Pleasure through Pain

An Empirical Examination of Benign Masochism in Tourism

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Abstract

Paradoxical at first sight, some tourists engage in activities involving negative emotions and even physical pain. Tourism scholars have begun investigating this phenomenon and have called for more of such research. Against this background, the authors introduce to tourism the notion of benign masochism, defining it as a trait describing a person's tendency to embrace and seek pleasure through safely playing with a stimulating level of physical pain and negative emotions. In doing so, the authors root benign masochism in the notion of play from evolutionary psychology and develop a benign masochism scale that is able to predict various tourism outcomes, including willingness to visit a haunted house, to go on a challenging adventure holiday, and to visit a nuclear disaster site. The authors conclude by discussing theoretical and managerial implications as well as limitations and future opportunities for research.

Keywords: Benign masochism, play, dark tourism, adventure tourism, evolutionary psychology

1.0 Introduction

While conventional wisdom suggests that "[p]eople approach pleasure and avoid pain" (Higgins 1997, 1280; Nawijn and Biran 2019), some people actively engage in activities that involve negative emotions and/or physical pain, including going on scary roller-coasters, enjoying tragic art work, and eating burning hot chilies (Klein 2014; Rozin et al. 2013). Interestingly, while many different reasons exist for engagement in such activities (Liu, Mattila, and Bolton 2018), they seem to sometimes be pursued because of their ostensibly undesirable effects, rather than despite them (Klein 2014; Strohminger 2014). In the psychology literature, this phenomenon has been studied under the label of benign masochism, referring specifically to how painful bodily reactions and feelings can be interpreted as pleasant when the individual perceives the situation to be safe (Rozin et al. 2013).

In tourism – as in other fields – it has traditionally been assumed that physical pain and negative emotions affect outcomes negatively. Relatedly, tourism practitioners have been advised to eliminate or limit such sensations resulting from their offerings and have instead focused on eliciting a smaller number of positive emotions (Cutler, Carmichael, and Doherty 2014; Volo 2021; Wang, Hou, and Chen 2020). However, the assumption that pain is to be avoided has been increasingly challenged, particularly with reference to adventure tourism, dark tourism, and transformative tourism (Cova and Cova 2019; Knobloch, Robertson, and Aitken 2017; Nawijn and Biran 2019). Indeed, these popular types of tourism have been linked to sensations such as sadness, disgust, fear, anger, and physical pain (Carnicelli-Filho, Schwartz, and Tahara 2010; Cova and Cova 2019; Light 2017), providing evidence to the view that pain may be a main attractor for some tourists. Aiming to advance this literature stream, this paper sets out to provide a more holistic theoretical explanation for why some tourists embrace and seek out pain during such activities as well as a suitable measurement

instrument for that purpose. This would improve tourism scholars' ability to understand why tourists engage in a wide range of activities as well as their ability to explain interindividual differences in this tendency.

Specifically, this paper contributes to the tourism literature by introducing the concept of benign masochism (BM) from psychology (Rozin et al. 2013) and expanding on its conceptualization through the evolutionary notion of play (Steen and Owens 2001). We view BM accordingly as a trait aimed at motivating humans to engage in playful yet painful activities as playing in this way has served different survival-relevant functions, including safe practice of survival-relevant skills, learning about the body's boundaries, and for social reasons (Gray 2019; Lents 2016; Steen and Owens 2001). As such, benign masochism can explain 1) enjoyment of various types of pains, 2) why these painful sensations can be enjoyed, 3) what conditions must be in place for enjoyment to occur, and 4) the broader benefits of engaging in such activities for the individual. Furthermore, in using this evolutionary-based perspective on pleasure through emotional and physical pain, we are able to offer an important, complementary explanation for different tourism phenomena, such as dark tourism and adventure tourism.

While we build on the work of Rozin et al. (2013) for the conceptualization of BM, we propose a new operationalization due to limitations of the existing scale of hedonic reversals (Rozin et al., 2013) which has previously been used to measure BM (e.g., Sagioglou and Greitemeyer 2020). Specifically, the existing scale has limited relevance in a tourism context due to asking about enjoyment of non-touristic activities. Researchers have further noted that some scale items may not represent enjoyment of pain (Strohminger 2013). In addition, the scale has limited relevance for empirical effect testing due to asking about specific activities, rendering attempts to measure BM as an antecedent of such an activity tautological. While we identify tourism as a particularly important context in which to introduce BM due to

observed tendencies among tourists to seek, for example, negative emotions or pursue painful activities (Carnicelli-Filho, Schwartz, and Tahara 2010; Nawijn and Biran 2019), our aim is to develop a scale that is versatile enough to be of potential use in other disciplines. We do so based on the view that BM is a predisposition of individuals that may guide their behaviors in various domains, such as in their role as consumers, media users, and tourists.

To test the predictive validity of the new scale, we assess whether BM can explain important phenomena that are conceptually related to it, such as willingness to visit a haunted house, to visit a nuclear disaster site, and to go on a challenging adventure holiday. In doing so, we answer calls for such research from both psychology (Rozin et al. 2013) and tourism (Biran and Hyde 2013; Hosany, Hunter-Jones, and McCabe 2020; Ivanova and Light 2018).

The present research also has important implications for tourism managers. In gaining a stronger understanding for why tourists seek out painful activities, practitioners can design service experiences that align with human psychological traits. Such insight can also point to when and how marketing an experience as painful may prove beneficial as well as provide a basis on which to segment potential tourists.

To introduce BM to tourism, the paper first reviews literature on participation in painful activities from various disciplines but with a focus on tourism. A refined conceptualization of BM is then presented which is rooted in the evolutionary function of play (Steen and Owens 2001) and is based on both prior literature and the analysis of interviews. Lastly, we develop the new BM scale, assess its predictive validity, and discuss theoretical and managerial implications as well as limitations and opportunities for future research.

2.0 Benign Masochism

While pain commonly motivates avoidance, exceptions exist with people engaging in and enjoying a wide variety of activities linked to physical pain and negative emotions. This paradox has been investigated across many disciplines, including philosophy (Klein 2014), psychology (Rozin et al. 2013), aesthetics (Strohl 2012), consumer research (Scott, Cayla, and Cova 2017), media psychology (Tan 2008), and tourism (Nawijn and Biran 2019) with various – at time overlapping – explanations being offered over the years (See Table 1 for an overview of selected approaches).

--- Please insert Table 1 around here ---

Early research suggested that people have varying needs for seeking out emotions or arousal through constructs such as sensation-seeking (Zuckerman 1979), novelty seeking (Hirschman 1980; Lee and Crompton 1992), need for emotion (Raman, Chattopadhyay, and Hoyer, 1995), need for affect (Maio and Esses 2001) and arousal seeking (Mehrabian and Russel 1973), and that people, in their quest for such stimuli, (incidentally) may engage in painful activities (Andrade and Cohen 2007). By taking point of departure in discrete emotions, Harmon-Jones et al. (2011), conversely, show that individuals differ in their subjective experiences of different emotions. As such, individuals vary in how negatively they perceive different emotions, such as anger and sadness, and these attitudes affect how likely they are to expose themselves to related stimuli. On the other hand, aftermath-based models such as the opponent-process theory (Solomon and Corbit 1974) build on the idea that people may endure painful experiences because pleasant sensations will follow when the initial stimuli is removed (Andrade and Cohen 2007). Scholars have also proposed that people engage in

painful activities as a way to escape the self (Baumeister 1988; Scott, Cayla, and Cova 2017), to escape boredom (Bench and Lench 2019), or due to a curiosity about death or harm (Oosterwijk 2017).While these accounts elucidate some aspects of people's interest in activities involving pain, they are less adept at explaining why some people enjoy various types of physically and emotionally painful activities while they are happening and because they are painful (Andrade and Cohen 2007; Rozin et al. 2013).

Instead, scholars have explained engagement in such activities with reference to two processes (Rozin et al. 2013). First, engaging in these seemingly "unpleasant" activities is linked to a co-activation of positive and negative affect (Andrade and Cohen 2007; Hemenover and Schimmack 2007). Second, this co-activation is experienced as enjoyable because the individual feels a psychological distance to the "threat" (Rozin et al. 2013). That is, the individual knows that the activity will not actually do any harm. Rozin et al. (2013, 439) refer to the latter process as benign masochism (BM) which they define as "enjoyment of negative bodily reactions and feelings in the context of feeling safe." According to the authors, it is the realization that there is no real risk at play that allows for pleasure to be experienced through the notion of 'mind over body' or mastery. Related to this, it has been suggested that masochistic pleasure will be experienced as particularly pleasant when it is "almost, but not quite, too much to bear" (Klein 2014, 49; Rozin et al. 2013).

The concept of distancing is central for BM because BM involves situations where the body is signaling danger, but the individual realizes that there is no real threat present (Rozin et al. 2013). The idea of distancing is present in Apter's (1982) concept of the protective frames which refers to "a feature of experience in which the individual sees his or her situation as being basically safe from all serious negative consequences, be these physical, mental, or social" (Augustin and Apter 2016, 8). Specifically, three types of protective frames have been advanced (Augustin and Apter 2016). First, the confidence frame reflects situations in which

a real threat is present, but the individual feels confident that nothing bad will happen to them, such as when a tourist is confident in their abilities to climb a mountain. Second, the safety zone frame reflects situations where there is no real threat involved or the threat is too far-removed to constitute a risk, such as when a tourist is atop a tall building but standing far from the edge. Lastly, the detachment frame concerns situations where a threat is present, but only for someone else, such as when a tourist is watching a movie clip about the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster (Augustin and Apter 2016).

BM and similar concepts have been examined in a variety of contexts. Rozin and Schiller (1980) alluded to the idea to explain human consumption of chili, and Rozin et al. (2013) investigated BM through the enjoyment of activities such as thrill rides, flashes of cold pain, and reading sad novels. In his penumbral theory of masochistic pleasure, Klein (2014) alluded to sexual activities involving pain, hardcore sports, and tragic works of art. Other authors have also pointed to activities linked to both pain and pleasure. These activities include watching horror movies (Andrade and Cohen 2007), watching sad movies (de Wied, Zillmann, and Ordman 1995), enjoyment of bitter tastes (Sagioglou and Greitemeier 2020), listening to sad music (Schubert 2016), and “disgusting” humor (Hemenover and Schimmack 2007). Despite the diverse behaviors linked to BM and its potential applicability to tourism (Rozin et al. 2013), the phenomenon remains under-researched in a tourism context, limiting scholars’ understanding of why people participate in painful tourist activities.

3.0 Pleasure and Pain in Earlier Tourism Research

Much tourism research is rooted in the paradigmatic and field-transcending assumption that negative and positive emotions are mutually exclusive, and that negative emotions are detrimental to the tourism experience (Nawijn and Biran 2019). This view is evident in studies that examine negative emotions as having negative effects on tourism outcomes, such as satisfaction (Deng, Yeh, and Sung 2013) and intention to recommend (Hosany and Prayag 2013). While this research is certainly very relevant, tourism scholars increasingly challenge this view (see Table 1), as the simple equation of negative emotions with displeasure and detrimental outcomes is unable to account for why some tourists apparently welcome and seek negative emotions (e.g., Nawijn and Biran 2019).

First, some scholars challenge this view with reference to mainly non-hedonic forms of tourism, such as dark tourism and transformative tourism (Nawijn and Biran 2019; Oren, Shani, and Poria 2020). Participation in these forms of tourism is often linked to the experience of physical pain and negative emotions. Indeed, dark tourism has been shown to evoke emotions such as sadness, disgust, fear, and anger (Buda, d'Hauteserre and Johnston 2014; Light 2017), while transformative tourism in the shape of pilgrimages or long hikes may involve physical pain (Cova and Cova 2019; Cutler, Carmichael, and Doherty 2014). Such findings bring Knobloch, Robertson, and Aitken (2017) to criticize the idea that tourists necessarily seek pleasure, and Nawijn and co-authors criticize the limited focus on (negative) emotions in particularly non-hedonic tourism contexts where negative emotions may influence tourism outcomes positively (Nawijn and Biran 2019; Nawijn et al. 2018).

To deal with the paradox of why people engage in activities involving pain, this stream of literature emphasizes that these activities are not necessarily experienced as pleasant, but can lead to life meaning, spiritual meaning, transformation, or eudaimonic well-being (Cova and

Cova 2019; Knobloch, Robertson, and Aitken 2017; Nawijn and Biran 2019; Xu, Lo, and Wu 2021). Nawijn and Biran (2019, 2388) encapsulate this view by noting that "eudaimonic happiness […] may result from activities that at the time may not be particularly pleasant or raise negative emotions but facilitate delayed positive effects that occur when results are achieved." Such research has then made an important contribution to understanding the (post-experience) reasons for engaging in experiences involving pain.

Conversely, some scholars have observed that tourists may derive pleasure through pain during different activities. Gyimóthy and Mykletun (2009, 259) and Mykletun and Gyimóthy (2010), for example, link disgust, fear, playfulness, and thrill to consuming Norwegian sheep head as a type of "scary food" tourism. Ivanova and Light (2018) find that some tourists visit the London Dungeon to experience fear and thrill in a safe context; and Mura (2010) finds that some young tourists seek enjoyment through risk and fear when on holiday in Greece. Bristow and Newman (2005) further coined the term of "fright tourism" to reflect how some tourists seek pleasure through being scared.

Engagement in tourist activities which involve risk at times also contain negative emotions and physical pain (Allman et al. 2009; Holm et al. 2017). Different lenses have been used to explain such behaviors, including sensation-seeking (Pizam, Reichel, and Uriely 2001; Pomfret 2006). The latter has been defined as a trait that reflects "the need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences" (Zuckerman 1979, 10). As such it shares commonalities with concepts such as arousal seeking (Mehrabian and Russel 1973) and even BM with which it correlates, albeit the two constructs have been found to be conceptually and empirically distinct (Rozin et al. 2013; Sagioglou and Greitemeier 2020). Sensation seeking has, for example, been linked to willingness to participate in extreme sports on a leisure trip (Pizam, Reichel, and Uriely 2001)—a preference that may, at least in part, be due to sensation-seekers

experiencing less negative affect and having lower risk perceptions (Andrade and Cohen 2007). Van den Berg and ter Heijne (2005), for example, found that sensation-seeking tourists report being less scared when faced with natural threats. As such, sensation seeking is a predictor of certain highly stimulating yet painful activities.

Other explanations for risky tourist activities are with reference to the notions of flow (Holm et al. 2017), rush (Buckley 2012) and edgework (Allman et al. 2009). According to Lyng (1990, 857), "[t]he archetypical edgework experience is one in which the individual's failure to meet the challenge at hand will result in death, or at the very least, debilitating injury," with examples being wartime combat situations, skydiving, hand gliding, and firefighting. Importantly, while edgeworking activities may involve painful sensations, such as fear, the goal of participating in the activities is to expand and test one's skills while maintaining control over the situation (Holm et al. 2017; Lyng 1990). As such, edgeworking is particularly useful to explain experienced or professional adventure tourists' motivations (Pomfret and Bramwell 2016) and to explain tourist activities where the tourist controls what happens, rather than, for example, going on amusement-park rides (Lyng 1990).

Lastly, tourism scholars have studied the link between pleasure and pain through the aesthetic notion of the sublime which involves "a feeling of mortal danger with a certainty of being safe" (Benediktsson, Lund, and Huijbens 2011, 81). In exploring "the sublime in crime," Huey (2011, 397), for instance, argues that visitors at Vienna Kriminalmuseum "are provided opportunities to explore fears in ways that are not only physically and ontologically safe but also allow for the conversion of fear into pleasure." Skinner (2018) relatedly links the sublime to disaster tourism, and Benediktsson, Lund, and Huijbens (2011) discuss the eruption of the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull as adding a sense of sublime for visitors to the country. Indeed, the sublime is an aesthetic perceptual phenomenon that involves awareness-altering and meaningful encounters with objects that inspire a feeling of

insignificance or dread (Benediktsson, Lund, and Huijbens 2011; Cochrane 2012; Huey 2011).

In sum, there is ample evidence in the tourism literature that some tourists seek out experiences involving pain. While different explanations have been advanced, and various reasons for seeking out pain may exist, a more holistic account for interindividual differences in why some tourists seek various types of pleasure through pain is lacking. We argue that BM offers such an account as we will demonstrate in the following.

4.0 Qualitative Pre-study: An Updated Conceptualization of Benign Masochism

In order to develop a robust BM scale, we follow established guidelines (Kock, Josiassen, and Assaf 2019a; Wieland, Kock, and Josiassen 2018; Zhou 2019) and various steps (See Figure 1). First, a clear conceptualization of the construct is necessary in order to develop items that represent the underlying construct (and not something else). In order to cross-validate and refine the conceptualization of BM, this study takes point of departure in evidence from both prior literature and the analysis of semi-structured interview data. The following section presents the interview analysis as well as the conceptualization of BM it gave rise to.

--- Please insert Figure 1 around here ---

4.1 Participants and Procedure

A purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants who had expressed an interest in tourist activities expected to involve physical or emotional pain. Specifically, participants were recruited through Reddit, a social media site comprising many specialized sub-communities. Recruiting participants through Reddit allows easy access to specific populations that might otherwise be hard to identify (Shatz 2017). Indeed, this procedure allowed us to contact Reddit users who had engaged in public discussion of relevance to BM in specialized sub-communities or posts and invite them for an interview. Beyond having expressed an interest in activities of potential relevance to BM, potential participants had to be 18 years of age and have travelled for holiday at least once in the prior three years. The

self-nominated participants were from English-speaking, Western countries: USA, UK, and Australia. Institutional ethics approval was obtained for this procedure and participants provided formal consent before participating.

The interviews took around 30-45 minutes each and were conducted one-on-one through video call due to geographical distance. A semi-structured approach was used to allow us to obtain answers to a pre-determined set of questions while leaving room for follow-up questions and for participants to express themselves freely. For that purpose, an interview guide was used which centered around pleasure through pain in a tourism context. Because some people might be sensitive to a social desirability bias when discussing the idea of pleasure through pain, the interview guide included both first-person reflections (e.g., "Think of some instances where you have sought out activities that involved negative emotions when traveling") and a projective third-person technique (e.g., "How do you think [tourist activity] makes tourists feel?"). The discussed activities included various tourist attractions, such as haunted houses, death-related museums, nuclear disaster sites, catacombs, holocaust memorials as well as eating unconventional foods and engaging in physically exhausting activities on holiday (e.g., climbing a mountain).

We conducted the interviews in October and November 2019 up until a saturation point where each new interview added little new knowledge. As such, the final sample consisted of 15 people (8 women; median age of 29; 12 from the US). While some of these participants would not necessarily fall under the label of benign masochists but rather had engaged in such activities for other or incidental purposes (e.g., job-related visit), their answers were useful in drawing the boundaries of the concept. All interviews were transcribed in full to prepare them for analysis.

4.2 Analysis

To identify themes in the interviews, template analysis was applied. Template analysis represents a type of thematic analysis that centers around the development and application of a coding template and was chosen as it "balances a relatively high degree of structure in the process of analysing textual data with the flexibility to adapt it to the needs of a particular study" (Brooks et al. 2015, 203). We specifically undertook the analysis from the position of a realist ontology but an epistemology with more constructivist traits which allowed us to be guided by a priori themes based on existing literature while still leaving room for data-driven ones (Brooks et al. 2015; King and Brooks 2016).

To conduct the template analysis, the steps outlined by Brooks et al. (2015) were followed in an iterative fashion. First, the first author familiarized themselves with the data to be analyzed. Part of this process was achieved through conducting and transcribing the interviews. Second, a subset of the data (six interviews) was preliminarily coded by making use of a priori themes and by highlighting new and potentially interesting ones. A priori themes, for example, included the notion of "safety" based on prior literature (e.g., Rozin et al. 2013). Third, relationships between the preliminary themes were tentatively identified with some themes representing sub-themes of others. Fourth, a coding template was drafted based on the prior steps. Fifth, the preliminary template was applied to further interview data and refinements were made. Lastly, based on several iterations, the template was finalized and used to analyze all the interviews. That is, as the analysis progress advanced, the template became more focused on the research aims and added richer descriptions of the data. For example, the initial template reflected the fact that data had been coded more broadly to not miss out on important aspects (King 2012). The

final template – compared to the initial template – also added more themes to better capture central facets of the data. The coding and the development of the template was facilitated by the use of the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 12.

In alignment with the adopted research philosophical position, the analysis was undertaken from the assumption that the researcher will always be influenced by their position in the world yet that validity can be approximated by ensuring reflexivity and critical thinking (Brooks et al. 2015; King and Brooks 2016). As such, the template analysis was mainly performed by one researcher who received continuous feedback from a co-author with significant experience in qualitative analysis to encourage critical thinking.

4.3 Results

Four top-level themes were derived relating to the nature of BM. These top-level themes had up to three layers of sub-themes in the template analysis, but to summarize and condense the analysis, only the most relevant themes and sub-themes to the BM conceptualization and scale development are presented here (See Table 2). The column to the left in Table 2 presents the four top-level themes under the heading of BM, the second column presents middle-level themes corresponding to the underlying concepts, the third column presents more specific manifestations of the different phenomena as evoked by the interview participants (i.e., sub-themes), and the fourth column provides exemplary quotes.

--- Please insert Table 2 around here ---

In summary, participants discussed a variety of activities involving negative emotions and physical pain, such as going on exhausting and challenging hikes on holiday, trying "weird" new foods in other countries, visiting haunted houses, visiting crime- and death related museums, and visiting nuclear disaster sites. The analysis of their descriptions thereof gave rise to the themes depicted in Table 2 (see "template analysis" in the online supplementary material for additional elaboration).

Explanations for Engaging in Painful Activities. The first top-level theme *explanations for engaging in painful activities* encompasses participants' own descriptions of why tourists seek out painful activities. Here, participants in particular evoked the notion of pleasure as well as the notions of wanting to overcome or conquer different kinds of pain; to challenge themselves; to test or push themselves to their limits; and to signal something about their abilities to others. The latter notions were linked to the idea of pleasure as well. These themes align well with prior literature that has identified similar motivations for engaging in painful activities (Allman et al. 2009; Clasen, Kjeldgaard-Christiansen, and Johnson, 2020; Bloom 2010; Klein 2014) and, in particular, align with ideas from the play literature of (painful) play being felt as pleasant at a proximate level and of play having deeper-rooted explanations such as examining one's boundaries and of establishing social hierarchy (Gray 2019; Lents 2016; Steen and Owens 2001; Tan 2008).

Requirements for Enjoyment. The second top-level theme *requirements for enjoyment* covers participants' accounts of the conditions that are necessary for tourists to enjoy a painful activity. Specifically, two important requirements for enjoying painful activities were mentioned that also align with prior literature (e.g., Augustin and Apter 2016; Cater 2006; Rozin et al. 2013): perceived safety and a balanced level of painful stimuli. Participants described that when they feel a lack of safety, the overall situation is unpleasant. They mentioned various ways in which safety perceptions can be established, including being

confident in one's own abilities to handle the situation, feeling in control, feeling detached from the situation, trusting the supplier of the experience, and through the presence of other people. In relation to balance, participants explained that the right amount of painful stimuli is needed to make the situation enjoyable. Indeed, when the individual feels too much pain at once, the situation is deemed undesirable and, conversely, when the individual is looking for a benign masochistic activity, a certain level of pain is expected and needed to make the experience stimulating.

Stability of Expression. The third top-level theme *stability of expression* captures descriptions of the degree to which seeking out and embracing painful activities is a stable tendency. In support of the idea that BM is a trait (Sagioglou and Greitemeier 2020), participants described people and themselves as having a relatively consistent interest or disinterest in painful stimuli. These two categories are best viewed as endpoints on a continuum, since participants varied in how much they seemed to embrace and seek out pain. People higher on the spectrum, for instance, described their interest in various painful activities as going a long way back in their lives and as a way of expressing themselves that they have been drawn to repeatedly.

Sensations. Lastly, the fourth top-level theme *sensations* covers descriptions of moments involving the embracing and seeking of pleasure through pain. Indeed, participants described various sensations before, during, and after engaging in painful activities, attesting to the breadth of different experiences that is sought out. Participants, for example, described enjoying activities involving disgust, sadness, fear, and physical pain. While it can be difficult for participants to explain the exact emotions involved, many accounts seem to provide evidence that a co-activation of oppositely valanced emotions is involved. Such a co-activation has been demonstrated empirically by prior research in relation to activities involving negative emotions (e.g., Andrade and Cohen 2007; Rozin et al. 2013).

4.4 Conceptualization of Benign Masochism

Based on the reviewed literature and the interview analysis, this article views BM as *a trait describing a person's tendency to embrace and seek pleasure through safely playing with a stimulating level of physical pain and/or negative emotions.* As such, we view BM as an individual's general predisposition to engage in pleasantly painful activities that may manifest itself in various types of behaviors (e.g., consumer behaviors, media consumption behaviors, and here: tourist behaviors). We also conceptualize BM as having roots in the notion of play, expanding on the explanation offered by Rozin et al. (2013). The different elements of this definition are explained further in the following.

First, in line with prior literature (e.g., Andrade and Cohen 2007; Hemenover and Schimmack 2007; Kerr, Siegle, and Orsini 2019; Menninghaus et al. 2017; Mura 2010; Rozin et al. 2013) and the analysis of interviews, the definition places the notions of perceived safety and a stimulating balance of painful sensations as central to taking pleasure in pain. That is, BM involves seeking out or embracing situations that are perceived to be safe and that involve enough pain to be engaging yet not enough to turn unpleasant. Similar notions exist in the literature on play where feeling safe has been described as a prerequisite for playful behaviors to take place (Steen and Owens 2001), in the literature on sexual masochism (Baumeister 1988; Dunkley et al. 2020), and in the literature on flow and edgework where control over the situation is an important aspect (Cater et al. 2021; da Silva deMatos, de Sá, and de Oliveira Duarte 2021; Lyng 1990).

In line with previous literature (Klein 2014; Rozin et al. 2013), BM may be expressed through different types of physical and psychological pain. These experiences may seem different on the surface but can be considered "different species of the same phenomenon"

(Klein 2014, 42). That is, "benign masochistic activities run the full gamut of possible negative affective states, including sadness, fear, disgust, anger, and pain" (Strohminger 2013, 96-97), and there is evidence "that people who enjoy one form of aversive activity are more likely to prefer other such activities" (Sagioglou and Greitemeyer 2020, 790). People may pursue activities that are physically painful (e.g., river rafting), sad (e.g., visiting a holocaust memorial), scary (e.g., visiting a haunted house), disgusting (e.g., eating 'strange' foods) or anger-inducing (e.g., visiting a slavery museum) due to the same underlying motivation to embrace and seek pleasure through pain. This observation also highlights why literature streams that separately have investigated specific forms of pain, such as physical pain in BDSM, sadness during sad movies, or fear during holidays, have pointed to similar mechanisms for enjoyment (Dunkley et al. 2020; Schramm and Wirth 2010; Mura 2010). As such, we argue for the utility of a holistic view where different pains are studied together, rather than making a sharp distinction between different physical and psychological pains. This choice also aligns with the interview findings, as respondents alluded to taking pleasure in a wide variety of painful stimuli under the right conditions.

In addition, the definition highlights that BM is not simply the ability to derive pleasure through pain but the deliberate embracing and seeking of such experiences. While being able to derive pleasure through pain is no doubt central to embracing and seeking such experiences, this ability is rather a subset of BM, as all normally developing adults are expected to have the ability to derive pleasure from pain to some degree. Instead, this paper argues that people high on BM are the ones who deliberately and proactively engage in such experiences of playing with pain.

Lastly, Rozin et al. (2013, 439) attributed pleasure through BM to a sense of "mind over body" or mastery. This paper expands on this idea by conceptualizing and operationalizing BM with a root in the evolutionary notion of play. This conceptualization is in line with prior

research that has suggested a link between BM and threat simulation (Clasen, Kjeldgaard-Christiansen, and Johnson 2020) and research that has made a link between play and engagement in various activities involving pain, such as watching sad or scary movies (Bloom, 2010; Grodal 2007; Tan 2008) and engaging in adventure tourism Gyimóthy and Mykletun 2004). Specifically, the evolutionary literature on play has argued that engaging in such activities is enjoyable because playing carried important benefits for our ancestors (Steen and Owens 2001; Tooby and Cosmides 2001). Indeed, from an evolutionary point of view, play serves several functions, such as providing a safe way to practice survival-relevant skills (Steen and Owens 2001; Tooby and Cosmides 2001), to train for the unexpected (Gray 2019), and as a way of establishing the social hierarchy (Lents 2016). As an example, children's play-chase can be explained as a subconscious way to practice predator-evasion or hunting (Steen and Owens 2001), and visiting a haunted house can be a way to safely rehearse for threatening scenarios (Andersen et al. 2020).

5.0 Study 1: Scale Development

Our literature review and the conducted interviews indicate that BM has potentially widespread implications for tourist behaviors and being able to measure the construct is therefore crucial. While a scale of hedonic reversals exists which has conceptual overlap with benign masochism (Rozin et al. 2013) and has been used to measure the concept (e.g., Sagioglou and Greitemeyer 2020), that scale has three key shortcomings that hamper its usefulness for measuring BM for tourism scholars. First, assuming that answers to specific activities may reflect a latent BM trait, the existing scale asks respondents about the extent to which they like a list of specific activities, such as eating "tacos with hot sauce" or reading "sad novels" (Rozin et al. 2013, 441). As a result, people high on BM may score low on the scale due to not liking the specific activity rather than actually being low on BM. Conversely, it is possible for respondents to score high on the scale who are not actually high on BM, but who merely enjoy the listed activities for other reasons. While such context specificity may bias the scale, it is also of questionable relevance in a tourism context. Second, by asking about the enjoyment of specific activities, the scale's usefulness in studies aimed at empirical effects testing is limited. For example, this type of scale renders attempts to measure BM as an antecedent of such activities tautological. Third, the specific activities in the scale do not necessarily represent situations where a person takes pleasure in pain. Strohminger (2013, 78), for example, points out that activities such as "pinching pimples" and "nose picking" only evokes disgust in potential onlookers. In addition, other scales that tap into the notion of enjoying negative sensations either have focused on limited types of negative sensations (e.g., sadness) (Oliver, 1993), are domain-specific and less relevant for tourism (e.g., media experiences) (e.g., Oliver and Bartsch 2010), or simply do not tap the full BM construct. To deal with these shortcomings, we develop a new BM scale in the following.

5.1 Item Generation and Evaluation

As the first step, we developed an initial item pool based on the qualitative findings from the interviews as well as the review of relevant literature, particularly from psychology (e.g., Rozin et al. 2013), consumer research (e.g., Andrade and Cohen 2007), and tourism research (e.g., Ivanova and Light 2018). Specifically, in an initial step, we gathered a broad set of items that reflect the nature of BM as a general tendency to embrace and seek out negative affect and physical pain. These items pertain to the basic emotions of fear, disgust, sadness, and anger (Ekman 1992; Plutchik 1984) as well as physical pain. To ensure their appropriateness and arrive at a more manageable number of items, the authors and an external reviewer judged the initial pool for face validity, content validity, ambiguity, and readability. This step yielded an item pool of 43 BM items that we included in the initial questionnaire (see "items for scale development" in the online supplementary material). This rather large number of initial items allowed us to test both a multi- and a uni-dimensional measurement model as both can be derived from our conceptualization of BM. While the dimensionality was yet to be assessed at this point in the procedure, we conceptualized BM as a reflective latent construct where the BM items serve as manifestations (or reflections) of the underlying BM trait. The items were scored on a 7-point ordinal scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," with individuals' scores being viewed as a continuum rather than making a dichotomous distinction between the absence versus presence of BM. The latter is in line with the interviews which indicated that participants tended to vary in their tendency to embrace and seek out painful stimuli.

5.2 Data Collection Procedure

We collected data in June 2020 through the crowdsourcing platform MTurk; this procedure has been reported to provide data of high quality (Goodman and Paolacci 2017; Kees et al. 2017). To exclude participants who likely would be unable to travel, only US participants who had travelled at least 70 miles within the last two years, had a household income of

minimum 30,000 USD, and were above the age of 18 years were recruited (Kock et al. 2020). Inspired by Robinson and co-authors (2019) who suggest stratifying samples based on MTurk worker experience, roughly 25% of the data collection welcomed individuals having completed less than 100 MTurk assignments. For the remaining data collection, we put in place the commonly recommended 95% approval ratio (Peer, Vosgerau, and Acquisti 2014) which automatically excludes workers having completed under 100 assignments. We also excluded the top 5% of workers who complete around 56% of all tasks on MTurk to deal with the potential problem of non-naivety. To limit a potential bias from respondents not paying attention, an instructional manipulation check was included ("Please pick "strongly disagree" as the answer to this question") and 55 respondents were removed for failing it. As an extra step to ensure the quality of the data, 21 respondents with unrealistically fast response times were excluded (i.e., response times corresponding to spending 2 seconds or less per item throughout the questionnaire) (Huang et al. 2012; Wood et al. 2017). Such steps led to a final sample of 364 valid responses (See Table 3).

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5.3 Dimensionality

Our conceptualization leaves room for operationalizing BM as either a multi- or uni-dimensional construct. Hence, in a first step, we set out to assess which measurement model best fit the collected data. It was established that it was appropriate to conduct a factor analysis on the data set as it met the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) criterion and Bartlett's test of sphericity (BTS) (KMO = 0.968; BTS = 12235.057; d.f. 903; $p < 0.001$). The skewness and kurtosis of all items were within the range of -2.0 to +2.0 with majority being between -

1.0 and +1.0. To test a multidimensional model, we first dropped 18 items because they had either very low or very high means (indicating floor and ceiling effects in the respective items) or because they were assessed by the authors as reflecting too specific aspects of BM (instead of more general aspects). The remaining 25 items were estimated in a five-factor model (see "five factor model" in the online supplementary material). While this five-factor model had an acceptable model fit ($\chi 2/df$= 3.924; GFI= 0.793; AGFI= 0.750; RMSEA= 0.090; PCLOSE= < 0.001; NFI= 0.833), the five factors are lacking in discriminant validity. First, using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (1981), discriminant validity could not be established between the factors as the square root of the AVE of each factor was not always higher than the correlations among the factors (Table 4). Second, discriminant validity was also not achieved by using the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) with a cut-off of 0.85. Third, many correlations between factors were very high (> 0.8) (Table 4), further indicating a lack of discriminant validity between the dimensions. This lack of discriminant validity between factors of the five-factor model documented the inappropriateness of a multidimensional scale. Against, this background, we estimated a unidimensional model. In the following, we explain the scale purification of that unidimensional scale.

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5.4 Scale Purification

The original item pool included a large number of items to examine potential multidimensionality, but since BM is better modelled as unidimensional and in order to achieve a parsimonious scale, this number needed to be reduced. 14 items of the remaining 25 were therefore selected based on judgmental and initial statistical criteria (e.g., content

validity, redundancy in terms of similar content, preference for simply worded items, means) before continuing the development of the unidimensional scale. Specifically, while the initial item battery captured various dimensions of BM, items representing the more generic pleasure, safety, and balance aspects of BM were chosen to create a generalizable scale. Indeed, these facets are considered core to BM, while phenomena such as signaling strength to others are more specific and potentially less generalizable facets of the nature of BM.

Following established scale development procedures (Kock, Josiassen, and Assaf 2019a; Wieland, Kock, and Josiassen 2018), the scale was then purified along four statistical and judgmental criteria. First, content and face validity were kept in mind throughout the entire process. That is, if an item was important for content or face validity, it would not be deleted. Second, factor loadings and item-to-total correlations were evaluated with a cut-off of 0.5. Third, we evaluated items for redundancy as indicated by judgmental criteria and high inter-item correlations (> 0.8). Fourth, we assessed whether deleting the item with the lowest item-to-total correlation improved model fit as measured by chi-square (CMIN), the goodness of fit index (GFI), and the adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) (Kock, Josiassen, and Assaf 2019a; Voss, Spangenberg, and Grohmann 2003). This iterative procedure was continued until the model fit stopped improving. These steps led to the deletion of 8 items, leaving six items in the final scale (see Table 5).

5.5 Assessing Reliability and Validity

Evaluating validity and reliability of new scales is important. The issue of content validity has been kept in mind throughout the whole process from initial item development to scale purification as indicated earlier. This focus is reflected in the final scale which covers the different types of 'pains' that were identified as particularly important based on prior research

and the interviews (i.e., fear, disgust, sadness, anger, and physical pain) as well as the notions of deriving pleasure through such 'pain' under the conditions of safety and balance.

Convergent validity refers to the idea that items "should converge or share a high proportion of variance in common" (Hair et al. 2014, 618), whereas reliability "is an assessment of the degree of consistency between multiple measurements of a variable" (123). We relied on commonly established thresholds for assessing validity and reliability (Hair et al. 2014). Convergent validity was established since the standardized factor loadings were above the threshold of 0.5 with the lowest being 0.61. Furthermore, the AVE was 0.51, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.86, and the composite reliability was 0.86, indicating convergent validity and satisfactory reliability of the scale. See Table 5 for such information about the final scale. To further assess the validity of the scale, Study 2 assesses its predictive validity, i.e., whether the scale empirically relates to theoretically related variables (Kock, Josiassen and Assaf 2019b).

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6.0 Study 2: Predictive Validity

The goal of Study 2 is to test theoretically grounded relationships to evaluate the theoretical and statistical soundness of the new scale because "[s]cales are only as good as their usefulness to identify and explain pressing phenomena" (Kock, Josiassen, and Assaf 2019b, 1227). Specifically, willingness to visit a haunted house, willingness to visit a nuclear disaster site, and willingness to go on a challenging adventure holiday will be tested as potential outcomes of BM. While previous literature has identified a variety of reasons for engaging in such activities (e.g., Allman et al. 2009; Light 2017), BM may constitute an additional driver due to the link between such activities and both pleasure and pain. These specific variables have been included as their potential relationship to BM is substantiated by prior tourism theory and the interviews, because they relate to various types of pain, thereby showing the potential breadth of outcomes that BM can predict, and because they may all be linked to the notion of play. Andersen et al. (2020), for instance, link visiting a haunted house to the notion of play, and Gyimóthy and Mykletun (2004) investigate play in adventure tourism.

First, although adventure tourism may take many forms (e.g., hiking, river rafting, mountaineering, base jumping), the phenomenon has often been linked to the experience of negative emotions and physical pain (Cater 2006; Gyimóthy and Mykletun 2004; Knobloch et al. 2017). Importantly, studies have noted that for the overall experience to be enjoyable, a "protective frame" needs to be established (e.g., Gyimóthy and Mykletun 2004; Mackenzie and Kerr 2012). Cater (2006) relatedly argues that adventure tourists do not seek risk but rather the feeling of fear from a relatively safe distance. The idea of deriving pleasure through a distancing mechanism parallels the idea of BM as involving enjoyment of safe pain. It therefore seems substantiated to propose BM as an antecedent of willingness to go on an adventure holiday.

Second, willingness to visit a haunted house and willingness to visit a nuclear disaster site have been chosen because dark tourism frequently has been linked to negative emotions, yet there is also evidence that dark tourism involves positive emotions (Light 2017; Nawijn and Biran 2019) and may even be "fun-centric" (Stone 2006, 152). Ashworth and Isaac (2015, 320), for instance, note that dark tourism can involve fear which "in controlled circumstances may be experienced as a pleasurable excitement," and Ivanova and Light (2018) note how the London Dungeon allows thrilling and scary experiences without being at risk. Such ideas resemble BM and its notion of perceived safety. The particular activities to be examined here have been linked to sensations such as fear, sadness, enjoyment, and fun by prior literature (Andersen et al. 2020; Ivanova and Light 2018; Jang, Sakamoto, and Funck 2021; Yankovska and Hannam 2014) and the template analysis conducted herein, indicating that BM may be an important driver of engagement in them.

6.1 Participants and Procedure

To test the proposed model, we followed a similar data collection approach as for Study 1. That is, in September 2020, we recruited participants through MTurk using the same participant requirements (e.g., a minimum household income of 30,000 USD) and instructional manipulation check and put in place the commonly recommended 95% approval ratio as well as excluded the top 5% of workers. 31 people were deleted for failing the instructional manipulation check and 2 were deleted due to unrealistically fast response times, resulting in a final sample of 302 responses. See Table 3 for sample characteristics.

6.2 Measures

We used the newly developed BM scale, making a slight alteration to the wording of the first item to ensure readability. We developed one-item measures inspired by Kock et al. (2020) to measure the three outcomes: willingness to visit a haunted house, willingness to visit a

nuclear disaster site, and willingness to go on a challenging adventure holiday. The outcomes are unidimensional and can be adequately represented with one item. The BM scale again had acceptable factor loadings with the lowest being 0.75, average variance extracted (0.61), and composite reliability (0.90). All items further lived up to key assumptions of multivariate normality (See Table 6).

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6.3 Results

We tested the proposed model through covariance-based structural equation modelling in AMOS 26. The data fit the model reasonably well ($\chi 2/df = 4.174$; CFI = 0.927; RMSEA = 0.103; SRMR = 0.0646), and the results provide evidence for the predictive validity of the scale. Indeed, BM is positively associated with willingness to visit a haunted house (0.43; $p < 0.001$), willingness to visit a nuclear disaster site (0.42; $p < 0.001$), and willingness to go on an adventure holiday (0.18; $p < 0.01$).

7.0 Conclusion

In this study, we investigate the seemingly counter-intuitive yet common phenomenon of tourists engaging in activities that involve negative emotions or physical pain. Tourism scholars have begun paying more attention to this phenomenon and have called for further research to enhance the current understanding (Hosany, Hunter-Jones, and McCabe 2020; Ivanova and Light 2018; Nawijn and Biran 2019). Against this background, we introduce BM to tourism as a trait that describes a tendency to embrace and seek pleasure through emotional or physical pain. In doing so, the paper also provides an updated conceptualization and measurement of the phenomenon and finds that BM has a positive effect on tourists' willingness to go on adventurous holidays, to visit haunted houses, and to visit nuclear disaster sites. As we discuss now, these findings indicate BM's relevance in tourism and advance the current state of the tourism literature on engagement in painful activities in several ways.

7.1 Theoretical Implications

First, the article joins a growing stream of literature (e.g., Knobloch, Robertson, and Aitken 2017; Mura 2010; Nawijn and Biran 2019) in arguing that negative emotions are not necessarily an unwanted and detrimental element of tourist experiences, thereby providing new evidence for this assertion. Rather, this article argues that negative emotions and even physical pain within safe contexts are a major appeal to certain groups of tourists. This perspective opens up tourism research to paying more serious attention to negative sensations as important and sometimes sought out parts of experiences rather than disregarding them as undesirable hindrances.

Second, by conceptualizing BM as a trait, we provide a way to study and explain differences in individuals' propensity to engage in painful activities. Future tourism research can then

benefit from including BM as an individual difference variable in their models to explain various behaviors. Indeed, because BM relates to enjoyment of different types of negative emotions and painful stimuli, the construct provides a way to potentially explain engagement in a very wide variety of tourism activities. For example, and as evidenced here, BM predicts willingness to visit a haunted house, which relates strongly to fear and disgust (Andersen et al. 2020; Ivanova and Light 2018), willingness to visit a nuclear disaster site, which relates strongly to feelings of sadness and fear (Jang, Sakamoto, and Funck 2021; Yankovska and Hannam 2014), and willingness to go on an adventurous holiday, which relates to physical pain (Gyimóthy and Mykletun 2004). Future research may consider alternative theoretical relationships. For example, BM may play a role in how tourists react to disasters, terrorism, or other negative events at certain destinations. While it is commonly assumed (and empirically demonstrated) that such events substantially lower tourists' visit intention, it may not be the case for tourists high on BM.

In addition to contributing to tourism research, this article also contributes to theory on engagement in painful activities more broadly. On one hand, it challenges paradigmatic assumptions across disciplines about the role of pain in the context of pleasure. On the other hand, our versatile BM scale responds to limitations of using the existing scale (Rozin et al. 2013) and is not limited to application in one domain (i.e., tourism). Indeed, while we identified tourism as a particularly pertinent context in which to examine BM, the developed scale is versatile enough to be of potential use in other disciplines such as marketing, service research, or psychology when engagement in seemingly painful experiences is of interest. Thus, we call for future research to examine the phenomenon of BM in various contexts. Our study provides the starting point for this endeavor.

In addition, the literature on engagement in pain-involving activities has tended to focus on either hedonic or eudaimonic motivations and well-being. BM can conversely encompass

both types of explanations through its root in the notion of play. That is, while BM involves the experience of hedonic pleasure of playing with negative emotions and pain, it also has more eudaimonic benefits of, for example, conquering one's feelings. BM then highlights that both hedonic and eudaimonic reasons for engagement in painful activities exist and are important to study within tourism.

7.2 Managerial Implications

Several suggestions emanate from this study on how managers could communicate and offer tourism experiences to address people's BM preferences. While various existing tourism offerings implicitly rely on people's BM tendencies, this assumption had not yet been tested. The present research closes this gap and provides managers with empirical evidence and a tool (i.e., the BM scale) to actively manage BM in their offerings. For example, if visitors to given attractions such as death, crime, and prison museums are high on BM, practitioners may take steps to ensure that negative stimuli are elicited at an appropriate balance through, for example, videoclips, sounds, and imagery that evoke negative emotions. Conversely, if visitors are rather low on BM – which could be the case if people mainly go for incidental reasons or to learn about history – steps may be taken to limit negative stimuli by, for example, keeping the tone of the exhibition less emotive. Indeed, exhibitions can be individualized by providing different types of audio guides depending on people's proclivity for BM or by selling different tickets: one including immersive theatrical elements that may elicit negative feelings and one without such elements. Similarly, such insights may be used when promoting the activities so that pain appeals (Liu, Mattila, and Bolton 2018) are used when promoting to people high on BM. Further, this research empirically demonstrates that some people are higher on BM than others, and the BM scale may serve as a segmentation tool to be used by practitioners.

The research further highlights the existence of different requirements in order for tourists to enjoy negative stimuli. Indeed, tourists must feel both safe and neither feel too much nor too little pain to enjoy pain through BM. These findings indicate the importance for tourism managers to understand and finetune the safety perceptions of tourists and to provide a balanced and stimulating level of negative stimuli when offering experiences to align with BM. Safety cues may, for instance, be added where activities are perceived as too risky otherwise. Such cues could include the presence of trustworthy and experienced tour guides for adventure tourism tours or adding occasional hints in a haunted house that visitors may leave whenever they wish. Conversely, otherwise mundane activities may be designed to elicit enjoyment through BM by, for example, using glass floors in tall buildings, designing immersive city tour apps that simulate that you are a historical person going through a hard time, or by using creepy music or disgusting smells in museums to accentuate the atmosphere of an exhibition. Importantly, as BM relates to various types of pain, it is possible to play on different types of negative stimuli throughout a tourist activity. For example, a nuclear disaster tour may be designed to evoke both sadness, fear, and anger.

7.3 Limitations

As with any piece of research, the present study has certain limitations that call for future investigations. First, this study builds on interview data from Western tourists and questionnaire data from Americans. As a result, future research is invited to investigate BM in other cultural contexts to determine if BM levels differ across countries and is expressed in the same behaviors. Initial research has, for example, suggested that counter-hedonic consumption is higher in countries with abundant resources (Yang and Zhang 2021), so such macroenvironmental factors represent an interesting avenue for future studies. Second, we measured BM at one point in time, but future research could investigate BM across time. Indeed, while voluntary consumption of painful activities can be traced far back historically

(Klein 2014), some authors seem to suggest that such consumption is increasing in magnitude in modern societies (Scott et al. 2017; Yang and Zhang 2021). Importantly, it is also unclear how the pandemic has impacted BM tendencies. Third, the measurement of willingness to go on a challenging adventure holiday represents a further limitation. Indeed, different types of adventurous tourist activities may be pursued for different reasons, and, while BM may explain engagement in 'softer' activities that are perceived as safe to engage in, the concept may be less adept at explaining very dangerous activities where safety perceptions cannot be established. We therefore encourage future research to investigate such finer distinctions further.

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Concept	Definition	Exemplary context(s)	Exemplary source
Aesthetic emotions	"[T]he emotions that can arise when a person perceives and evaluates a stimulus for its aesthetic appeal or virtues […] aesthetic pleasure results from a well-orchestrated sequence or mix of emotions and sensations, regardless of whether these are of positive, mixed, or negative valence"	Art, literature, products, nature (tourism)	Menninghaus et al. (2019); Schindler et al. (2017, 2, 11); Zhang and Hu (2020)
Arousal seeking	A person's tendency to "actively seek to increase their arousal by selecting novel, complex, or unpredictable situations"	Violent media consumption, drug preference, choice of arousing situations	Kern et al. (1986); Mehrabian and Russell (1973, 315); Xie and Lee (2008)
Attitudes toward emotions	"[T]he degree to which an individual likes or dislikes the subjective experience associated with [a] particular emotion"	Choice of sad, scary, and disgusting images.	Harmon-Jones et al. (2011, 1333); Markovitz et al. (2017)
Boredom	"[B]oredom creates a seeking state that prompts people to explore new experiences, even if those experiences are hedonically negative"	Self-inflicted electric shock, negative images, increased risk taking	Bench, Bera, and Cox (2021); Bench and Lench (2019, 242); Nederkoorn et al. (2016)
Edgework	Voluntary risk-taking to explore one's limits	Skydiving, wartime combat, hand gliding, BASE jumping, firefighting	Allman et al. (2009); Holm et al. (2017); Lyng (1990)
Emotion regulation	Individuals may up-regulate (negative) emotions due to hedonic or instrumental motives	Beneficial anger in negotiation situations, beneficial sadness in recruiting help, maintaining worry as a distraction for people with anxiety disorders	Tamir and Ford (2012); Tamir (2016); Riediger et al. (2009)
Escape	Engaging in painful activities can be a way to escape high-level self-awareness	Sexual masochism, adventure challenge race	Baumeister (1988); Scott, Cayla, and Cova (2017)
Eudaimonic happiness	"[E]udaimonic happiness involves negative or mixed emotions and may result from activities that at the time may not be particularly pleasant or raise negative emotions but facilitate delayed positive effects that occur when results are achieved, such as reaching a goal and gaining increased skills, which provide meaning and self-development"	Rafting, dark tourism, pilgrimage tourism, movie preferences	Knobloch, Robertson, and Aitken (2017); Nawijn and Biran (2019, 2388); Oliver and Raney (2011)
Extraordinary experience	A type of hedonic consumption experience which is "triggered by unusual events and is characterized by high levels of emotional intensity and experience"	River rafting, mountain biking, food tourism	Arnould and Price (1993, 25); Goolaup, Solér, and Nunkoo (2018); Knobloch, Robertson, and Aitken (2017)
Masochism	"[T]he seeking of unpleasure […] for the sake of sexual pleasure, with the qualification that either the seeking or the pleasure or both may often be unconscious rather than conscious."	Sexual masochism	Brenner (1959, 197) Freud (1924)
Meta-emotions	"[E]valuative thoughts and feelings about one's emotions." Negative emotions can be appreciated when they are associated with positive meta-emotions.	Horror movies, sad movies	Bartsch, Appel, and Storch (2010, 167); Oliver (1993);
Morbid curiosity	"[C]uriosity for information involving death, violence or harm"	Negative images, interest in pandemic films, dark tourism	Oosterwijk (2017, 1); Scrivner et al. (2021); Sharpley (2005)
Need for affect	"[T]he general motivation of people to approach or avoid situations and activities that are emotion inducing for themselves and others."	Emotion-inducing movies, attitude extremity, lower support for conservative policies, persuasion from affect-based messages	Appel, Gnambs, and Maio (2012); Maio and Esses (2001, 585)

Need for emotion	"[T]he tendency or propensity for individuals to seek out emotional situations, enjoy emotional stimuli, and exhibit a preference to use emotion in interacting with the world"	Equality violations in groups, music tempo in advertisement	Raman, Chattopadhyay, and Hoyer (1995, 537); Stouten (2008); Stewart and Koh (2017)
Negative affect valuation	"[T]he degree to which individuals tend to appraise or evaluate [negative affect] not solely as aversive states, but occasionally also as valuable experiences with respect to their (a) hedonic pleasure states, (b) functional adaptiveness or utility in attaining one's goals, (c) appropriateness or acceptability, and (d) meaningfulness"	Psychosocial functioning, physical health, depressive symptoms	Luong et al. (2016, 388); Luong, Wrzus, and Riediger (2018)
Novelty seeking	"[D]esire to seek out new and different experiences"	Destination choice, participation in risky activities, golf vacations	Hirschman (1980); Holm et al. (2017); Lee and Crompton (1992, 737-738); Petrick (2002)
Opponent-process theory	Exposure to a stimulus that is linked to a (positive/negative) emotion will lead to an opponent process. Over time, the primary emotion will be felt less and the opposite one will be felt more.	Drug addiction, skydiving, jogging, sauna bathing, noxious thermal stimulation	Leknes et al. (2008); Solomon (1980); Solomon and Corbit (1974)
Parapathic emotions	Negative emotions are experienced as pleasant when individuals are in a paratelic, i.e., playful, state	Skydiving, tragedies, reading tabloids, design eliciting negative emotions	Apter (2007); Fokkinga and Desmet (2014); Hick and Derksen (2017)
Play	Play (involving pain and negative emotions) is inherently motivating and served survival-relevant functions for our ancestors.	Fiction eliciting negative emotions, haunted houses, children's play-chase	Andersen et al. (2020); Bloom (2010); Steen and Owens (2001); Tan (2008)
Productivity orientation	"[A] continual striving to use time efficiently and productively" which motivates consumers to consume (sometimes aversive) experiences to add them to their "experiential CV"	Staying in an ice hotel, eating at an exotic restaurant, exploring a new city, having an unusual birthday celebration	Keinan, Bellezza, and Paharia (2019); Keinan and Kivetz (2011, 947)
Sensation-seeking	A trait that reflects "the need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experiences"	Alcohol consumption, gambling, high-risk sports, risky and adventurous (tourist) activities, response to natural threats, preference for making own travel arrangements	Pizam, Reichel, and Uriely (2001); van den Berg and ter Heijne (2005); Zuckerman (1979, 10)
Spiritual experience	Pain and mixed emotions can lead to spiritual experiences	Pilgrimages, dark tourism	Cova and Cova (2019); Zheng et al. (2019)
Sublime	A notion of greatness that involves "a feeling of mortal danger with a certainty of being safe"	Crime museums, volcanos, nature tourism, disaster tourism	Benediktsson, Lund, and Huijbens (2011, 81); Bell and Lyall (2002); Huey (2011); Skinner (2018)
Thrilling fear or disgust	Tourists may seek out fear and disgust for (thrilling) pleasure	'Scary food' tourism, 'fright tourism,' dark tourism, hitchhiking, adventure tourism	Cater (2006); Gyimóthy and Mykletun (2009); Bristow and Newman (2005); Ivanova and Light (2018); Mura (2010)
Transformation	Pleasure and pain co-exist and can lead to tourist transformation	Working holidays, hiking, backpacking,	Kirillova, Lehto, and Cai (2017); Soulard, McGehee, and Knollenberg (2021); Xu, Lo, and Wu (2021)
Benign masochism	**"[E]njoyment of negative bodily reactions and feelings in the context of feeling safe, or pleasure at "mind over body""**	**Bitter tastes, sad fiction, disgusting jokes, thrill rides, spicy food, massage pain, physical exhaustion, anger fiction**	**Rozin and Schiller (1980); Rozin et al. (2013, 439); Sagioglou and Greitemeyer (2020)**

Table 1: Overview of Different Concepts Relating to Engagement in Painful Activities

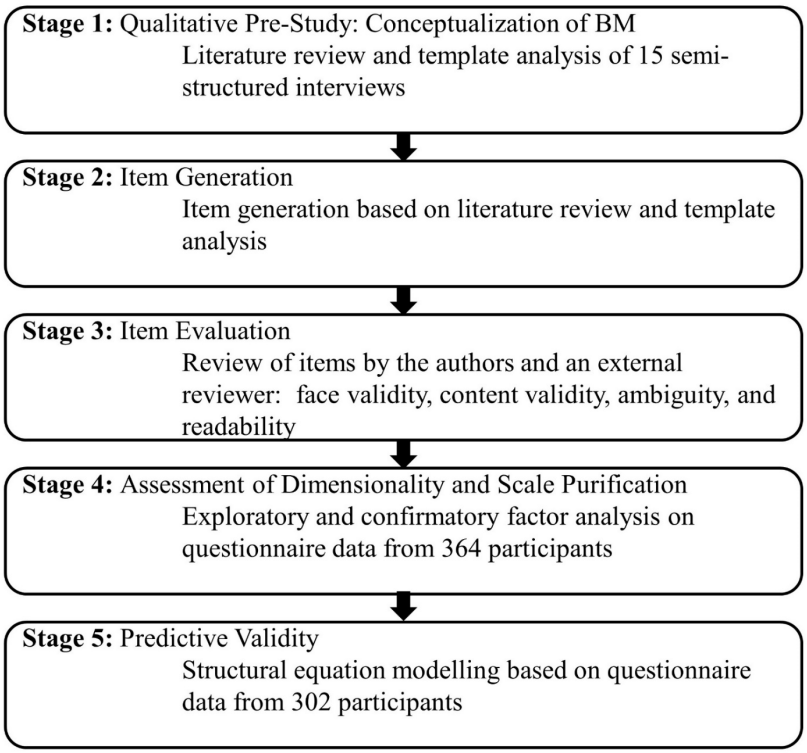

Figure 1: Scale Development Procedure

Top-level theme	Underlying concept	Specific manifestation	Exemplary statement
Explanations for engaging in painful activities	Play	-Pleasure -Conquering or overcoming pain -Challenging oneself -Testing or pushing oneself to one's limits -Signaling strength to others	"[T]he reason that it's the most memorable and the reason that I also enjoyed it the most was just because I was able to push myself." (P4) "[F]or enjoyment […] I go because I enjoy it." (P9)
Requirements for enjoyment	Perceived safety	-Confidence in own abilities -Control over situation -Detachment -Trust in supplier -The presence of other people -Unpleasant when lack of safety perception	"'Cause it's very hard to do any sort of event where there's pain involved if there's not trust and there's not control of the situation. When it gets past that, it becomes dangerous like psychologically and physically, and when it starts actually being dangerous and when it stops being fun." (P1) "I believe what makes it fun is knowing that your life is not in danger. Kind of like, for example, I wanna equate it to kind of like video games, right?" (P4)
	Balance	-Too much pain is unpleasant -Too little pain is not stimulating	"[W]hen I get like more scared, I feel like I don't enjoy it. It's not enjoyable. I can't wait to leave." (P3) "If I was less scared, I guess I would have thought it was kind of a waste of my time and money." (P12)
Stability of expression	Trait	-Consistent disinterest -Consistent interest	"[T]here is something to be said about the addiction to intense emotions. Like I have a couple of tattoos and people say, "you get one and then you have the tattoo bug, like you crave the pain." And that definitely is true in a way." (P6)
Sensations	Sensations before the activity	-Excitement -Nervousness	"Excited, nervous, lots of butterflies in my stomach." (P3) "I was a little nervous, but I was also excited." (P9)
	Sensations during the activity	-Physical pain -Adrenaline rush -Negative feelings -Positive feelings	"[E]ven though there was electric shock and paint-balls and all that good stuff that caused a lot of pain, I would say that it was done in such a manner to where it was a very fun experience." (P4) "It's just a little repulsive […] I was amused by it." (P12)
	Sensations after the activity	-Accomplishment or pride -Adrenalin kick	"I felt accomplished to know that I actually got to see these places that I read about in real life. So kind of like a little sense of joy." (P9) "Quite pumped up. You had a lot of adrenaline and sort of get hyped up, so afterwards it's kind of like, "that was crazy. I'm so glad I did it." Yeah, so quite elated." (P13)

Table 2: Themes Relating to the Nature of Benign Masochism

Sample	Study 1	Study 2
Sample size	364	302
Age (%)		
18-29	27.5	33.8
30-39	42.9	38.7
40-49	19.0	17.6
>49	10.7	9.9
Gender (%)		
Female	29.1	40.1
Male	70.9	59.9

Table 3: Sample Characteristics

	Sadness	Pain	Anger	Disgust	Fear
Sadness	0.753				
Pain	0.882***	0.779			
Anger	0.948***	0.927***	0.785		
Disgust	0.878***	0.828***	0.835***	0.757	
Fear	0.713***	0.734***	0.651***	0.843***	0.635

Table 4: Assessment of Discriminant Validity of the Initial Five-Factor Model

Construct/items	Mean	Std. deviation	Skewness (std. error)	Kurtosis (std. error)	Factor loading	Corrected item-to-total correlation	Scale parameters
1. I often find myself looking for my next 'fix' of getting scared	5.24	1.241	-0.899 (0.128)	1.070 (0.255)	0.61	0.56	
2. Feeling disgusted is thrilling, as long as I know that I am safe	5.12	1.543	-0.850 (0.128)	0.142 (0.255)	0.69	0.65	
3. I often enjoy crying on behalf of someone else	4.93	1.582	-0.934 (0.128)	0.139 (0.255)	0.68	0.62	
4. A degree of physical pain often adds to the fun of an experience	5.20	1.557	-0.993 (0.128)	0.525 (0.255)	0.78	0.71	
5. Some activities are exciting because they hurt a bit	5.10	1.521	-1.051 (0.128)	0.698 (0.255)	0.77	0.71	
6. Feeling angry is often thrilling	4.95	1.574	-0.826 (0.128)	0.107 (0.255)	0.74	0.67	
Cronbach's alpha							0.86
Composite reliability (CR)							0.86
Average variance extracted (AVE)							0.51

Table 5: Parameters of the Benign Masochism Scale

Construct/Items	Factor loadings	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness (Std. error)	Kurtosis (Std. error)
Benign masochism					
1. I often look for opportunities to get scared	.78	5.15	1.502	-1.210 (.140)	.914 (.280)
2. Feeling disgusted is thrilling, as long as I know that I am safe	.77	5.23	1.502	-.946 (.140)	.413 (.280)
3. I often enjoy crying on behalf of someone else	.79	5.22	1.543	-.894 (.140)	.222 (.280)
4. A degree of physical pain often adds to the fun of an experience	.78	5.12	1.453	-.994 (.140)	.608 (.280)
5. Some activities are exciting because they hurt a bit	.75	5.13	1.500	-.954 (.140)	.520 (.280)
6. Feeling angry is often thrilling	.80	5.13	1.608	-1.051 (.140)	.417 (.280)
Willingness to visit a haunted house					
1. If I get the opportunity, I will visit a haunted house		4.94	1.675	-.949 (.140)	.162 (.280)
Willingness to visit a nuclear disaster site					
1. If I get the opportunity, I will visit a nuclear disaster site		4.27	1.893	-.445 (.140)	-.987 (.280)
Willingness to go on an adventurous holiday					
1. I would like to go on a challenging adventure holiday		5.56	1.263	-1.215 (.140)	2.204 (.280)

Table 6: Measurements Used in Study 2.