

## Marketing Innovations for Sustainable Destinations

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# 11 Angry or Regretful? The Effect of Dissatisfaction on Tourists' Negative Word of Mouth and Exit

**Enrique Bigné Alcañiz, Isabel Sánchez García, Rafael Currás Pérez and Luisa Andreu Simó, Universitat de València**

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## Introduction

Scholars and practitioners have paid special attention to (dis)satisfaction for many decades due to general consensus over its key influence on consumer loyalty/switching behaviour (Bolton, 1998; Lam et al., 2004; Roos, 1999; Zeithaml et al., 1996). In this line, it is widely accepted that one of the main drivers of customers' exit is dissatisfaction experienced after a service failure (Coulter and Ligas, 2000; Roos, 1999), which has led to an increasing interest in service recovery strategies. These strategies encompass all the actions carried out by the provider to reduce or eliminate the negative consequences experienced by a customer after a service failure (Grönroos, 1990; Kelley and Davis, 1994).

Service failures and service recovery attempts are crucial moments of truth for companies (Schoefer and Ennew, 2005; Smith and Bolton, 2002). As Stewart (1998) points out, when a customer has decided to exit it is too late to attempt recovery, which highlights the importance of detecting early signs of dissatisfaction (Hart et al., 1990).

Service failure and service recovery research has a long tradition in marketing (Holloway and Beatty, 2003; Tax et al., 1998). Nevertheless, there are still several issues that deserve investigation (Hoffman et al., 2003; Mattila and Ro, 2008; McCollough et al., 2000). In this regard, even though scholars increasingly accept that post-purchase behaviour is triggered by emotions and not only by cognition (Agarwall and Malhotra, 2005; Bigné and Andreu, 2004; Bigné et al., 2005; Bonifield and Cole, 2007), the mediated or direct effect of some specific emotions on consumer behaviour is still unclear. As Mattila and Ro (2008) point out, 'although prior studies imply that service failures induce negative affects, research on discrete emotions and their influence on behavioural responses is lacking'. Specifically, the existence of a different effect (mediated by dissatisfaction or direct) of some discrete emotions on negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) and exit has received scant attention, and even less in the field of tourism.

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