

Effects of Visitors Experience on Satisfaction and Intentions to Recommend in Malaysian Museum

*Mazlina Mahdzar, Siti Athirah Najwa Kamarul Bahrin,
Intan Rahayu Abd Razak and Arni Abd Ghani*

Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
42300 Bandar Puncak Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract: Museums are an integral tourist destination across the globe because it is not only playing as a strategic role in education but indirectly, it exposed visitors to real-life experiences. Museums are also now shifted from the collection centered towards visitors centered. Hence, understand the visitors' experience is crucial as it will help museum to enhance their performance in the future and increase the visitors' level of satisfaction ultimately lead to behavioral intention. Experience economy is a conceptual model proposed by Pine and Gilmore (1998) to capture tourism experience gained by the stakeholder that enable the organization or practitioner to identify their strength and weaknesses. From the result, the organizations strive in adding value or craft new strategies in order to gain high revenue. This paper seeks to provide a deeper understanding about the four realms of experience economy in the context of museum visitors' experience towards their satisfaction and intention to recommend the destination to other prospect visitors.

Key words: Museum • Experience Economy • Satisfaction • Behavioral Intention • Visitor

INTRODUCTION

Museum listed as one of the major attraction in travel and tourism industry [1] where it now shifted from collection centred towards visitors centred and represented as an alternative economic strategy [2]. A good example of how museums are reorienting their offer toward the visitors' needs and desires is the Dallas Museum of Art whereby the museum induced a continuing music element, workshop and art history lecturers with the aim of delivering experiences and bringing the exhibition to life [3].

[4] pointed out that visitors experience is more relevant in the current society, in which they have more choices than they used to. According to [5], in the emerging of various competent economy, instead seeking for goods and services deliver, customers are looking for experiences that affect their senses and have an impact towards their personal feeling till one willing to spent in order to experience the goods and services itself [6, 7]. [8] identify there are four types of experiences which are entertainment, educational, esthetic, escapist known as 4E's that are differentiated based on two categories: (1)

the degree of customer involvement (passive vs. active participation) and (2) the desire of customer connects or engages with the event and performance (absorption vs. immersion).

Moreover, it is important for customer to engage or connect with these experiences in order to reach the optimum level of satisfaction [8]. Satisfactions refer to an emotional state of mind response to interaction and it based on purely experiential which it can be positive or negative [9]. Higher level of satisfaction is perceived to result in behavioural intention [9, 10] such as loyalty, revisiting or intention to recommend the site to others. In this circumstance, the study investigates to measure the experiences of visitors using the theory of experience economy [8] about their visit to the National Museum Malaysia. The experience is concentrated on the satisfaction of the museum visitors and their intention to recommend.

One of the greatest challenges faced by museums is to attract new visitors [11, 12, 13]. This supported by [14], museum always facing various challenges in competing with other industry such as (1) enterprise competitors (e.g. visiting a major downtown art museum rather than

visiting a smaller neighbourhood art museum or going to a theme park); (2) desire competitors (e.g. traveling, reading and watching TV); (3) generic competitors (e.g. learning something by attending a university course instead of participating in a museum lecture); and (4) Form competitors (e.g. viewing a museum's art collection on the Internet; viewing it in a commercial gallery).

In Malaysia, museum industries already started since the early of 19th century. The first museum started operates in 1883 by the British in Taiping, Perak [15]. Since then, more than 100 of museum have been set up in this country [16] and they were run by various government agencies from the federal to state level as there are different types of museum depending on how they are owned, managed and funded [17]. Despite the rapid promotions for museum visits as one of the interesting tourist sites by the local tour operators and the immerse attention given by the national and state tourism boards in promoting local museums, there are still fluctuating number of visitors to the museums listed under the Department of Museum Malaysia.

According to [18], there are limited empirical work on the visitor museum experiences as a tourist attraction in Malaysia especially using the theory of experience economy plus museum literature records an increasing need to focus on understanding of museum visitor's experience. The present study expands understanding of the experience economy by examining how visitors' satisfactions operate together with multiple dimensions of their experience at Malaysian National Museum to develop their recommendation intention. By understanding the visitor experience dimensions from their perspectives attained from visiting a museum, justification can be made to museum development as a tourist attraction site. In order for the museum to attract more visitors and to ensure visitor visits are valuable, meaningful and memorable, the understandings of the experience dimensions that lead to visitor satisfaction are crucial for the museum management and managers. Thus, the findings may have significant managerial and practical implications to the management of National Museum in terms of attracting more visitors and enhancing visitors' experience.

Literature Review: Experience economy model has stood out among various application of the experiential view of consumer behavior [8] [19]. Experience economy is a conceptual model used in order for companies to understand and manage their customer experience. From the perspective of economic, understanding customer

experience is a key to promote future economic revenue since peoples are seeking something more valuable and memorable than good and services offered [5, 8]. This has been supported by [20] posit that experience economy approach can provide a new impetus to development of association and make it more competitive.

Experience economy model sort experiences into four dimensions which are entertainment, educational, esthetic and escapism (4E's). The aforementioned dimensions of Pine and Gilmore's model noted that experience constitutes a good starting point for understanding better customers' and visitors' perception of a product or attraction. Few empirical examinations of [8] framework were carried out by researchers. One of it was conducted by [21]. Their study has developed and tested a measurement scale for the four dimensions. Their study found evidence that an experience can also be operationalized according to Pine and Gilmore's dimensions. They also observed that the esthetic dimension appeared to be a dominant determinant of experiential outcomes. In contrast, the escapism and entertainment dimension were not statistically significant contributors to guest satisfaction. In this context [22] stated that memory significantly impacted by all four dimension of experience economy, while loyal visitors are mainly affected by esthetic and entertainment dimension in the festival industry. [23] also observed that esthetics is an equally important component of the cruise experience followed by entertainment dimension in the cruise ship industry. While [24] identified that esthetics as the chief experiential realm for boutique and lifestyle hotels. [20] observed the significant relationships between the four dimensions and behavioural intentions in wine tourism rural tourism industry. Few studies also observed significant relationships between the four dimensions and satisfaction.

It has been advised by [5] that customer experiences that consist of the 4Es result in strong memories and positive behaviour. There above-mentioned scholars have studied this phenomena and they support the positive impact of 4Es on customer satisfaction and future behaviour. This supports the following hypotheses:

- H₁: 4Es has significant effect on intention to recommend.
- H₂: 4Es has a significant effect on satisfaction.
- H₃: There is a relationship between Satisfaction and Intention to Recommend.
- H₄: Museum visitors' satisfaction mediates the relationship between the 4Es and intention to recommend.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample Design and Data Collection: The target population for this study involved Malaysia National Museum visitors. The survey was conducted through face to face interaction with the visitors at the museum. A self-administered survey was used to collect using non-probability convenience sampling technique whereby respondents were approached and informed about the purpose of the survey in advance before they were given the questionnaire. The total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, out of which, 365 were completed and used for analysis. Based on the analysis, majority of the respondents in this study were female with 61.6% and 38.4% were male respondents. In addition, most of the respondents aged 20 years old or younger which consist of 58.6% followed by respondents aged from 21 – 30 years old 25.8%. The least group of respondents participated in this study was from group of above 51 years old with 2.2%.

Besides, majority of respondents participated in this study were Malaysian with 89.6% and only 10.4% were non-Malaysian. Regard to the working status, the table indicated majority of the respondents were non-employed that was 71% while only 29% were employed. Apart from that, most of the respondents had experienced visiting National Museum at least 1-2 times with the percentage of 41.9% followed by the respondents who have no previous visit experienced with 35.3%. In term of sources of information about the museum, most of respondents find out about the museum via internet with 37.3% followed by referral from friends and family which is 27.9% and the least is via travel agent with only 8.5%. Based on the analysis, 69.6% of the respondents were accompanied by their friends during the visits while only 3.3% travel alone. The questionnaire based on 42 items in total. Dimension of experiences were measured using 6 items each adapting from [21], [23], [24] and [22]. Satisfaction were operationalized using 5 items adapted from [25] whereas visitor behaviour intention was operationalized using 6 items proposed by [25] and [23].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis were test based on structural equation modeling using Partial Least Square (PLS) method. In order to conduct the analysis, WarpPLS 5.0 [26] software was used. There are two steps in conducting Structural Equation Modeling which are: 1) measurement model; 2) structural model (Awang, 2012).

Measurement Model: In order to evaluate measurement models, convergent validity and discriminant validity together with reliability assessments were conducted. First, the measurement model was tested for convergent validity. Convergent validity is achieved when all items in a measurement model are statistically significant [27]. This was assessed through factor loadings, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) [28]. Based on the result, it shows that all items loadings exceeded the recommended value of 0.5 (above 0.662) and CR values exceeded the recommended value of 0.7 which was between 0.884 and 0.913, while AVE reflecting the overall amount of variance in the indicator accounted for the latent construct, exceed the recommended value of 0.5 [28]

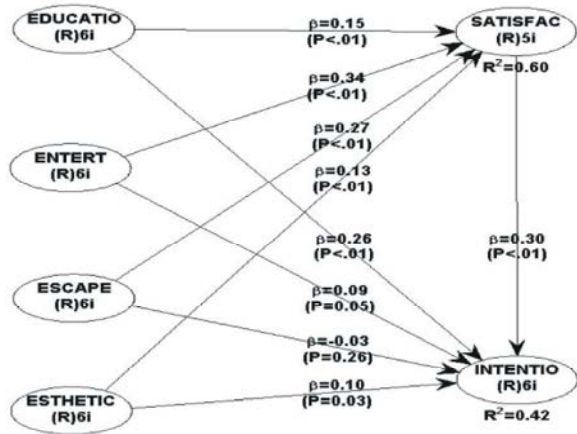
The discriminant validity [29] was achieved indicating adequate discriminant validity [29]. Next, further testing for the structural model and hypothesis.

Structural Model: WarpPLS 5.0 was used to test the structural model and hypothesis [26]. Based on the analysis Goodness of fit (GoF) index [30, 26], GoF = 0.556 is calculated which indicates a good model fit. Figure 1 shows the results of the analysis.

The corrected R^2 values in figure 1 refer to the explanatory power of the predictor variable (s) on each construct. Based on the figure 60% ($R^2 = 0.60$) of visitors' satisfaction can be predicted by 4Es (educational, entertainment, escapism, esthetic). Moreover, it was also observed that 4Es of visitors experienced and satisfaction predict 42% ($R^2=0.42$) of visitors' intention to recommend. According to [31], endogenous latent variables classified into three which are: substantial ($R^2=0.67$); average ($R^2=0.33$); weak ($R^2=0.19$). Result shows that visitors satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.60$) and intention to recommend ($R^2=0.42$) can be described as average.

Mediation Analysis: Mediation effectiveness analysis performed. Satisfaction was used as mediator between 4Es of museum visitors' experiences and intention to recommend. The significant of mediating effect is tested using [32, 33] criteria.

Based on the result, "satisfaction" was found to fully mediate the relationship between all the four museum visitors' experiences namely educational, entertainment, escapism and esthetic experience towards visitors' intention to recommend. This indicates that satisfaction is very important variables in order to capture or to emphasize the number of visitors to the National Museum Malaysia as they will recommend the site to others.



Note: P<0.01, P<0.05

Fig. 1: The Result of Structural Equation Model

CONCLUSION

Museums are shaping to be a rapidly growing and liked facet of Malaysian tourism industry, where visitor visit to escape from their daily routine life and to enjoy a memorable experience. Recent scholars have proposed various approaches towards the assessment of tourist experiences and their level of satisfaction that ultimately lead to the post consumption. One of these approaches is the four-faceted conceptualization of experience proposed by [8]. However, empirical testing of the 4Es (i.e. educational, esthetic, entertainment and escapist experiences) in museum has yet to be undertaken. Moreover, despite of the importance of museum indicated by [34], they are somewhat ignored in the hospitality and tourism literature. Therefore, this study aimed to assess visitor museum experiences, their level of satisfaction and intention to recommend. Structural equation modelling was used to test the hypotheses and the findings revealed there are relationships between dimensions of experience economy, satisfaction and intention to recommend the museum site to others in the context of National Museum Malaysia. Besides, this study also highlighted that escapism experience is the only dimension of experience economy is not significant towards intention to recommend.

The result of the structural model showed that all the four facets of museum visitors' experience (4Es) had positive and significant impact on satisfaction and intention to recommend except for escapism experience towards intention. 60% of visitors' satisfaction can be predicted by 4Es. Moreover, it was also observed that satisfaction developed by 4Es may also influence 42% of

museum visitors' intention to recommend the site to others. Hence, all the hypotheses were accepted except for escapism experience towards intention to recommend. These results are consistent with the study conducted [23] and [21] who observed a significant influence of dimensions of customer experience over their satisfaction and behavior. Results from this study indicate that customer experiences can be classified in four dimensions including entertainment, education, esthetic and escapism [8]. These four dimensions can develop satisfaction of visitors' which can ultimately influence their future behaviors. The first dimension is educational and its importance has been highlighted by [35] as museum emphasizing and providing educational experience towards visitors'. Apart from that, museum management must focus on the entertainment aspect as it is an integral motivation of visitors that will promote and enhance a feeling of well-being, enjoyment and satisfaction. Experience of the visitors can be much more memorable if the service delivery and performance integrates the sense of escapism. National Museum Malaysia should create more creative idea in designing program that can engage and connect with the individuals who visits to the museums.

Overall, results indicate the four dimensions of museum visitors' experience have a direct effect on intention to recommend. In addition, satisfaction was found fully mediate the relationship between museum visitors' experiences and intention to recommend. As a result, museum management must develop distinctive brand positions to differentiate their institutions from competitors. At the same time, museum marketer or public relation department are under greater pressure to understand visitors experiences and the resulting influence on future behavioral evaluations. This study sheds some light into the dimensions of museum visitors' experiences and their relationship with satisfaction and intention to recommend. More specifically, this research provides museum management a measurement tool to evaluate and understand museum visitors' experiences during their visit. Such an understanding of museum visitors' experiences along the four dimensions will enable marketer or management to design appropriate marketing and promotional strategies which more tailored environment.

To sum up, hopefully the finding of this study may provide insightful information that can improve the body of knowledge and also contribute to academicians and practitioner in this industry especially in Malaysia.

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