation, we interviewed
420 fifteen frequent travelers. They were asked to recall the negative tourism experiences
421 and negative emotions they experienced at that time. No new negative emotions
422 emerged from interviews, which provided the assurance that the data analysis had
423 reached theory saturation.

424

425 3.3. Data Analysis

426 Correspondence analysis (CA) was used to examine the nexus between tourists'
427 negative emotions and their attribution (locus of control and stability) after data
428 coding. CA as a statistical technique can be used to assess the relationships among
429 different qualitative variables (Torres & Greenacre, 2002; Whitlark & Smith, 2001).
430 A multidimensional dataset can be deduced into low-dimensional axes and the nexus
431 of different variables can be visualized in a figure by transforming correspondence
432 tables, regardless of the frequency distribution. Moreover, correspondence analysis
433 has proved to be a useful tool in tourism marketing and hospitality marketing research
434 (e.g., Gong, et al., 2015; Gursoy & Chen, 2020; Vinyals-Mirabent, 2019). For the
435 present study, CA was conducted to investigate the proximity between tourists'
436 negative emotions and their attribution.

437

438 **4. Results**

439 4.1. Negative emotions aroused by negative tourism experiences

440 As discussed before, nine main categories of emotions were identified through
441 two rounds of coding. The following sections elaborate on these negative emotions
442 using frequency distributions. Disgust, distress, and anger were the top three negative
443 emotions in the developed codebook, followed by fear, sadness, regret, shame,
444 boredom, and shock. Descriptors in Chinese (see Table 1) and the frequency and
445 percentage of each negative emotion (see Table 2) are provided. The definitions of
446 these nine categories are provided below (see Table 3).

447

448 [Insert Table 1 here]

449 [Insert Table 2 here]

450 [Insert Table 3 here]

451

452 4.1.1. Disgust

453 Disgust (30.39%) was found to be the most frequently reported emotion related
454 to destinations, as shown in Table 2. This category includes the three sub-categories
455 of unhappy, disgusted and discontentment. Unhappy (80.18%) was associated, for
456 example, with annoying and dishonest service staff (e.g., tour guides are frequently
457 mentioned) in the travelogues. Another example shows that unhappiness was related
458 to the blogger being charged by retailers without his/her prior consent. Blogger 126
459 said:

460 *We were informed by the travel agency that there were no shopping*
461 *stops in the itinerary. But in the afternoon, the tour guide took us to*
462 *different shops. Later, I found that the things I bought were more*
463 *expensive than those sold online. It's not worth it. I was extremely*
464 *unhappy.*

465 Tourists felt disgusted (13.82%) when the servicescape (e.g., ambiance,
466 cleanliness of facilities) did not meet their expectations or if they were provided with
467 food that was below standard. For instance, the feeling of discontentment (5.99%)
468 was triggered on various occasions, by high prices at tourist attractions, crowded
469 restaurants, and unethical business practices at, for example, the train station.

470

471 4.1.2. Distress

472 Distress (24.23%) consists of five sub-categories (disappointed, overwhelmed,
473 heart-broken, hopeless, and distressed). Disappointment, which results primarily from
474 the high expectations of tourists, accounted for 82.08% of the distress reports.

475 Tourists found that the destination was not what they thought it should be. For
476 instance, *“I heard Yangshuo was very beautiful before, but I was disappointed after I*
477 *arrived” (Travelogue 24)*. Facing a tricky issue while traveling makes tourists
478 overwhelmed (8.09%), especially on occasions where other fellow tourists or service
479 providers cannot provide substantial help. The situation in which heart-broken (4.05%)
480 was experienced was similar to that of disappointment, and occurred when tourist
481 attractions did not meet expectations, particularly if the attraction was well-known.
482 However, this is not the only instance where tourists felt heart-broken. They
483 expressed this feeling also, when the quality of services or products was substantially
484 lower than the expected standards. Tourists in unfamiliar environments and
485 circumstances also felt helpless (3.47%). As tourist 298 elaborated, *“There are so*
486 *many of them that we have no choice but to pay. We are helpless.”* Distressed (2.31%)
487 was experienced particularly in relation to queuing, where tourists felt distressed
488 when they had to join a long, crowded queue.

489

490 4.1.3. Anger

491 Anger made up 14.43% of the total nodes. Angry (83.5%) was closely related to
492 unethical business practices. For instance, *“he (tour guide) told me our itinerary*
493 *includes a geological park before, but now he said no, I was angry (Travelogue 66).”*
494 Furthermore, low service quality also triggered anger. Tourists feeling annoyed
495 (6.8%) was experienced when tourists were forced to do something they did not agree
496 to (e.g., the tour guide asked them to go shopping), or when they were not allowed to
497 do something they thought should be allowable, or when they had to put up with
498 others’ inappropriate behavior. For example, blogger 257 said, *“We were sleeping on*
499 *the tour bus; a tour guide picked up the loudspeaker and began talking. I was*

500 *annoyed. Didn't he see we were all sleeping?"* Three travelogues mentioned
501 resentment (2.91%), all of which were related to visiting an overseas destination. It
502 should be noted that tourists expressed resentment in relation to the destination
503 experience as a whole, rather than in relation to certain people or issues at the
504 destination. For example, *"Be very careful about what you do in Vietnam, so that you*
505 *won't get stuck and end up hating the whole country!"* (Travelogue 203).

506 Bloggers easily felt frustrated (2.91%) when they could not get the needed
507 services or products. For instance, blogger 264 could not find airline staff at the
508 airport to help when their luggage was lost. Irritated (1.94%) refers to a feeling of
509 being out of control and beyond the psychological limit of endurance, such as
510 experiences where some tourists in the coach kept screaming, or visitor management
511 was so poor at the gate of the tourist attraction. One travelogue elaborated on an
512 experience:

513 *The building numbers are not ordered logically, so I could not find the*
514 *hotel according to the given number. I was very irritated. Then I made*
515 *a call to the reception desk, asked if the number was wrong, and they*
516 *told me, "you cannot find the hotel according to the building number".*
517 *If I cannot find the hotel by following the building number, how*
518 *meaningless is the number?* (Travelogue 234)

519 Feelings of madness (1.94%) were brought about by traffic congestion,
520 roadblocks, and issues related to general infrastructure at the destination.

521

522 4.1.4. Fear

523 Tourists felt scared (62.92%) in various situations, including when experiencing
524 adventure tourism (scared but exciting), encountering conflicts between tourists,

525 experiencing strange sounds at night, and having to endure an unskilled driver
526 overtaking other cars. Tenseness/Nervousness (17.98%) was aroused either by
527 uncertainty during travel or by the time taken by the tourist to deal with an urgent
528 issue. For instance, Travelogue 96 stated, *“It took me some time to insert a SIM card*
529 *successfully at the store, I felt very nervous since all other tourists in the package tour*
530 *were waiting for me”*.

531 While traveling, tourists also felt afraid/worried (15.73%) if the destination was
532 perceived as unsafe. A blogger who was traveling in Africa mentioned, *“I didn’t sleep*
533 *all night. I remembered clearly I was too afraid as it is a very high-altitude town.”*
534 *(Travelogue 239)*

535 Anxious (2.25%) and panicky (1.12%) were other emotions felt in relation to
536 safety issues at the destination.

537

538 4.1.5. Sadness

539 Sadness (8.82%) also consists of five sub-categories (sad, depressed, upset,
540 sorrowful and aggrieved). Tourists felt sad (30.16%) mostly because of unfulfilled or
541 disappointing experiences (e.g., poor quality of food, tickets were sold out, and
542 terrible weather), and sometimes felt sad because of encounters with other people
543 during the trip. For example, Travelogue 183 mentioned, *“One child was taught to do*
544 *such things (i.e., unethical business practices). I felt very sad for this child. My*
545 *hometown is Yunnan province; when I saw that Yunnan’s tourism market was in*
546 *chaos, I was so sad.”*

547 Depressed (26.98%) was associated with weather (e.g., rainy, foggy) and flawed
548 service facilities (e.g., air conditioning did not work well). Tourists would feel upset
549 (26.98%) and sorrowful (12.7%) when they experienced incidents such as losing their

550 mobile phone or missing the last bus. Aggrieved (3.17%) was related to the low
551 responsiveness to tourists' needs, particularly urgent needs.

552

553 4.1.6. Regret

554 Regret (5.32%) consists of two emotions, regret and pity. Regret (73.68%) was
555 caused mostly by dissatisfaction due to multiple incidents. In other words, regret
556 usually occurred when several negative incidents happened in the one destination or
557 one attraction. For example,

558 *Too many people, low value for money, although I had purchased a*
559 *ticket, I just saw the ordinary scenery. If I want to see the extraordinary*
560 *scenery, I had to climb the mountain, either by foot or cable car. It*
561 *would be very time-consuming if climbing on foot. If I want to save time,*
562 *I had to pay and take the cable car. After paying for the cable car and*
563 *arriving at the top of the mountain, I found that the scenery was worse*
564 *than what I expected in Xinjiang. If this was what Xinjiang can offer, I*
565 *do not need to come here, since the scenery is so normal that I can find*
566 *similar views in other places. If I did not come here, I would feel*
567 *regretful, but I was more regretful after coming. (Travelogue 48)*

568 Pity (26.32%) often occurred in package tours, where tourists were faced with
569 time limits for staying at the destination, or when some attractions were not included
570 in the itinerary so tourists could not alight and take a photo. Other reasons that
571 triggered pity were sickness or cancellation of outdoor activities due to bad weather.
572

573 4.1.7. Shame, Boredom and Shock

574 Shame (2.1%) includes embarrassed and ashamed as sub-categories. Some
575 tourists attributed their embarrassment (66.67%) to poor communication as a result of
576 language barriers; for instance, the tourist could not understand Cantonese or English
577 well. This negative emotion also occurred in package tours when tourists had to
578 purchase something to avoid embarrassment. Ashamed (33.33%) included shame felt
579 for others (e.g., poor behavior) and shame due to the tourist's own actions (e.g., not
580 brave enough when the tourist was in trouble).

581 *Although the tour guide said, "it doesn't matter if we didn't buy*
582 *anything, and he just hopes that we can have a good experience", later*
583 *he said, "some families still haven't bought anything." We were very*
584 *embarrassed as we didn't buy anything. (Travelogue 36)*

585 In addition, travelers would also feel bored (1.54%) when the tourism attractions
586 were not attractive, or the experience was not enticing. For example,

587 *(on a cruise ship) VIP services were bad. My god. The lunch was a*
588 *buffet. It was no different from the economy class on the first floor, but*
589 *we were in the VIP class. We have water-based activities for free, which*
590 *were not attractive at all. So, we were pretty bored. (Travelogue 57)*

591 Shock (0.7%) was associated with unusual situations that occurred during travel
592 in comparison to daily life, for example, crowdedness at an attraction and strange
593 behavior. For instance,

594 *(in a restaurant in London) We asked, "Are you open now? Can we*
595 *have a meal?" The owner said in a terrible manner, "Don't you*

596 *understand English? Don't you see the board says that we are open?"*
597 *We felt that she was very rude, so we turned around and wanted to*
598 *leave. She immediately cursed, "Get out if you don't want to eat!" We*
599 *were shocked. We have been here for so many days and have visited a*
600 *lot of restaurants. Both foreigners and Chinese people are very polite,*
601 *but in this restaurant, she cursed us within the first few minutes that we*
602 *met. We argued a bit, and she cursed us more! And when I was taking*
603 *this photo, she came out and wanted to beat me! (Travelogue 153)*

604 4.2. Relationships between negative emotions and attribution style

605 Table 4 shows the examples and frequency of two attribution dimensions: locus
606 of control and stability. Following the recommendations by Beldona, Morrison, &
607 O'Leary (2005) and Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black (1998), the researchers
608 extracted K-1 dimensions according to the number of categories in a contingency
609 table's columns and determined the dimensionality based on the singular values. In
610 this study, the CA of negative emotions and attribution showed a two-dimensional
611 result. The dimension results (see Table 5) presented that two dimensions (i.e.,
612 Dimension 1 and Dimension 2) explained .107 and .088 of singular values, and 53.5%
613 and 36.7% of the variance, respectively.

614

615 [Insert Table 4 here]

616 [Insert Table 5 here]

617

618 As presented in Table 6, Dimension 1 (D1) explained a large proportion of the
619 variance in the attribution 'others' (.695), stable (.987), anger (.715), boredom (.707),

620 distress (.983), sadness (.735), while a relatively larger proportion of the variance in
621 self (.926), unstable (.519), disgust (.725), regret (.559), shame (.769), and shock
622 (.769) were explained by Dimension 2 (D2). It was decided to omit one negative
623 emotion (i.e., fear) from the joint plot (Figure 1) as less than 50% of the variance was
624 explained in both D1 and D2 (Hair et al., 1998).

625

626 [Insert Table 6 here]

627

628 As shown in Figure 1, D1 clearly delimited shame, anger, and disgust from the
629 other negative emotions such as boredom, shock, distress, regret, and sadness.

630 According to D1, Stability-Stable was related to two negative emotions, namely anger
631 and disgust, while locus of control related to others was associated with distress,
632 regret, and sadness. D2 illustrates that Stability-Unstable was related to the negative
633 emotion of shock, whereas Locus of control-Self was associated with shame.

634

635 [Insert Figure 1 here]

636

637

638 **5. Discussion and Implications**

639 5.1. Discussion of Major Findings

640 This study seeks to understand the relationship between attribution and negative
641 emotions from a psychological constructivist perspective. Using attribution theory as
642 the theoretical lens, the findings suggest that Chinese tourists express nine different
643 types of negative emotions while blogging, which are supported by various
644 Western-centric literature on tourist emotions. However, some of these negative
645 emotions can be attributed to their locus of control and stability, departing from the
646 findings in existing tourism studies.

647 This study revealed some negative emotions reported by Chinese tourists that
648 have received scant attention in tourism studies, such as hopelessness, shock, and
649 boredom. For instance, tourists felt hopeless when facing difficulties related to place
650 unfamiliarity. This suggests that visitor experiences at tourist attractions and those
651 involving service providers are potentially problematic. Hence, information and
652 service provision as well as the amenities/facilities provided to tourists should be
653 reviewed critically to identify weaknesses in the host-guest relationship. Managing
654 these weaknesses can reduce the negative emotions felt by visitors avoiding
655 potentially undesirable behaviors such as negative online/offline word-of-mouth and
656 complaints (Min & Kim, 2019; Nawijn & Biran, 2019; Sanchez-Garcia &
657 Curras-Perez, 2011). Shock was triggered when, for example, tourists encountered
658 destination over-crowdedness, indicative of mismanagement of carrying capacity at
659 some of the places Chinese tourists visited. While tourism is usually imbued with a
660 sense of hedonism (Nawijn et al., 2013; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Otto & Ritchie,
661 2003), tourists felt boredom when elements of fun were lacking from the tourism

662 experience. Thus, some of these experiences are not optimally designed as they
663 induce negative emotions in tourists rather than provide positive psychological
664 outcomes such as memorable tourism experiences.

665 Some of the negative emotions identified in this study, such as disgust, anger,
666 fear, sadness, regret, and shame, were consistent with previous research in the fields
667 of psychology and consumer behavior (Richins, 1997; Izard, 1977; Jang & Namkung,
668 2009; Laros & Steenkamp, 2005). Furthermore, this study demonstrates that the same
669 emotional responses can have different triggers and are appraised by visitors
670 differently as suggested by CAT (Smith et al., 1993) and attribution theory (Weiner,
671 1985). Both service providers and the presence of other tourists can trigger feelings of
672 annoyance. In the same way, anger can be triggered by perceptions of unfair business
673 practices and low service quality. Thus, the findings give further credence to studies
674 (Cai et al., 2018; Hosany, 2012; Zheng et al., 2019) that emphasize the importance of
675 CAT in tourism studies and highlight the key role of attribution, both external and
676 internal in understanding tourist emotional responses. In relation to attribution theory,
677 the results confirmed that tourists engage in a process of reflection to determine the
678 triggers of the negative emotions they felt. This leads to a set of inferences and
679 behaviors (Hareli, 2014; Weiner, 1985), such as tourists sharing their negative
680 experiences on travel blogs. The results highlighted the importance of self and social
681 attributions when negative experiences occur and the corresponding emotional
682 responses that follow (Martinko et al., 2011).

683

684 5.2. Theoretical Contributions and Implications

685 This study contributes to tourism literature in four ways. First, by examining
686 negative emotions in a tourism context, this study responds to the call for a sharper

687 sensitivity to the understanding of emotions in tourism studies (Buda, 2015; Nawijn &
688 Biran, 2019). We achieve this by identifying emotional responses from travel blogs
689 and the underlying mechanism Chinese tourists deploy to understand their negative
690 experiences. Previous studies have extensively investigated positive emotions from
691 pleasure travel (see Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Nawijn et al., 2013; Otto & Ritchie,
692 1996) and negative emotions from special interest tourism such as dark tourism
693 (Nawijn et al., 2018; Nawijn & Biran, 2019), with negative emotions reported in
694 travel blogs by pleasure travelers receiving scant attention. This study, therefore,
695 extends tourism emotion studies by broadening the range of negative emotions
696 identified in travel experiences of Chinese tourists—disgust, boredom, shock, and
697 shame. Although these broad emotion descriptors are reported in extant research on
698 consumer emotions (Richins, 1997), they have received scant attention in tourism
699 studies.

700 Second, the negative emotions reported in travel blogs of pleasure travelers and
701 their corresponding attribution have been rarely researched. By examining these
702 attributions in a tourism setting, this study responds to the call for extending the
703 relationship between attributions and different types of emotions beyond positive ones
704 (Vaerenbergh et al., 2014). Departing from existing studies (Choi & Cai, 2016;
705 Jackson, 2019; Su et al., 2020), the findings identify specific relationships between
706 emotions and locus of control or stability. This implies that tourists engage in some
707 form of coping response by analyzing causal factors of their felt negative emotions.
708 For instance, when tourists attribute their negative experience to themselves instead of
709 other people, they tend to feel ashamed—a self-directed emotion (Sugathan et al.,
710 2017). When visitors believe the negative experience will always happen as this is
711 beyond their control, anger and disgust are elicited, while distress, regret, and sadness

712 are attributed to the action of others. The findings highlight an interplay between self
713 and other-directed emotions in Chinese tourists understanding of their negative
714 tourism experiences, which is consistent with studies on external attributions (Choi &
715 Cai, 2010). This finding is also aligned with other studies (Jackson et al., 1996; Ma et
716 al., 2013) showing how other tourists and service staff can affect the tourist
717 experience. In this way, this research extends studies on service failures and
718 attribution (Chang et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2019; Sugathan et al., 2017) by linking
719 specific emotions to those attributions.

720 Third, the examination of attribution mechanisms by Chinese tourists provides
721 an opportunity to extend the Western-centric literature (Menon & Dubé, 2004;
722 Vaerenberg et al., 2014) on the role of negative emotions. Our findings concur with
723 Parkinson et al. (2005) in highlighting that Westerners and Easterners have cultural
724 similarities and differences in terms of the meaning and verbal expression of emotions.
725 In fact, the results support Derks et al.'s (2008) suggestion that emotional labels,
726 appraisals and action tendencies can be identified in explicit computer-mediated
727 communication such as blogs. Specifically, the importance of stability and its
728 relationship with anger and distrust are highlighted in comparison to previous studies
729 (e.g., Weiner, 2000) that have linked fear with this attribution. Likewise, the
730 relationship between shame and locus of control-self illustrates the importance of
731 Chinese cultural values in the host-guest relationship. As suggested in previous
732 studies (Gao et al., 2017), saving face is important for Chinese tourists and therefore,
733 feelings of shame are attributed to one's inability to complete a task due to, for
734 example, language barriers rather than blaming the service provider. It is also vital to
735 note that some of these negative emotions co-occur, that is, feeling angry may be
736 accompanied by feelings of shame and/or regret.

737 Fourth, emotions analyzed in tourism studies are based on quantitative
738 approaches that utilize self-reported measures to evaluate valence-based or discrete
739 emotions (see Hosany & Gilbert, 2010; Nawijn & Biran, 2019). This approach limits
740 the range of emotions that can be assessed in a single study, while using travelogues
741 allows multiple emotions and travel experiences to be evaluated simultaneously.

742 Moreover, except for the study by Jackson (2019), attribution theory in tourism
743 studies has been used primarily to understand outcomes, such as loyalty (Choi & Cai,
744 2016) and revisit intentions (Su, Gong & Huang., 2020; Su, Lian & Huang, 2020).
745 Our study focuses on the outcome of negative emotions (i.e., blogging), but unlike
746 Jackson (2019) who used interviews and surveys as the data source, we utilize
747 travelogues, which are typically used to examine destination image and attributes
748 (Kim, Wang, & Song, 2020; Pan & Ryan, 2007). Through travel blogs a multiplicity
749 of causes related to many different negative emotions can be captured, which have
750 implications for destination management (Kim, Wang, & Song, 2020; Pan & Ryan,
751 2007).

752

753 5.3. Practical Contributions and Implications

754 Beyond the theoretical implications, the current study also provides several
755 practical implications for managers. Firstly, the presence of negative emotions in
756 travelogues is a signal indicating issues in service delivery and customer experience
757 management. External attributions to service providers, in particular, suggest that
758 service design principles need to be employed to identify critical touchpoints in the
759 service experience and these should be managed to reduce negative emotions felt by
760 tourists. Secondly, issues of crowdedness, poor service quality, and inappropriate
761 behavior by other tourists may be related to broader issues of managing the carrying

762 capacity of a destination. For instance, this is where tourism policy and code of
763 conduct for both tourists and operators may need to be enacted to reduce the
764 occurrence of negative tourism experiences. Thirdly, not all negative emotions can be
765 controlled by managers; however, experience management principles would suggest
766 the use of theming and other cues to guide visitor experience toward the more positive
767 aspects of the tourism offer. Therefore, with respect to negative emotions,
768 improvements in the amount and type of positive emotions felt by visitors can
769 substantially reduce how felt negative emotions are evaluated. For example, Hosany
770 and Prayag (2013) discuss the rosy view effect, which suggests that tourists can
771 downgrade negative experiences at the expense of positive ones in evaluating their
772 overall destination experience. Fourthly, negative emotions impact a range of
773 post-consumption behaviors including the amount of e-WOM and negative posts on
774 social media. This implies that an analysis of travelogues pinpoints to often extreme
775 circumstances of dissatisfaction with the destination experience. Therefore, the
776 amount and extent of negativity as evidenced by the number of negative emotions are
777 beneficial to managing destination reputation and positioning in the long term.

778 At the same time, destination managers and service providers should be aware
779 that not all negative emotions are symptomatic of the same problem. As highlighted
780 by the findings, the causes attributed by tourists for their felt negative emotions
781 revealed a combination of external and internal attributions. Accordingly, managers
782 should understand the causes that drive the experience of different negative emotions
783 to put in place the right service recovery strategies. If tourists are feeling ashamed, for
784 example, service providers are required to rethink their information provision and
785 how they deal with language barriers. The posting of negative experiences on social
786 media by tourists also highlights the need for proactive strategies by destination

787 management organizations to deal with negative experiences. Thus, the findings
788 suggest that it is necessary not only to clarify the types of tourists' negative emotions
789 experienced at a destination, but also to understand how tourists attribute their
790 negative tourism experiences to improve the overall destination experience for
791 Chinese tourists.

792

793 5.4. Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research

794 This study makes several significant contributions to the emotion and attribution
795 literature in the tourism field. By examining negative emotions and their attribution,
796 the study shifts the focus of examining tourists' positive emotions (e.g., Grappi &
797 Montanari, 2011; Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). By linking attributions of locus of control
798 and stability to specific discrete emotions, the study extends research on attribution in
799 tourism studies (e.g., Choi & Cai, 2016; Jackson, 2019; Su, Lian & Huang, 2020).

800 However, the study is not without limitations. First, the external validity of this
801 research is limited since we used online travelogues as the data source. Hence, future
802 studies should use non-bloggers as research samples to ensure generalizability.

803 Second, as the research aim of this study was to gain rich narrations of various
804 negative emotions in tourism, the current research is limited to being exploratory in
805 nature. Thus, future research can evaluate the causal relationships between the
806 negative emotions and the attributions identified in this study. Third, negative
807 emotions can co-occur, but the coding employed in this study assigned one type of
808 emotion to a single category without linking this emotion to the occurrence of other
809 types of negative emotions. Therefore, future studies can aim to capture not only the
810 occurrence of various types of negative emotions but also how they are related. Fourth,
811 attributions can be both internal/external and stable/unstable and can be linked to

812 post-consumption behaviors or actions taken by the tourist to remedy the situation.
813 Specifically, an in-depth analysis of linkages between tourists' attribution (i.e.,
814 internal-stable, internal-stable, external-stable, external-unstable) and negative
815 emotions is a worthy area of future research. Fifth, as previous studies have
816 acknowledged that there are cross-cultural differences in felt consumption emotions
817 (e.g., De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011; Oyserman et al., 2002), future studies could use
818 data from Western cultural contexts to explore possible cultural differences and also
819 validate the associations between tourists' negative emotions and their attributions.
820 Sixth, attribution theory is not without its own limitations. For example, not all
821 emotions felt can be directly related to causal events or the causal characteristics of
822 locus of control, stability, and controllability (Weiner, 2014). Emotional reactions can
823 frequently occur automatically and without conscious efforts to interpret the event or
824 situation. Therefore, the weaknesses of attribution theory can be complemented by
825 CAT and vice-versa. Other theories of emotion (see Niedenthal & Ric, 2017) can also
826 be applied to understand the phenomenon investigated in this study.

Table 1: Negative emotions categories

Categories	Sub-categories		Sample descriptors in Chinese
Disgust	Unhappy	好	不高兴、不开心、不爽、不
	Disgusted		反感、厌恶
Distress	Discontented		不满
	Disappointed		失望、寒心
	Overwhelmed		崩溃、心力交瘁、心累
	Heart-broken		心碎、心疼、痛心
	Hopeless		绝望
	Distressed		痛苦
Anger	Angry		生气、气愤、气急败坏
	Annoyed		烦、烦躁、烦闷
	Resented		愤慨、愤懑、悲愤
	Frustrated		无语、无奈
	Irritated		恼怒、愤怒
	Mad		抓狂
Fear	Scared		害怕、怕
	Tense/Nervous		紧张
	Afraid/Worried		担心、不安心、忐忑、心慌
	Anxious		焦虑、焦躁
	Panicky		慌张
Sadness	Sad		难过、难受、心酸
	Depressed		压抑、低落、心塞、郁闷
	Upset	乱	糟心、闹心、心烦、心烦意
	Sorrowful		哀伤、悲哀、悲催、惨
Regret	Aggrieved		委屈、不忿
	Pity		可惜、遗憾
	Regretful		懊恼、后悔
Shame	Embarrassed		尴尬、狼狈、难堪
	Shamed		丢脸、羞
Boredom	Bored		无聊、厌烦、厌倦
Shock	Shocked		震惊、错愕、懵逼

Table 2: Negative emotions affected by tourists' negative experiences (frequency)

Negative emotions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Disgust	217	30.39
Unhappy	174	80.18
Disgusted	30	13.82
Discontented	13	5.99
Distress	173	24.23
Disappointed	142	82.08
Overwhelmed	14	8.09
Heart-broken	7	4.05
Hopeless	6	3.47
Distressed	4	2.31
Anger	103	14.43
Angry	86	83.5
Annoyed	7	6.8
Resented	3	2.91
Frustrated	3	2.91
Irritated	2	1.94
Mad	2	1.94
Fear	89	12.46
Scared	56	62.92
Tense/Nervous	16	17.98
Afraid/Worried	14	15.73
Anxious	2	2.25
Panicky	1	1.12
Sadness	63	8.82
Sad	19	30.16
Depressed	17	26.98
Upset	17	26.98
Sorrowful	8	12.7
Aggrieved	2	3.17
Regret	38	5.32
Pity	28	73.68
Regretful	10	26.32
Shame	15	2.1
Embarrassed	10	66.67
Shamed	5	33.33
Boredom	11	1.54
Bored	11	100
Shock	5	0.7
Shocked	5	100
Total	714	100

Table 3: Operational definition of negative emotions in tourism

Negative emotions	Operational definition	Relevant literature
Disgust	It principally responds to the vices of pretense, cruelty, insincerity, and betrayal that may not directly affect the self.	Rozin, Haidt, & McCauley, 2005; Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999
Distress	Individually, it is referred to as an individual's affective episode with multiple high-arousal negative emotions of inner helplessness and despair. In social contexts, it is experienced when individuals are rejected by longing social relationships.	Gibson & Schroder, 2001; MacDonald & Leary, 2005; Holden, Mehta, 2001
Anger	An emotion elicited when an offense or injustice is deemed to affect oneself, one's social relations, or even the public.	Jiang et al, 2019; Ben-Ze'ev, 2000; Min, & Kim, 2019
Fear	An affective episode of anxiety and uncertainty due to uncontrollable causes following an unpleasant tourism experience	Mattila & Ro, 2008; Menon & Dubé, 2000; Jiang et al, 2019
Sadness	Sadness, usually related to loss and helplessness, is an emotion elicited from misfortune.	Keltner, Locke, & Audrain, 1993; Lench, Flores, & Bench, 2011
Regret	It is a negative emotion predicated on a self-relevant counter-factual inference and linked with self-blame and self-reflection for either action or inaction.	Pieters & Zeelenberg, 2005; Connolly, Ordóñez, & Coughlan, 1997
Shame	Shame has a social nature and is linked with morality. It involves a specific form of negative evaluation that the subjects take towards themselves or others when they fail to meet standards or norms. Shame is produced out of tension between our identity (who I am or what I did and in which way) and our self-conception (who I should be or what I should do and in which way).	Thomason, 2015; Deonna, Rodogno, & Teroni, 2012; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985
Boredom	Boredom is a low arousal affective episode. It is featured by inadequacy of interesting external stimuli, inability to focus, lack of motivation.	Fisher, 1993; Fenichel & Rapaport, 2012
Shock	It is referred to as negative surprise or unpleasant surprise.	Desmet & Schifferstein, 2008

Table 4: Coding examples

Codes	Texts	Frequency
Locus of Control-Self	“I didn’t prepare myself enough”; “My mistake”; “My responsibility”; “I am not experienced”.	10
Locus of Control-Others	“travel agency”, “restaurant”, “hotel”, “staff”, etc.	287
Stability-Stable	“I have traveled here three times before, there are always many tourist traps”; “Package tour is always terrible”; “Others also faced similar situation to me”.	58
Stability-Unstable	“This time I met an irresponsible tour guide, hopefully next time will be a good one”; “I have traveled there several times, and have a good image of this place, but this time, I really want to complain”.	44

Table 5: Summary of the dimension results (negative emotions and attribution)

Dimension	Singular value	Inertia	Proportion of Inertia		Chi-square	Sig.
			Explained	Cumulative		
1	.107	.011	.535	.535		
2	.088	.008	.367	.902		
3	.046	.002	.098	1.000		
Total		.021	1.000	1.000	20.274	.681a

a. 24 degrees of freedom

Table 6: Contribution of the dimensions to the inertia of each negative emotions

Negative emotions	Mass	Explanation by dimension 1	Explanation by dimension 2	Total
Anger	.162	.715	.231	.946
Boredom	.017	.707	.085	.792
Disgust	.316	.236	.725	.961
Distress	.236	.983	.009	.992
Fear	.118	.394	.288	.682
Regret	.054	.029	.559	.588
Sadness	.074	.735	.257	.992
Shame	.018	.200	.769	.970
Shock	.006	.021	.769	.791
Active Total	1.000			
Attribution	Mass	Explanation by dimension 1	Explanation by dimension 2	Total
Others	.614	.695	.008	.703
Self	.065	.000	.926	.926
Stable	.170	.987	.013	1.000
Unstable	.150	.206	.519	.726
Active Total	1.000			

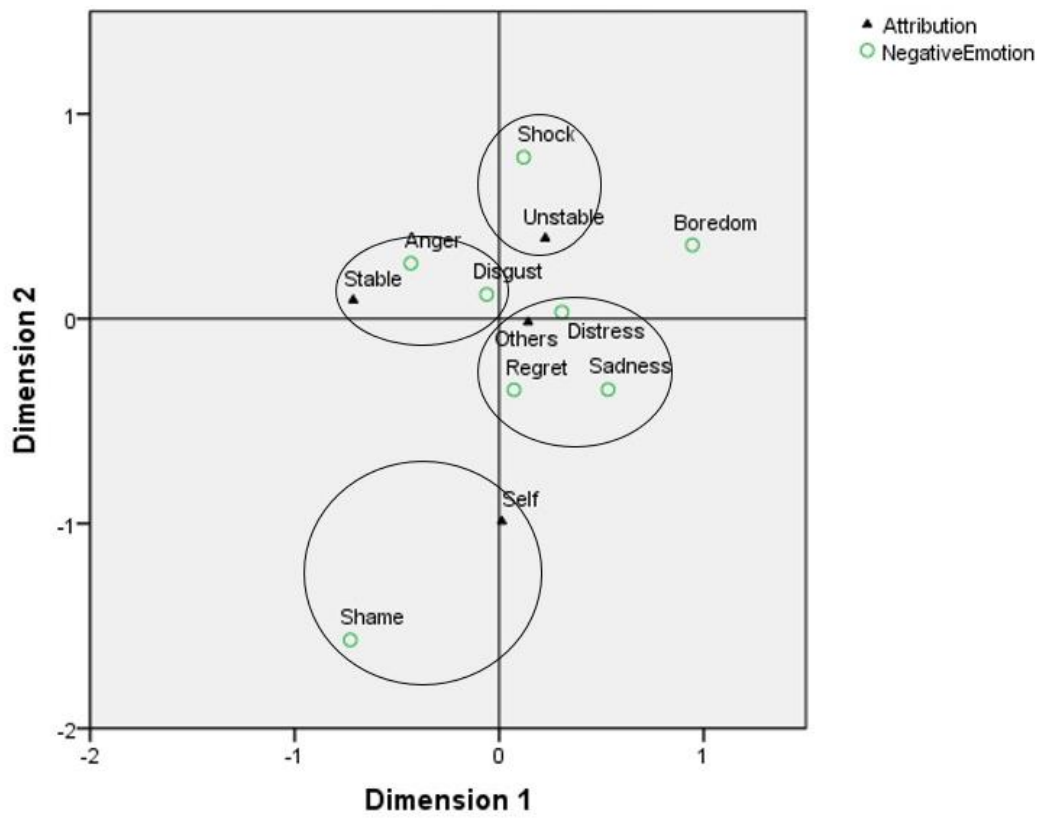


Figure 1: Correspondence map of negative emotions and attribution

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