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DOES A HAPPY DESTINATION BRING YOU HAPPINESS? EVIDENCE FROM SWISS INBOUND TOURISM

Abstract

This study aims to explain tourist happiness by examining a specific destination in which happiness is generated for tourists via their travel behavior at the destination. Building upon the spillover theory of happiness, we developed a destination-based model of tourist happiness, which is shaped by destination image and service quality and mediated by tourist satisfaction and life satisfaction. This model was tested using data from 1,048 inbound tourists in Switzerland in 2015. We found that destination image is positively associated with life satisfaction, eudaimonia, and positive and negative affect; no evidence indicated the effect of service quality on life satisfaction and negative affect. In particular, life satisfaction can largely predict eudaimonia and positive and negative affect. We also discovered that negative affect is poorly explained by its antecedents in the tourism context, suggesting that tourists are reluctant to link their travel experiences to negative affect.

Keywords

happiness; life satisfaction; tourist destination; Switzerland

1. Introduction

Happiness research has drawn considerable attention from academia, industry, and governmental organizations (Diener, 2000; Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1986; Mogilner, Aaker, & Kamvar, 2012). The academic study of happiness originated from positive psychology, which aims at promoting mental health to improve quality of life not only for those who are suffering but also for the general population (Seligman, 2002; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). This line of research has expanded from psychology to a broad range of social sciences, particularly economics, sociology, and political science, addressing various issues such as what determines happiness and how to boost happiness (Easterlin, 2001, 2004, 2013; Johns & Ormerod, 2007). Interesting results from these studies include the nonlinear relationship between income and happiness, the prediction of happiness on success, and the effects of happiness on people's choices (Buchanan & Bardi, 2010; Carter & Gilovich, 2012; Cone & Gilovich, 2010; Easterlin, 2001; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005; Mogilner et al., 2012).

Not only has happiness research become a scientific field in general, but it has also brought attention to tourism scholarship (Bimonte & Faralla, 2016; Chen, Huang, & Petrick, 2016; Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1986; Uysal, Sirgy, Woo, & Kim, 2016). Tourism is among the most important life domains that generate happiness and thus improve overall life satisfaction (Allen & Beattie, 1984; McCabe & Johnson, 2013; McCabe et al., 2010; Neal, Sirgy, & Uysal, 1999). Happiness research in tourism first compared differences in life satisfaction between vacationers and non-vacationers, concluding that the former are generally happier than the latter (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004; Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1986). Holiday participation can enhance happiness, especially for those who greatly enjoy and value holidays (Gilbert &

Abdullah, 2004). Holidays can also mediate the well-established relationships between happiness and a wide range of sociodemographic variables, including gender, income, marital status, and employment status (McCabe & Johnson, 2013; McCabe, Joldersma, & Li, 2010).

Despite these findings, little is known about how holidays can boost happiness with regard to tourists' destination choices. In other words, do destinations affect tourist happiness, and if so, how? Happiness studies in tourism have not yet identified the determinants of tourist happiness at a destination, although empirical studies have shown that tourist happiness varies by destination-specific tourist activity (Bimonte & Faralla, 2012; Gillet, Schmitz, & Mitas, 2016; Voigt, Howat, & Brown, 2010). A lack of consensus on the operationalization and measurement of happiness has led to mixed results regarding the effects of holidays on happiness (Milman, 1998). Some studies have concluded that this effect is short-lived, while others have argued that vacation can boost long-term life satisfaction (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006; Nawijn, 2010a; Nawijn et al., 2010). We aim to explain why and how destinations can determine tourist happiness by adopting a comprehensive measure of happiness consisting of life satisfaction, eudaimonia, and affect, as suggested by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2013). Such a comprehensive measure of happiness also allows us to bridge the gap between domain-specific happiness, such as tourist happiness, and life satisfaction in general to shed light on the extent to which holiday and destination choice can boost long-term life satisfaction.

2. Literature review

2.1. Tourism, life satisfaction, and happiness

It has been well acknowledged in the literature that happiness, or subjective well-being, can be defined by cognitive life satisfaction and affective emotions (Diener, 2000; Easterlin, 2001, 2004, 2013; Nawijn, 2010a; Nawijn et al., 2010). Life satisfaction is seen as a composite index of individuals' satisfaction with various life domains, ranging from economic and health conditions to leisure and holiday participation (Allen & Beattie, 1984; Hoopes & Lounsbury, 1989; Kim & Woo, 2014; Neal et al., 1999; Neal, Uysal, & Sirgy, 2007). Empirical studies have shown that leisure and holiday participation can significantly increase people's overall life satisfaction, even for those who are not satisfied with some of their life domains (e.g., their economic situation) (Allen & Beattie, 1984; McCabe & Johnson, 2013; McCabe et al., 2010). This conclusion was verified by Neal et al. (1999), who found that travel experience has a direct impact on life satisfaction for leisure travelers. Hoopes and Lounsbury (1989) further argued that holidays can not only increase life satisfaction but can also permeate other life domains, thereby boosting people's satisfaction in other areas. In a similar vein, Kim and Woo's (2014) study showed that satisfaction with leisure activities, along with satisfaction with one's family, health, and emotional state, can increase overall life satisfaction for the elderly.

The mechanism by which leisure and tourism satisfaction increases overall life satisfaction is elucidated by spillover theory, which postulates that overall life satisfaction is determined by people's satisfaction with their major life domains in a hierarchy (Neal et al., 1999, 2004, 2007; Neal, Sirgy, & Uysal, 2004). At the bottom of this hierarchy is people's satisfaction with the life conditions that comprise a particular life domain. Their conditional satisfaction determines their overall satisfaction with a given domain (e.g., satisfaction with holidays) which, together with their satisfaction with other life domains such as work, health, and family, determines life satisfaction at the top of the hierarchy (Neal et al., 1999). When it

comes to the leisure domain, spillover theory suggests that people's leisure satisfaction can spill upward to boost their overall life satisfaction (Neal et al., 1999, 2007). Satisfaction with leisure and tourism experiences is derived from tourists' reflection on, memories of, and emotional arousal from their travel experiences as well as from their satisfaction with a variety of tourism services (Neal et al., 1999, 2007). However, spillover theory does not necessarily explain the complexity of tourist happiness in its own right, especially in relation to different travel phases and activities, which may cause tourist happiness to fluctuate over time.

Tourist happiness has been found to vary across different travel phases, suggesting a fade-out effect over time (Nawijn, 2010b; Strauss-Blasche, Ekmekcioglu, & Marktl, 2000). In particular, the positive effect of a holiday on happiness diminishes as tourist activities come to an end (Filep & Deery, 2010; Neal et al., 2004). The fade-out effect was especially evident in some studies in which happiness was measured using a set of affective constructs, such as emotion and mood (Filep & Deery, 2010; Nawijn, 2010b). For instance, Nawijn (2010b) found that compared to the pre-holiday level, tourists' moods peak during the first 70% of the holiday duration, then slightly decline and finally balance out when the holiday concludes. Strauss-Blasche et al. (2000) discovered that happiness, as measured by mood, sleep quality, and a decrease in physical complaints, increases in the post-holiday period.

2.2. Tourism services, travel activities, and tourist happiness

Tourist happiness is composed of life satisfaction, affect, and eudaimonia, all of which have been underscored by many studies related to the tourist experience (Diener, 2000; Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006; Gillet et al., 2016; Kler & Tribe, 2012; Knobloch, Robertson, & Aitken,

2017; Matteucci & Filep, 2017). Tourist happiness fluctuates over time because the affect component of happiness is short-lived (Hoopes & Lounsbury, 1989; Nawijn, 2010b; Neal et al., 1999; Strauss-Blasche et al., 2000). A great deal of evidence has shown that tourist happiness varies according to different types of tourism services and travel activities (Bimonte & Faralla, 2012; Gillet et al., 2016; Voigt et al., 2010). For instance, Bimonte and Faralla (2012) found that park visitors are happier than beach tourists. Voigt et al. (2010) noted that spa visits can evoke more positive, hedonic well-being compared to resort visits and spiritual retreats. Kler and Tribe (2012) found that scuba diving can result in positive experiences, which may lead to higher life satisfaction. Tsaur, Yen, and Hsiao (2013) discovered that highly engaging travel activities, such as mountain climbing, can boost happiness by immersing tourists in transcendent experiences. Gillet et al. (2016) found that photography can boost short-term positive emotions and long-term life satisfaction due to its role in building social relationships.

2.3. Tourist experiences and the multiple facets of happiness

Evidence has suggested that different tourist activities touch on different facets of happiness, including affect, eudaimonia, and life satisfaction (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006; Hosany, 2012; Kler & Tribe, 2012; Matteucci & Filep, 2017; Nawijn, 2010a; Nawijn et al., 2010; Tsaur et al., 2013). This may explain why the effects of a holiday on tourist happiness were short-lived in some studies but long-lasting in others (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006; Nawijn, 2010a; Nawijn et al., 2010). By classifying tourism experiences along a continuum with hedonic and eudaimonic end-points, Voigt et al. (2010) argued that spa visitation can activate the hedonic component of happiness whereas spiritual retreat activities are associated with the eudaimonic facet. Studies have shown that life satisfaction is affected by the eudaimonic

facet of happiness associated with highly engaging travel activities (Kler & Tribe, 2012; Matteucci & Filep, 2017). One such example is scuba diving, which provides participants with meaning and fulfillment, thereby contributing to overall life satisfaction in the long term (Kler & Tribe, 2012).

3. Conceptual development

Tourism involves a temporary transition in space and time as a person moves from his or her ordinary place of residence to a destination (Cohen, 1972; Gross & Brown, 2006; Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010). It is the destination that constitutes a temporary home for tourists and therefore determines their happiness. Voigt and Pforr (2014) proposed that tourists' well-being should contain objective elements at a destination level in addition to individual, subjective elements. Gholipour, Tajaddini, and Nguyen (2016) argued that a nation's happiness is an asset that not only attracts tourists but also increases their spending. These arguments have underscored the role of destinations in influencing the relationship between holidays and happiness. In other words, tourist happiness can vary across destinations. Destination image and service quality are used in the present study to represent a destination's macro- and non-market-based component and its micro- and market-based component, respectively (del Bosque & Martin, 2008; Jenkins, 1999; Song, van der Veen, Li, & Chen, 2012).

3.1. Destination image, service quality, and tourist satisfaction

Destination image refers to tourists' cognitive and affective evaluations of a destination, including appreciating the economic, social, and environmental factors that characterize the

destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; del Bosque & Martin, 2008; Jarvis, Stoeckl, & Liu, 2016; Li & Stepchenkova, 2012). These factors have been found to affect tourist satisfaction and revisit intention (Jarvis et al., 2016). Specifically, destination image influences a wide range of cognitive and affective patterns, including tourists' expectations, perceived service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty along with their destination choices (Bigné, Sánchez, & Sánchez, 2001; del Bosque & Martin, 2008; Telisman-Kosuta, 1989). In particular, Bigne et al. (2001) confirmed that destination image has direct effects on tourist satisfaction and behavioral intentions, while del Bosque and Martin (2008) argued that destination image is one of the key drivers of tourists' commitment to a destination. We therefore propose the following hypothesis to test the effects of destination image on tourist satisfaction:

$H_{1\text{-}1}$: Destination image has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction.

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction has been well established in different contexts, suggesting that service quality is an antecedent of customer satisfaction (Anderson & Fornell, 2000; Cole, Crompton, & Willson, 2002; Fornell et al., 1996; Ostrowski, O'Brien, & Gordon, 1993; Spreng & Mackoy, 1996). Fornell et al. (1996) modeled customer satisfaction as a consequence of customers' expectations, assessed value, and perceived service quality. This model highlights the core relationships between customer satisfaction and perceived service quality, which were empirically verified by Chan et al. (2003) and Song et al. (2012) when computing customer and tourist satisfaction indices. Bigné et al. (2001) found a positive relationship between tourists' perceived service quality and their satisfaction. Neal et al. (1999, 2007) argued that tourist satisfaction is generated from travelers' satisfaction with a variety of tourism services, which contributes to their overall life satisfaction and happiness. In order to model the effects of destination image and

service quality on tourist satisfaction, we propose the following hypothesis:

$H_{1\text{-}2}$: Service quality has a positive effect on tourist satisfaction.

3.2. Tourist satisfaction, life satisfaction, and happiness

The widespread use of happiness as a measure of life satisfaction, or satisfaction in different life domains, has corroborated the relationship between consumer satisfaction and happiness (Diener et al., 1985; Fugl-Meyer, Bränholm, & Fugl-Meyer, 1991; Neal et al., 1999; Seligman et al., 2005). In spillover theory specifically, happiness is operationalized as people's overall life satisfaction and their satisfaction with a wide range of life domains, including leisure and holidays (Allen & Beattie, 1984; Neal et al., 1999, 2004, 2007). Such operationalization highlights the interrelationships between happiness and domain-specific life satisfaction. Empirical evidence has shown that domain-specific satisfaction can lead to overall life satisfaction (i.e., happiness) (Allen & Beattie, 1984; Chen et al., 2016; Fugl-Meyer et al., 1991; Kim, Woo, & Uysal, 2015; Neal et al., 1999; Newman, Tay, & Diener, 2013). Recent research indicates that satisfaction with a travel experience has a significantly positive effect on life satisfaction (Chen et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2015; Su, Swanson, & Chen, 2016). Travel experiences can also lead directly to life satisfaction (Chen et al., 2016). As articulated by spillover theory (Neal et al., 1999, 2004, 2007), we highlight the central role of tourist satisfaction in boosting life satisfaction after tourists conclude their holidays; hence, we propose the following hypothesis:

$H_{2\text{-}1}$: Tourist satisfaction has a positive effect on life satisfaction.

By addressing different facets of happiness, we conceptualize tourist happiness on three dimensions: life satisfaction, eudaimonia, and affect (Kler & Tribe, 2012; Matteucci & Filep, 2017; Tsaur et al., 2013). This definition is based on a comprehensive measure of happiness suggested by the OECD (2013) for guiding empirical studies across different contexts and countries. In tourist satisfaction research, Filep (2008) argued that tourist satisfaction should highlight the hedonic components of people's experiences, including positive emotions, meanings, and quality of life. A study conducted by del Bosque and Martin (2008) found tourist satisfaction to be positively associated with positive emotions but negatively associated with negative emotions. We propose the following hypotheses to test the effect of tourist satisfaction on multiple facets of happiness:

$H_{2\text{-}2}$: Tourist satisfaction leads to positive affect.

$H_{2\text{-}3}$: Tourist satisfaction has an inverse relationship with negative affect.

$H_{2\text{-}4}$: Tourist satisfaction leads to eudaimonia.

3.3. Life satisfaction, eudaimonia, and affect

Life satisfaction remains relatively stable over time and can therefore predict a range of happiness domains, including positive and negative affect (Sirgy et al., 2011). In Sirgy et al.'s (2011) study, affect was conceptualized as influencing life satisfaction by affecting domain-specific facets of satisfaction. Empirical evidence has suggested that there are a range of positive behavioral consequences from being happy (Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). For instance, happiness was found to predict success and work performance (Boehm & Lyubomirsky, 2008; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). It can also affect people's choices of consumer goods, such as tea, music, and bottled water (Mogilner et al.,

2012). In the present study, we examine the relationships between life satisfaction and tourists' behavioral consequences in order to determine the effect of life satisfaction on short-lived happiness domains. We therefore propose the following hypotheses:

$H_{3\text{-}1}$: Life satisfaction leads to positive affect.

$H_{3\text{-}2}$: Life satisfaction has an inverse relationship with negative affect.

$H_{3\text{-}3}$: Life satisfaction leads to eudaimonia.

Besides investigating the effect of destination attributes (as measured by destination image and service quality) on satisfaction, we attempt to test the direct effects of destination attributes on different facets of happiness. This investigation is underpinned by a number of studies showing that different facets of happiness, such as positive affect and eudaimonia, are associated with destination-specific activities, such as scuba diving, photography, and spa visitation (Bimonte & Faralla, 2012; Gillet et al., 2016; Kler & Tribe, 2012; Voigt et al., 2010). These activities also affect tourists' perceptions of a destination and the service provided at that destination. In particular, tourism is seen as a way of pursuing meaning and eudaimonia, and the destination plays a pivotal role in imbuing travel with purpose (Filep & Deery, 2010; Gross & Brown, 2006; Yuksel et al., 2010). In order to test the effects of destination image and service quality on different facets of tourist happiness, we propose the following hypotheses:

$H_{4\text{-}1}$: Destination image has a positive effect on life satisfaction.

$H_{4\text{-}2}$: Destination image leads to positive affect.

$H_{4\text{-}3}$: Destination image has an inverse relationship with negative affect.

$H_{4\text{-}4}$: Destination image leads to eudaimonia.

$H_{5\text{-}1}$: Service quality has a positive effect on life satisfaction.

$H_{5\text{-}2}$: Service quality leads to positive affect.

$H_{5\text{-}3}$: Service quality has an inverse relationship with negative affect.

$H_{5\text{-}4}$: Service quality leads to eudaimonia.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of tourist happiness consisting of the 17 hypotheses proposed above.

Figure 1

4. Methods

4.1. Research design

We designed a cross-sectional study to examine Swiss inbound tourists' happiness. Switzerland was chosen as a tourist destination for two reasons. First, Switzerland has topped the list of the world's happiest countries since the first World Happiness Report was published in 2012 (Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2017), which makes it an ideal destination in which to study tourist happiness. Gholipour et al. (2016) found that tourists prefer to travel to, and spend more money in, happier countries, indicating that national happiness is an intangible asset that can boost tourism demand. This is especially meaningful when a destination provides tourists with a temporary environment in which to experience a taste of local life. The transmission of happiness from local residents to tourists through tourists' experience of the local lifestyle can be seen as an extension of spillover theory from a geographical point of view. We conjecture that happiness tends to converge over time

between less happy countries and happy destinations as international travel becomes more popular.

We also chose Switzerland because it is a land-locked, small state, which allowed us to focus on how a restricted range of destination attributes, including destination image and service quality, can influence tourist satisfaction and happiness. Therefore, we were able to minimize intra-destination heterogeneity while maximizing the differences between Switzerland and other destination countries. Different levels of tourist happiness could thus be attributed to destination-specific, rather than activity-specific, factors across different destinations.

4.2. Measurement

In this study, destination image was operationalized as consisting of environmental quality, political security, social connectivity, and economic affordability, all items drawn from previous studies (del Bosque & Martin, 2008; Jarvis et al., 2016; Jenkins, 1999). We adopted Song et al.'s (2012) measurement of service quality that includes measuring tourists' perceived service quality of hotels, restaurants, attractions, shopping, and transport services. Destination image and service quality were measured as formative constructs to capture a wide range of destination attributes that shape the tourist experience and influence tourist satisfaction and happiness. Tourist satisfaction was measured using three indicators, namely overall satisfaction, comparison with expectations, and comparison with the ideal (Chan et al., 2003; Conner & Sparks, 1996; Fornell, 1992; Song et al., 2012).

Happiness was measured on three dimensions—life satisfaction, eudaimonia, and affect (Diener, 2009; OECD, 2013; ONS, 2011)—with life satisfaction assessed using a single item

suggested by the World Value Survey (Bjørnskov, 2010). The dimension of eudaimonia is considered a crucial component of happiness, especially in tourism (Kler & Tribe, 2012; Matteucci & Filep, 2017; Voigt et al., 2010); to measure it, we chose three indicators (worthwhileness, accomplishment, and meaningfulness) proposed by Diener (2009), suggested by the OECD (2013), and used by the UK Office of National Statistics (ONS, 2011). The measurement of affect consisted of positive and negative affect with four indicators (relaxation, contentedness, joyfulness, and excitement) measuring positive affect and four (anxiousness, stressfulness, depressiveness, and sadness) measuring negative affect (OECD, 2013; ONS, 2011).

As suggested by the OECD's (2013) guidelines for measuring happiness, each construct indicator was measured on an 11-point Likert scale, with 0 indicating tourists' complete disagreement with a statement and 10 indicating complete agreement. Compared to scales with a limited number of choice-points, the 11-point Likert scale (i.e., 0 to 10) increases scale sensitivity without systematically undermining scale reliability (Cummins & Gullone, 2000) and has been widely adopted by consumer satisfaction and tourist satisfaction studies (Chan et al., 2003; Song et al., 2012).

4.3. Data

A questionnaire comprised of sociodemographic items and questions measuring each construct was administered to Swiss inbound tourists in 2015. Inbound tourists were surveyed from eight countries (Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, the United States, Canada, China, and Japan), which represented the largest source markets of Swiss inbound tourism (Federal Statistical Office (FSO), 2014). A professional market research firm assisted

with data collection using its online survey panel that included respondents who traveled to Switzerland between January and December 2015.

Data collection began when a link to the questionnaire was sent to a professionally managed online panel. A pilot study showed that the median length of the interview was around nine minutes, and we added a speeding check—measured as one-third of the median soft launch time—that automatically terminated respondents who were not answering thoughtfully. Similar to Li (2012), we invalidated responses completed within three minutes (i.e., less than one-third the median completion time). The firm provided incentives averaging around US$0.75–1 to respondents who completed the survey. Of the 4,607 respondents who began the survey, 1,450 were deemed to have thoroughly completed the questionnaire based on speeding check results; of them, 1,048 hailed from the abovementioned eight countries.

4.4. Analysis

We aimed to investigate the extent to which the two key destination-based attributes (i.e., destination image and service quality) are associated with tourist happiness, a construct that incorporates life satisfaction, affect, and eudaimonia. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the cause-effect relationship between these constructs. Compared with covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM), partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM) is more appropriate and superior to CB-SEM when the theory is less developed and the study seeks to identify the key predictors of the dependent construct (Hair et al., 2011, 2014, 2017). In addition, because our model incorporated both reflective and formative constructs, PLS-SEM was suitable to handle this measurement issue (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2011, 2014, 2017). Therefore, we adopted PLS-SEM (SmartPLS v. 3.2.1) to analyze the model. We expected

that the model predictors would have sufficient power in predicting tourist satisfaction and happiness.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive analysis

Tables 1 and 2 present the sociodemographic information for the 1,048 respondents. Males made up 55% of the sample, and more than 60% of respondents were married. The respondents were relatively young, with more than 65% between 25 and 44 years old; respondents aged between 25 and 34 outnumbered those between 35 and 44 by 10%. The respondents were well educated, with more than 80% having earned college/university degrees or above. More than 80% of respondents were employed. Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents' household income. We found that the majority of tourists from short-haul source markets (Germany, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom) had relatively lower income. By contrast, tourists from long-haul source markets (the United States, Canada, and Japan) reported above-average income. As an exception, the household income of Chinese tourists (a long-haul market) mostly fell into the middle range of provided response options (US$40,000–79,999).

Table 1

Table 2

Table 3 outlines respondents' behavioral characteristics. More than half of the respondents (55%) reported having stayed at their accommodations in Switzerland for more than four nights. Among the major travel purposes were leisure, recreation, and holiday (67.4%

altogether), followed by business or visiting friends and relatives (30% combined). Over 80% of the respondents reported traveling with companions, such as friends, colleagues, or family, which may have allowed them to share travel information and reflect on their overall experiences more thoroughly. As for travel activities, sightseeing was the most popular, comprising over 40% of responses, followed by various sporting, spa, and wellness activities (nearly 25% of responses). These activities are of high hedonic and eudaimonic merit and have been found to play a major role in boosting tourist happiness at the destination (Tsaur et al., 2013; Voigt et al., 2010).

Table 3

5.2. Measurement model

Prior to analyzing the measurement model, a data examination procedure was carried out to check for missing data, suspicious response patterns, outliers, and data distribution (Hair et al., 2017). Table 4 shows the criteria for assessing the reliability of the reflective constructs. The factor loadings of all constructs were statistically significant and above the threshold value of .70, and the communalities of the indicators were above .50. These results suggest that the indicators indeed measured their corresponding constructs (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair et al., 2014). The Cronbach's αs of all constructs far exceeded the cutoff value of .70, indicating the constructs had internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Because Cronbach's α tends to underestimate internal consistency (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009), composite reliability was also adopted; the results suggested high levels of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 4

Table 5 shows that the average variance extracted (AVEs) of all reflective constructs far exceeded the cutoff value of .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014), indicating that the constructs had adequate and satisfactory convergent validity. Table 5 also demonstrates that the square roots of all constructs' AVEs were larger than the corresponding inter-construct correlations; thus, the measurement model achieved satisfactory discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014). However, because the commonly used Fornell-Larcker criterion and the assessment of cross-loadings were criticized for their failure to detect discriminant validity (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015), we used the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) as an alternative method based on the $HTMT_{.90}$ criterion and the $HTMT_{inference}$ in checking discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). While the HTMT ratios for the four comparisons (eudaimonia and positive affect, eudaimonia and tourist satisfaction, life satisfaction and tourist satisfaction, and positive affect and tourist satisfaction) indicated some discriminant validity issues, the $HTMT_{inference}$ did not detect discriminant validity problems; thus, we retained these constructs in the analysis of the structural model.

Table 5

Table 6

To assess the reliability and validity of formative constructs, we checked the level of collinearity as well as the magnitude and significance of the weights of each formative construct (Calvo-Mora et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2014; Picón, Castro, & Roldán, 2014). Table 7 indicates that the variance inflation factor (VIF) values for all indicators of the two constructs were below the cutoff value of 5 (Hair et al., 2014), indicating no critical collinearity issues.

The weights of a formative construct are crucial to assessing its reliability and validity (Hair et al., 2014); our results showed that the weights of all indicators of destination image except for one (the indicator "safe and secure") were statistically significant at the .01 level. Given that the outer loading of this indicator was far above the cutoff value of .50, we kept it in the model based on Hair et al.'s (2014) suggested guideline. The weights of all service quality indicators were statistically significant at the .001 level, demonstrating that all indicators explained a significant proportion of the variance in service quality.

Table 7

5.3. Structural model

5.3.1. Assessment of the structural model

The structural model was assessed using a comprehensive set of criteria, including evaluating the significance and relevance of structural relationships, the coefficient of determination (R^2), the effect size f^2, and the predictive relevance Q^2 (Hair et al., 2017). Table 8 shows that 15 out of 17 structural relationships were statistically significant at the .05 level, and the directions of all significant relationships, except for that between tourist satisfaction and negative affect, were consistent with theories. Table 9 shows that all five dependent constructs, except negative affect, were substantially explained by their predictors, with R^2 ranging from .777 (life satisfaction) to .806 (tourist satisfaction). Table 10 presents the f^2 values, which were used to assess the contribution of an exogenous construct to an endogenous construct's R^2. Table 10 also reports Q^2, which indicates the predictive relevance of the exogenous construct for the endogenous construct. All predictors of negative affect had

negligible effects as f^2 values were far below .02, the cutoff value to satisfy a small effect (Hair et al., 2014). We found that service quality had a minimal effect on life satisfaction, and the effect was not statistically significant. Table 10 shows that all Q^2 values for the endogenous constructs were greater than zero, indicating that they had predictive relevance for the endogenous constructs in the model.

Table 8

Table 9

Table 10

5.3.2. Mediation analysis of tourist satisfaction

To test the mediation effects, we adopted the bootstrapping procedure that is well suited to the PLS-SEM method (Hair et al., 2017). Table 11 shows the results of the mediation analysis of tourist satisfaction. We found that tourist satisfaction mediated all relationships between destination attributes (destination image and service quality) and happiness-related constructs except for negative affect. According to the classification of mediation effects (Hair et al., 2017; Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010), tourist satisfaction had partial mediation effects on the relationships between destination image and eudaimonia, life satisfaction, and positive affect; the direct and indirect effects involved in these relationships were statistically positive. Partial mediation effects were also found on the relationships between service quality and both eudaimonia and positive affect. In particular, tourist satisfaction fully mediated the relationship between service quality and life satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction was not found to mediate the relationships between destination image and negative affect or between service quality and negative affect. Destination image had only a direct effect on negative affect,

whereas service quality had no effect on negative affect.

Table 11

5.3.3. Mediation analysis of life satisfaction

We also examined the mediation effects of life satisfaction by using the same bootstrapping procedure (Hair et al., 2017). Table 12 shows that life satisfaction mediated all relationships between destination image, service quality, and tourist satisfaction as a set of independent constructs and happiness-related constructs, including eudaimonia and positive affect. Specifically, life satisfaction had partial mediation effects on the relationships between destination image and both eudaimonia and positive affect; the direct and indirect effects involved in these relationships were statistically positive. Partial mediation effects were also found on the relationships between service quality and both eudaimonia and positive affect. While there were no mediation effects of life satisfaction on the relationships between destination image and negative affect, nor between service quality and negative affect, life satisfaction did mediate the relationship between tourist satisfaction and negative affect. It is interesting to note that this mediation effect was a partial mediation, as both the direct and indirect effects were statistically significant and positive (Hair et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2010).

Table 12

6. Discussion and conclusion

6.1. Theoretical issues and key findings

6.1.1. The dark side of tourist happiness

The complexity of tourist happiness includes measuring life satisfaction, eudaimonia, and affect by taking a destination into account (Nawijn, 2010a; Nawijn et al., 2010; Tsaur et al., 2013; Voigt et al., 2010). This study showed that the measurement of happiness matters when examining the relationships between tourist happiness and negative affect. While negative affect helps to strike an emotional balance that can ultimately lead to happiness (Liu, Wang, & Lü, 2013; Moriwaki, 1974; Ryff, 1989), our results suggested that tourists are reluctant to link their travel experiences to negative affect. While holidays can bring about negative emotions due to fatigue and burnout during travel (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004; Steyn, Saayman, & Nienaber, 2004), tourists tend to focus on the hedonic or pleasurable side of travel. Of all structural relationships, those between the predictors of tourist happiness and negative affect were relatively weak, albeit statistically significant. For instance, service quality was not associated with negative affect although it can lead to dissatisfaction and may explain other constructs in the model. All three significant relationships pertinent to negative affect were weak.

6.1.2. Antecedents and consequences of tourist happiness

This study provided compelling evidence for predicting tourist happiness using destination attributes. We found destination image to be positively associated with life satisfaction, eudaimonia, and affect. However, there was no evidence indicating that service quality influences life satisfaction and negative affect. Life satisfaction explains and predicts all of its consequential constructs, namely eudaimonia, positive affect, and negative affect. The results

demonstrated that life satisfaction can explain the largest variance in positive affect. This study also confirmed the previous finding that the influence of positive affect was more evident on tourist happiness than on negative emotions or eudaimonia (Filep & Deery, 2010; Gillet et al., 2016; Voigt et al., 2010). We also verified that life satisfaction can explain eudaimonia because travel is seen as a pursuit of meaning and purpose (Filep, 2008; Filep & Deery, 2010; Kler & Tribe, 2012; Matteucci & Filep, 2017). Life satisfaction helps to reduce negative affect, a finding supported by many previous studies showing that vacationers tend to be happier than non-vacationers (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004; Lounsbury & Hoopes, 1986).

6.1.3. Roles of tourist satisfaction and life satisfaction

We found that the direct effects of destination image and service quality on happiness-related constructs were largely mediated by tourist satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction was found to significantly reduce these direct effects, implying that destination image and service quality can boost tourists' life satisfaction, eudaimonia, and positive affect by increasing their satisfaction level. This is true given the conceptual similarity between satisfaction and happiness (Diener et al., 1985; Fugl-Meyer et al., 1991; Peterson et al., 2005). The total mediation of tourist satisfaction on the relationship between service quality and life satisfaction suggested that service quality may not lead to life satisfaction unless it increases tourist satisfaction in the first place. Although the relationship between destination image and life satisfaction was mediated by tourist satisfaction, there appears to be a direct relationship between destination image and life satisfaction after all.

Similar to the mediating effects of tourist satisfaction, life satisfaction was found to largely mediate the effects of destination image and service quality on happiness-related constructs.

This result indicated that destination image and service quality can lead to life satisfaction, which can in turn boost eudaimonia and positive affect. The effect of life satisfaction has also been underscored in previous studies examining affect and emotion and predicting consumer choices and personal growth (Mogilner et al., 2012; Sirgy et al., 2011). However, life satisfaction was found to have no mediating effect on the relationships between both destination image and service quality and negative affect. Also, the direct effects of destination image, service quality, and tourist satisfaction on negative affect were very weak, even though some of the effects were statistically significant. This means that in a tourism context, negative affect cannot be explained by destination attributes or by life satisfaction at least when it comes to the destination of Switzerland.

6.2. Managerial implications

We verified that destination attributes, as measured by destination image and service quality, have sufficient power in predicting tourist happiness. This result has profound implications for destinations when it comes to measuring and managing tourist happiness in order to enhance destination performance and competitiveness, such as by projecting a favorable destination image and improving service quality based on an accurate measure of tourist happiness. Research has shown that the success of the tourism industry depends on delivering high-quality travel experiences to customers (Baloglu, Pekcan, Chen, & Santos, 2004; Dwyer & Kim, 2003; Song et al., 2012). Given that the pursuit of happiness has become one of the most important goals of modern society and the aim of public policies (Kluger, 2013), happiness management plays a pivotal role in various businesses (Knobloch et al., 2017). Particularly for tourism and hospitality managers and practitioners, nurturing happy tourists is strategically important—not only because happiness has more fundamental impacts than

consumer satisfaction on consumer behavior and fulfillment (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Mogilner et al., 2012), but also because tourism consumption and holidays elicit high emotional arousal and eudaimonia (Kler & Tribe, 2012; Voigt et al., 2010).

6.3. Limitations and future research

This study has several limitations. Because data were collected a couple of weeks and even months after tourists' visits to Switzerland, tourist happiness, and especially short-term affect, was perhaps influenced by tourists having already returned to their everyday routines in their respective home countries. In other words, tourists' memories of their travel experiences might have been colored by the post-travel period. This distortion can be substantial when something unusual happens in tourists' post-travel period, which may cloud their judgement of their actual travel experience at the destination. For this reason, the OECD (2013) suggested that in collecting happiness data, researchers should assess respondents' current happiness state at the time of the interview and the day when the survey is conducted. Future research should take these suggestions into account by either revising the data collection procedure or controlling for these effects in data analysis.

Scholars should also aim to design a longitudinal study to track changes in happiness before and after travel. This is especially true for tourist behavior studies that involve measuring tourist evaluations of products and services, such as perceived service quality, satisfaction, and happiness. Because tourist consumption is essentially a process (Smith et al., 2015), tourist happiness is likely to change when tourists are at different travel stages. Studies have shown that tourist happiness, particularly as it relates to emotion, can vary at different travel stages, leading to the fade-out effect of happiness (Filep & Deery, 2010; Nawijn, 2010b;

Strauss-Blasche et al., 2000). Future researchers should collect tourist happiness data at different travel stages by using, for instance, mobile apps (Smith et al., 2015) or some sort of behavior tracking system that can record respondents' happiness throughout all travel phases.

On another note, there is a growing body of literature regarding the relationships between natural and manmade environments and happiness, suggesting that nature and natural outdoor settings can boost positive emotions and eudaimonic well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2015; Nisbet, Zelenski, & Murphy, 2011; Passmore & Howell, 2014; Wolsko, & Lindberg, 2013). These studies suggest that the microenvironment of hospitality establishments at a destination can also affect tourist happiness; therefore, future research should consider manmade environments in order to expand the scope of the destination-based happiness model. In the wide range of factors that influence different domains of happiness, culture has been considered a pertinent factor in life satisfaction (e.g., Oishi, 2006). With 1,048 responses collected from eight nations and diverse cultures, the reliability of our results may have been affected because we did not control for possible cross-cultural bias in our analysis. Unfortunately, we were unable to conduct a cross-cultural analysis as the sample sizes for some nationalities were too small. It is therefore recommended that future research take culture or nationality into account in research design and data collection.

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Table 1

Sociodemographics of the respondents (N = 1,048).

Category	*N*	*%*	*Category*	*N*	*%*
Gender			*Age (continued)*		
Male	579	55.2	65 +	32	3.1
Female	469	44.8	*Education*		
Marital status			No formal education	5	.5
Single	315	30.1	Primary/elementary school	10	1.0
Married	652	62.2	Secondary/high school	150	14.3
Divorced	26	2.5	College/university	616	58.8
Separated	10	1.0	Postgraduate	254	24.2
Widowed	15	1.4	Other	13	1.2
Other	30	2.9	*Occupation*		
Age			Employed	865	82.5
15–24	103	9.8	Unemployed	23	2.2
25–34	402	38.4	Retired	41	3.9
35–44	284	27.1	Student	54	5.2
45–54	145	13.8	Housewife	40	3.8
55–64	82	7.8	Other	25	2.4

Table 2

Household income of the respondents (%).

Household income	Germany (*N* = 104)	France (*N* = 104)	Italy (*N* = 105)	UK (*N* = 104)	US (*N* = 157)	Canada (*N* = 156)	China (*N* = 157)	Japan (*N* = 156)
Less than US$20,000	13.3	9.5	15.2	1.0	2.5	4.5	1.3	5.1
US$20,000–39,999	22.9	26.7	33.3	27.6	7.6	6.4	18.5	13.4
US$40,000–59,999	27.6	30.5	23.8	25.7	15.3	21.0	33.1	19.7
US$60,000–79,999	21.0	19.0	13.3	15.2	22.3	24.8	29.9	22.3
US$80,000–99,999	10.5	12.4	7.6	12.4	21.7	20.4	8.3	15.9
US$100,000 or more	3.8	1.0	6.7	17.1	30.6	22.3	8.9	22.9

Notes: The aggregated sample size was 1,043, as there were missing values on income. The shaded cells highlight the predominant income categories.

Table 3

Behavioral characteristics of the respondents (N = 1,048).

Category	*N*	*%*	*Category*	*N*	*%*
Length of stay			*Travel companions*		
One night	71	6.8	Traveled alone	184	17.6
2–4 nights	394	37.6	Traveled with friends and/or colleagues	315	30.1
5–7 nights	401	38.3	Traveled with family	533	50.9
8–10 nights	110	10.5	Other	16	1.5
More than 10 nights	72	6.9	*Travel activities*		
Travel purposes			Sightseeing	458	43.7
Leisure, recreation, and holidays	706	67.4	Shopping	113	10.8
Business	142	13.5	Sports, spas, and wellness	258	24.6
Visiting friends and relatives	183	17.5	Museums and cultural events	149	14.2
Other	17	1.6	Other	70	6.7

Table 4

Reliability of the reflective constructs.

Construct	*Factor loading*	*Communality*	*Composite reliability*	*Cronbach's α*
Satisfaction			.943	.908
Overall satisfaction	.934***	.873		
Comparison with expectations	.889***	.791		
Comparison with ideal	.934***	.873		
Life satisfaction				
How happy would you say you were?	1.000***	1.000	1.000	1.000
Eudaimonia			.945	.913
My trip was worthwhile in my life	.919***	.845		
My trip brought accomplishment in my life	.917***	.840		
My trip was meaningful in my life	.932***	.869		
Positive affect			.954	.936
How relaxed did you feel?	.914***	.835		
How content did you feel?	.935***	.874		
How joyful did you feel?	.935***	.874		
How excited did you feel?	.881***	.775		
Negative affect			.978	.970
How anxious did you feel?	.930***	.864		
How stressed did you feel?	.963***	.928		
How depressed did you feel?	.976***	.952		
How sad did you feel?	.963***	.927		

Note: *** $p < .001$.

Table 5

Validity of the reflective constructs.

Construct	*EU*	*LS*	*NA*	*PA*	*TS*
Eudaimonia (EU)	(.923)				
Life satisfaction (LS)	.839	(1.000)			
Negative affect (NA)	-.099	-.146	(.958)		
Positive affect (PA)	.877	.853	-.128	(.916)	
Tourist satisfaction (TS)	.857	.865	-.102	.848	(.919)
AVE	.852	1.000	.918	.840	.845

Note: Values in parentheses are the square root of the AVEs of the corresponding constructs.

Table 6

Discriminant validity assessment using heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT).

	Eudaimonia	Life satisfaction	Negative affect	Positive affect
Life satisfaction	.878			
	[.844, .907]			
Negative affect	.101	.144		
	[.053, .161]	[.085, .205]		
Positive affect	**.948**	.881	.128	
	[.925, .969]	[.850, .906]	[.076, .189]	
Tourist satisfaction	**.940**	**.905**	.106	**.917**
	[.915, .962]	[.871, .932]	[.072, .164]	[.887, .944]

Notes: The results marked in bold indicate discriminant validity problems according to the $HTMT_{.90}$ criterion; $HTMT_{inference}$ does not indicate discriminant validity problems.

Table 7

Reliability of the formative constructs.

Construct	*VIF*	*Weight*	*Outer loading*
Destination image			
Environment	3.569	.225***	.862
Landscape	3.384	.159**	.841
Weather	2.856	.204***	.862
Safe and secure	3.737	.054	.855
People reliable and trustworthy	4.845	.138**	.898
People friendly and hospitable	4.216	.212***	.891
Good value for money	1.888	.190***	.723
Service quality			
Hotels	3.078	.167***	.867
Attractions/activities	3.735	.369***	.935
Restaurants	3.645	.174***	.894
Transport	3.164	.132***	.862
Shops	3.428	.268***	.900

Notes: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 8

Path estimates.

Path	*Estimate*	*S.E.*	*Confidence interval 95%*
DI → TS	.417***	.072	[.287, .565]
DI → LS	.274***	.053	[.174, .381]
DI → EU	.227***	.052	[.124, .329]
DI → PA	.218***	.053	[.122, .329]
DI → NA	-.152*	.071	[-.293, -.016]
SQ → TS	.506***	.073	[.356, .638]
SQ → LS	.103	.070	[-.017, .258]
SQ → EU	.178**	.052	[.078, .283]
SQ → PA	.182**	.064	[.069, .322]
SQ → NA	-.084	.073	[-.225, .060]
TS → LS	.536***	.061	[.401, .637]
TS → EU	.269***	.061	[.148, .385]
TS → PA	.187**	.056	[.070, .290]
TS → NA	.245**	.071	[.107, .386]
LS → EU	.272***	.053	[.169, .374]
LS → NA	-.164**	.059	[-.282, -.047]
LS → PA	.361***	.048	[.260, .449]

Notes: DI = Destination image, EU = Eudaimonia, LS = Life satisfaction, NA = Negative affect, PA = Positive affect, SQ = Service quality, TS = Tourist satisfaction.

** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 9

R^2 values of the dependent constructs.

Construct	R^2	*S.E.*	*p-value*	*Confidence interval 95%*
EU	.800	.018	.000	[.766, .834]
LS	.777	.023	.000	[.731, .821]
NA	.033	.011	.002	[.019, .060]
PA	.802	.019	.000	[.766, .839]
TS	.806	.017	.000	[.775, .839]

Note: EU = Eudaimonia, LS = Life satisfaction, NA = Negative affect, PA = Positive affect, TS = Tourist satisfaction.

Table 10

Values of f^2 size and Q^2.

Construct	*TS*	*LS*	*EU*	*PA*	*NA*
DI →	.186	.059	.043	.040	.004
SQ →	.274	.008	.026	.027	.001
TS →		.251	.056	.027	.010
LS →			.083	.147	.006
Q^2 (OD = 7)	.677	.774	.679	.671	.028

Notes: DI = Destination image, EU = Eudaimonia, LS = Life satisfaction, NA = Negative affect, PA = Positive affect, SQ = Service quality, TS = Tourist satisfaction.
OD = Omission distance.

Table 11

Mediation analysis of tourist satisfaction.

Path	*Direct effect*		*Indirect effect*		*Mediation*
	β	*Confidence interval 95%*	*β*	*Confidence interval 95%*	
DI → EU	.227***	[.120, .326]	.248***	[.165 .335]	Partial mediation
DI → LS	.274***	[.184, .390]	.224***	[.125, .323]	Partial mediation
DI → NA	-.152*	[-.300, -.025]	.021	[-.048, .102]	No mediation
DI → PA	.218***	[.126, .334]	.258***	[.146, .367]	Partial mediation
SQ → EU	.178**	[.089, .292]	.238***	[.145, .319]	Partial mediation
SQ → LS	.103	[-.016, .259]	.272***	[.179, .340]	Full mediation
SQ → NA	-.084	[-.229, .053]	.063	[-.004, .134]	No mediation
SQ → PA	.182**	[.074, .327]	.230***	[.140, .289]	Partial mediation

Notes: DI = Destination image, EU = Eudaimonia, LS = Life satisfaction, NA = Negative affect, PA = Positive affect, SQ = Service quality, TS = Tourist satisfaction.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

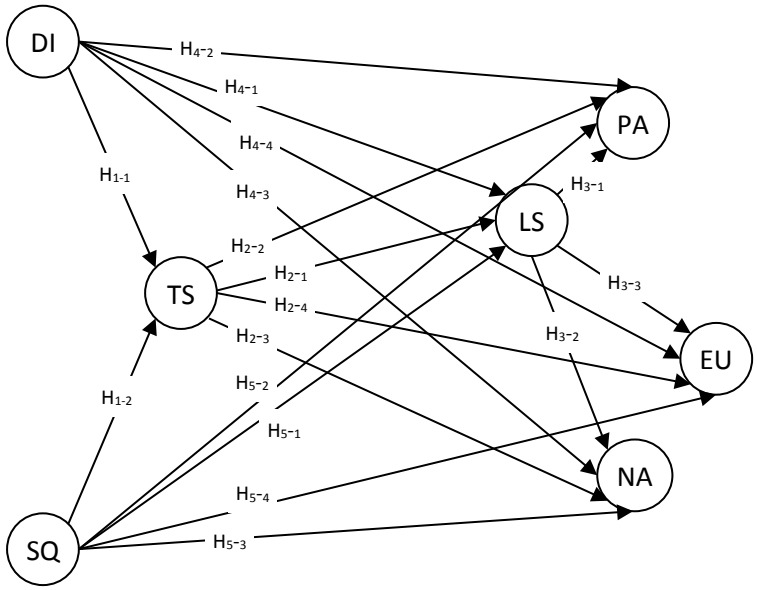
Table 12

Mediation analysis of life satisfaction.

Path	*Direct effect*		*Indirect effect*		*Mediation*
	β	*Confidence interval 95%*	*β*	*Confidence interval 95%*	
DI → EU	.227***	[.120, .326]	.248***	[.165, .335	Partial mediation
DI → NA	-.152*	[-.300, -.025]	.021	[-.048, .102]	No mediation
DI → PA	.218***	[.126, .334]	.258***	[.146, .367]	Partial mediation
SQ → EU	.178**	[.089, .292]	.238***	[.145, .319]	Partial mediation
SQ → NA	-.084	[-.229, .053]	.063	[-.004, .134]	No mediation
SQ → PA	.182**	[.074, .327]	.230***	[.140, .289]	Partial mediation
TS → EU	.269***	[.137, .374]	.146***	[.075, .219]	Partial mediation
TS → NA	.245**	[.117, .397]	-.088*	[-.152, -.020]	Partial mediation
TS → PA	.187**	[.058, .282]	.194***	[.114, .247]	Partial mediation

Notes: DI = Destination image, EU = Eudaimonia, LS = Life satisfaction, NA = Negative affect, PA = Positive affect, SQ = Service quality, TS = Tourist satisfaction.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.



Note: DI = Destination image, EU = Eudaimonia, LS = Life satisfaction, NA = Negative affect, PA = Positive affect, SQ = Service quality, TS = Tourist satisfaction.

Fig. 1. The conceptual model.