

Engaging tourists with museums in the destination Lisbon

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze the relationships among the concepts of serious leisure and museum prestige on engagement with museums, pleasant emotions, memory, and word-of-mouth among Lisbon tourists. Findings reveal that reflective motivations are one important driver of engagement. Be engaged with museums lead to create positive emotions and memories, which, in turn, contribute to the willingness to communicate and recommend the Lisbon museums to others.

Keywords: engagement, serious leisure, prestige, museum, tourists

Introduction

The contribution of museums' cultural property to the gross domestic product has become very important to several societies and marketing strategies and is of huge importance to several countries in order to attract potential customers to museums. Therefore, many museums worldwide have started to create different tangible benefits as well as different communication strategies to create new bonds (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011) in order to achieve a product differentiation that leads to sustainable customer loyalty and satisfaction. In this vein, the concept of consumer engagement has brought huge attention and must be understood as a state of involvement and commitment to a specific market offer (Abdul-Ghani, Hyde, & Marshall, 2011).

Several studies have highlighted that higher levels of engagement brought superior rewards for cultural consumers (e.g., Edmonds et al., 2006). So, in order to achieve a more enjoyable, enriching and informative experience, visitors can enhance their knowledge of the museum by gathering information from various sources like family and friends, visitor information, mass media and websites (Falk & Dierking, 1992; Falk & Storksdieck, 2005; Sheng & Chen, 2012). Following this line of thoughts, the aim of the current study is to analyze the relationships among the concepts of serious leisure and museum prestige on engagement with museums, pleasant emotions, memory, and word-of-mouth among Lisbon tourists. All constructs will be defined below.

Motivation to engagement

Cultural motivations are widely employed to engage tourists with historical sites, museums or art galleries (e.g., Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; McKercher, 2002). The current study analyzes the effect of serious leisure in its two intrinsic components: reflective and recreational motivations. Extrinsic motivation is also analyzed through museum prestige. Serious leisure has been studied to mean "the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for a participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge" (Stebbins, 1992, p. 3). This concept has been used to examine a variety of leisure activities. However, it has rarely been considered in tourism context (Black, 2005; Prentice, 2001; Brodie et al., 2011; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Falk & Storksdieck, 2005; Sheng & Chen, 2012). Gould et al. (2008) develop the Serious Leisure Inventory and Measure (SLIM) as an assessment tool employing 18 sub-dimensions and 54 operational points (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013). The multiple motivation benefits of serious leisure can help to predict engagement (Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013; Taheri et al., 2014). Thus, we propose (see figure 1):

H1: Serious leisure is positively related to tourists' engagement with museums.

H1a: Reflective motivation is positively related to tourists' engagement with museums

H1b: Recreational motivation is positively related to tourists' engagement with museums

Prestige is an extrinsic motivation associated with a specific attribute of a brand or good/service, or even the overall quality and performance of the product (e.g., Erdem et al., 2006). Prestige can also be regarded as a signal of social status, wealth, or power and strongly linked to an individual's self-concept and social image (Alden et al., 1999).

According to Hagtvedt and Patrick (2008), art has a favorable influence on brand image and product evaluation through the luxury perception of product design, or packaging, or advertising. The effect of art in enhancing perceived prestige has been investigated on both inexpensive and low involvement products (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008) and luxury high

involvement products (Xie et al., 2015). Indeed, art is associated with prestige and can fulfill consumers' emotional and self-reward needs for perceived hedonic value (Xie et al., 2015). Museums are spaces where art is displayed and preserved. Museums may be regarded with admiration, respect, and prestige. Prestigious museums, well-known in the country where they belong and abroad are more willing to exert positive emotions, pleasure, and excitement in tourists and visitors. Thus:

H2: Museum prestige is positively related to tourists' engagement with museums.

Outcomes of engagement

Engagement indicates a significant potential relationship between motivations and visitors' level of commitment and interaction with museum offerings. Engaged tourists will be more willing to say positive things about a museum and recommend it to others (Yu & Littrell, 2003; Hollebeek, 2010). Yet, emotions could result from an engaged experience.

Emotions are mental states that emerge from the experience lived in events or from a consumer's own thoughts (e.g., Bagozzi et al., 1999; Jang & Namkung, 2009). When tourists visit museums, the experience and the mechanisms employed by the museums' managers to attract visitors could generate higher levels of engagement and this, in turn, leads to positive emotions (like pleasant arousal which comprises pleasure and arousal) and favorable memories. Memories, meaning remembering a particular event (Gilmore and Pine, 2002) is likely to act as a way to communicate and recommend the museum experience to others (Dolcos & Cabeza, 2002). Therefore, pleasant arousal and memories are expected to mediate between engagement and word-of-mouth., where pleasant arousal generate positive memories (Loureiro, 2014). Therefore:

H3: Tourists' engagement with museums is positively related to pleasant arousal.

H4: Tourists' engagement with museums is positively related to memory.

H5: Pleasant arousal is related to memory.

H6: Pleasant arousal is positively related to word-of-mouth communication.

H7: memory is positively related to word-of-mouth communication

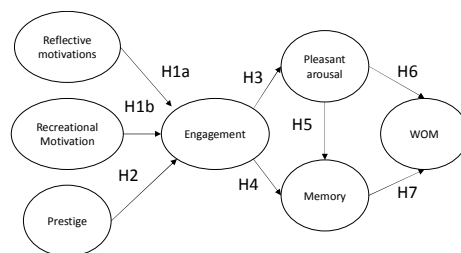


Figure 1. Proposed model

Methodology

Data collection

A structured questionnaire were developed including multiple-item scales constructs of serious leisure (adapted from Gould et al., 2008; Taheri et al., 2014); prestige (adapted from Xie et al., 2015); pleasant arousal and memory (adapted from Loureiro, 2014); word-of-mouth (adapted from Loureiro and Kastenholtz, 2011) and engagement (Taheri et al., 2014), as well as socio-demographic variables. Due to the potential violation of face validity, the authors followed the panel rating approach for each questionnaire item as either ‘very representative’, ‘moderately representative’, or ‘not at all representative’ of the respective constructs. The results showed the majority of items were rated as ‘very representative’ (87%) and the rest being rated as ‘moderately representative’. Therefore, all items were retained in the questionnaire.

Participants were asked to indicate their levels of agreement with each item on a seven-point Likert scale (1-completely disagree, 5-completely agree). Through convenience sampling, data was collected in several museums in Lisbon: Museum of coaches, Electricity Museum, Costume Museum, Navy Museum, Museum of Ancient Art, Gulbenkian Museum and Orient Museum. The authors chose these venues for two reasons: (i) all are popular visitor attractions in Lisbon (and even considered emblematic in Portugal); (ii) all have been considerable improvements, some have new facilities in recent times.

Questionnaires were distributed over 3 months where museum visitors (in local) were approached. A total of 500 people were surveyed, but 37 questionnaires were excluded from the sample because of incomplete responses. Thus, a sample of 461 respondents remained for the final analysis, which constitutes a 92% usable response rate. The original questionnaire was written in English (because most items were originally in English), then translated to Portuguese, Spanish and French and translated back to English (with the help of native linguists). Back translation was used to ensure that the items in Portuguese and English communicated the same information.

Sample profile

Table 1 presents the profiles of the respondents. In Table 1, Portuguese means visitors from Lisbon and other places from Portugal. Foreigners mean visitors from different countries, mainly from Spain, French, Germany, and UK. Most participants are retired and visiting museums with friends or with an organized tour.

Table 1. Sample profile

Gender: Female: 49.4%	Nationality: Portuguese: 67%
Male: 50.6%	Foreigners: 33%
Age: 16-18 years: 17.5%	36-45years: 8.9%
18-25 years: 30.5%	46-55 years: 7.6%
26- 35years: 19.3%	55- 65 years: 11.0%
	Over 65 years: 5.0%

Results

Measurement results

A PLS model should be analyzed and interpreted in two stages. First, the measurement model or the adequacy of the measures is assessed by evaluating the reliability of the individual measures, the convergent validity and the discriminant validity of the constructs. Then, the structural model is evaluated. In order to evaluate the adequacy of the measures at the first-order construct level, item reliability is assessed by examining the loadings of the measures on their corresponding construct. Item loadings of scales measuring reflective constructs should be 0.7 or more, which indicates that over 50% of the variance in the observed variable is explained by the construct (Hair et al., 2014). In this study, the item loading of each item exceeds the value of 0.7 (see Table 2). All Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.7, and all composite reliability values in Table 2 are above 0.8. Therefore, all constructs are reliable. The measures demonstrate convergent validity as the average variance of manifest variables extracted by constructs (average variance extracted [AVE]) is above 0.5.

Regarding Engagement, we have the parameter estimates of indicator weights, the significance of weight (t-value) and multicollinearity of indicators. Weight measures the contribution of each formative indicator to the variance of the latent variable (Taheri et al., 2014). A significance level of at least 0.05 suggests that an indicator is relevant to the construction of the formative index (Engagement), and thus demonstrates a sufficient level of validity. They are formative because each dimension of Engagement is distinct in nature but together represent the general concept of Engagement. The degree of multicollinearity among the formative indicators should be assessed by variance inflation factor (VIF). The VIF indicates how much an indicator's variance is explained by the other indicators of the same construct. The commonly acceptable threshold for VIF is below 3.33 (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001). Table 2 shows VIF values are < 3.33 , and so the results did not seem to pose a multicollinearity problem. Considering discriminant validity, the square root of AVE should be greater than the correlation between the construct and other constructs in the model (Hair et al., 2014). Data shows that this criterion has been met.

Table 2. Measurement results.

Latent variables and items	LV Mean	Item loading range (Reflective measure)	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Prestige-Extrinsic motivation	3.7	(0.762-0.870)	0.847	0.895	0.681
Serious Leisure- Reflective motivation	2.8	(0.760-0.801)	0.748	0.840	0.568
Serious Leisure- Recreational motivation	3.4	(0.760-0.801)	0.830	0.886	0.661
Pleasant arousal	3.7	(0.800-0.876)	0.852	0.910	0.772
Memory	3.5	(0.800-0.876)	0.858	0.904	0.701
Word-of-mouth	3.7	(0.902-0.913)	0.891	0.932	0.820
Formative Construct: Engagement	Mea n	Weight	t-value	VIF	
Using (interactive) panels	2.4	0.217***	9.714	1,727	
Using guided tour	2.8	0.137**	3.815	1,161	
Using videos and audios	2.6	0.216***	10.101	1,740	
Using social interaction space	2.8	0.220***	9.531	1,573	
Using my own guide book and literature	2.6	0.196***	7.443	1,334	
Seeking help from staff	2.7	0.176***	6.660	1,384	
Playing with materials such as toys, jigsaw puzzle, and quizzes	2.2	0.181***	6.093	1,521	
Using the on-site online facilities	2.5	0.204***	8.332	1.470	

Note: **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001

Structural results

In this study, a non-parametric approach, known as Bootstrap (500 re-sampling), was used to estimate the precision of the PLS estimates and support the hypotheses (Hair et al., 2014). All path coefficients are found to be significant at the 0.001 and 0.01 levels, except hypothesis H2 (see Table 3). H1 is partially supported.

Table 3. Structural results.

Path	Standardized coefficient direct Effect	t-value	Standardized coefficient total effect	t-value	Test results
Reflective Engagement -> Recreational Engagement	0.427	3.526	0.427	3.526	H1a; supported
Prestige Engagement -> Engagement	0.042	0.303	-0.036	0.301	H1b: not supported
Pleasant arousal Engagement -> Engagement	-0.036	0.291	0.210	2.039	H2: not supported
Memory Engagement -> Engagement	0.210	1.903	0.210	2.039	H3: supported
Pleasant arousal Memory -> Pleasant arousal	0.217	2.681	0.315	3.441	H4: supported
Memory Pleasant arousal -> Pleasant arousal	0.467	4.850	0.467	4.977	H5: supported
Memory Pleasant arousal -> wom	0.467	4.850	0.482	5.222	H6: supported
Memory -> wom	0.159	2.135	0.692	9.580	H7: supported
R ² Engagement = 0.198	Q ² Engagement = 0.41		R ² Memory = 0.308		Q ² Memory = 0.24
R ² Pleasant arousal = 0.044	Q ² Pleasant arousal = 0.13		R ² Word-of-mouth = 0.617		Q ² Word-of-mouth = 0.51

As models yielding significant bootstrap statistics can still be invalid in a predictive sense, measures of predictive validity (such as R² and Q²) for focal endogenous constructs should be employed. All values of Q² (chi-squared of the Stone–Geisser criterion) are positive, so the relations in the model have predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2014). The model also demonstrated a good value of GoF.

Conclusions and implications

The authors found that Serious Leisure has a strong positive influence on Engagement when considering the dimension of reflective motivations. Museum prestige does not act as a motivational driver to engagement among visitors of Lisbon museums. The findings for a significantly positive link between the reflective motivations and not for recreational motivations is aligned with several previous researches (e.g., Black, 2005; Prentice, 2001; Brodie et al., 2011; Sheng & Chen, 2012) but not with the study of Taheri et al. (2014). Those who visit the Lisbon museum seem to be more motivated by the “self and identity project” rather than recreational motivation, that is, individuals are searching for self-expression, self-actualization, self-image and interact with others who are interested in the same things and not necessarily for fun and a refreshing experience. Yet, the study made by Taheri et al. (2014) pointed out the opposite, revealing that the main interest of museum visitors is the fun and recreation. Thus, the reason behind could be the context of the museums, its nature and even the destination where they are located. Depending on the destination and the nature of the museum, they can captivate different types of visitors.

Comparing the extrinsic motivation (perception of museum prestige) with intrinsic motivation, the latter shows to be more significant on engagement than the former. This seems that visitors are looking for the content and context of the Lisbon museums and are informed about it and properly select what they really wish to visit.

Emotions and memory emerge as mediators between engagement and word-of-mouth, Like in the study of Loureiro (2014), where emotions and memory creation are outcomes of rural experiences, here both act as a result of engagement with museums. Although other studies are needed to consolidate the findings, the current study stresses the role of emotions on creating memories and enhancing the willingness to recommend the museum to others.

Managerial implications

Characteristics of serious leisure enhanced engagement, commitment, and loyalty, suggesting that museums facilities should be prepared with equipment and devices that allow visitors do activities interacting with others, get more knowledge about the expositions and display such information and expertise. This interaction amongst consumers could yield benefits to museum managers. Levels of engagement with a place may contribute to visitors’ cognitive enjoyment, create favorable memories and word-of-mouth. Consequently, museum managers can enhance engagement to foster increasing levels of visitor loyalty.

Limitations and future research

Although a review of the literature highlighted potential cues that tourists use in evaluating the engagement with, and consequently their loyalty towards the place, only Serious Leisure emerged with significant results for tourists visiting Lisbon museums. This represents a limitation of this study but also opens avenues for future research. Secondly, the use of PLS has some limitations. Further study may require a combination of several methodological approaches, for instance: in-depth interviews with visitors and managers. Finally, it would be interesting to do a comparison study between two or more different East Asian and Occidental countries by applying the conceptual framework developed in this study: cross-cultural studies. Those studies may have implications for managing attractions across cultures and extend the generalizability of the model.

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