



# The impact of novel people, places, and activities, in tourism

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## Abstract

As part of an undergraduate research design class, we measured tourism experiences of 617 tourists, during a day, and their potential impact, in a quantitative, cross-sectional manner. In May 2023, a total of 30 tourism and experience design students teamed up from Breda University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands, and Brigham Young University students, United States, and approached tourists at 45 various tourist hot spots in the Rotterdam and the Amsterdam area.

We were mainly interested in the relationship between experienced novelty, human connections with other people, familiar and strangers, and experience impact, and how to best measure them. We measured overall novelty felt and perceived by tourists, subjectively, and also objectively, by measuring the degree to which activities and places were novel to them. Experience impact was measured under three levels of memorability, meaningfulness, and transformation, as suggested by Lundberg et al. (2022).

Our preliminary findings show that when predicting experience impact, a similar pattern was found for all three levels of impact. To be exact, General, subjective or perceived novelty experienced during the day mediated the relationship between social novelty (amount of novelty felt by connecting to strangers) and reported levels of memorability, meaningfulness, and

transformative impact. In other words, social novelty  $\square$  \_subjective novelty  $\square$  \_memorable/meaningful/transformative. Subjective novelty was found to be a bigger predictor of impact compared to social novelty, however, by 3 folds, each explaining about 18% of the variation in outcomes. In line with the self-expansion model (Aron et al., 2022), this result hints towards the importance of novelty felt through connecting with strangers and its impact on individuals, above and beyond visiting new and novel places and participating in new activities, together. Experience designers often times invest in the novelty of the elements outside the individuals, while connections between individuals can be a valuable source of novelty, with great impact.

When looking at human connections, connecting with both familiar people and strangers explained approximately 10% of meaningful experiences. When predicting transformative experiences, only connection with strangers, cognitively (i.e., how much they had in common), and not affectively (i.e., how much they had positive emotions), was found to be important.

We will continue to test how novelty and human connections measured differently in this study effect the three levels of experience impact. We plan to present the findings and how they can be utilized in experience design at the 7 Experiences Summit in NZ, in December 2023.

## References

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