Research on the Aesthetic Experiences of Tourists Visiting Turkey

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Extensive Summary

Introduction

Tourism action is commonly referred to as being a process established on experiences. The Maslow’s hierarchy of needs can be seen as being closely related to the hierarchy of experience within the experiential marketing approach as they both came into being in the postmodernism era. Together with the increase in quality of life standards, experiential values have also come into prominence more as part of touristic consumption. Customers enjoy their consumption experiences using physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual actions. Tourism products are supposed to cover all aspects of consumer needs to achieve postmodern consumption aims. According to Hirshman and Holbrook (1982) hedonic aspects of consumption relate to fantasies feelings and fun. As a result of this experiential consumption customers expect to feel that tourism establishments should create various forms of touristic theatre within which they, as tourist, can act out their desires of fantasy and fun. It follows that tourism establishments should essentially serve their customers with more experiential themes than their more conservative expectations. At the end of the consumption they should be made to feel that they experienced suprisingly more unforgettable times than they had originally envisaged (Aho, 2001).

An aesthetic aspect of consumption is one of the experiential value dimensions. Aesthetic value has psychological, economical and sociological perspectives (Zhang, 2008). The experiential value model of Pine and Gilmore (1999) consists of the following experiential value dimensions: entertainment, education, esthetics and escape; The Schmitt (1999) model has different ones within it namely: sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioural and relational dimension; Holbrook (1994) on the other hand listed: esthetics, play, excellence, efficiency, esteem, politics, morality and spirituality.
as his dimensions. Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991) have within their list: functional, conditional, social and epistemic dimensions. As we see this group of aesthetic dimensions is one of the most important parts of experiential consumption.

Aesthetic value has become popular in the postmodern era and Aestheticism is now considered as being one of the most important, effective and enhancing core touristic products. The purpose of the study was to determine the aesthetic value of tour operators touristic products who are the wholesalers within the tourism industry in order to clearly highlight the crucial impact of aesthetic value on customer satisfaction.

**Methodology**

The aim of this study was to measure the aesthetic value of tour operators’ touristic products. The Aesthetic Value Scale was used to measure: a souvenir shop, museum, hotel, restaurant and the transportation used within the tour operators’ package tour. This was performed as a one day evaluation.

The universe of the study was a group of Far East tourists who visited Turkey. In 2012 the Ministry of Culture and Tourism reported that Japan, South Korea, China, Indonesia, India, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Bangladesh, and Pakistan were the most prominent Far Eastern countries that visited Turkey. The chosen sample of the study was limited to Japanese, South Korean and Chinese tourists which were reported as being the countries that visited the Capadoccia Region the most between February and April 2013. The aim of selecting the Far Eastern Tourist was to measure their aesthetic value behavioural trends because: (1) Capadocia is one of the most popular golden destination of the Japanese, South Korean and Chinese tourist (2) An increasing number of far eastern tourists have visited Turkey for their cultural vacational tour (3) The Far Eastern Market especially China is estimated to become one of the largest tourism markets in the World (4) The Far Eastern culture behaviour, as a general rule chooses, tour operators as their desired method of touring (5) Similarly, tour operators are chosen by them because of the fact that they possess this form of touristic behaviour (6) The Far Eastern Geographical distance to Turkey dictates that tourists within these countries almost without exception use tour operator. According to the official tourist arrival numbers collated by the Cultural And Tourism Ministry Report 203592 Japanese, 159084 South Korean, 114582 Chinese tourists visited Turkey. Sekaran’s Sampling Table specifies that after 100,000 tourists have been recorded, 384 samples must be completed. In this research 780 Japanese, South Korean and Chinese tourists came to Turkey using tour operators in between February and April 2013. That number is sufficient to enable the Sekarans’ Sampling Tablet to be used. Convenience sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method was used. The study design included quantitative methodology. An Aesthetic Value Scale was applied to the sample.

The research had 5 hypothesis which are set out below:

**H1:** Souvenir shops aesthetic experiential values have a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

**H2:** Restaurants aesthetic experiential values have a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

**H3:** Museums aesthetic experiential values have a positive effect on customer satisfaction.
**H₄:** Hotel aesthetic experiential values have a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

**H₅:** Transportation aesthetic experiential values have a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

**Findings and Discussion**

An exploratory factor analysis, correlation and regression analysis was applied to evaluate the data. There were 43 Aesthetic value scale Items, 5 Customer satisfaction items employed for factor analysis. The Eigen Aesthetic Experiential values were as follows: Souvenir Shops 21,500, Restaurants 3,772, Museums 3,029, Hotels 2,660 and Transportation 2,036.

According to correlation analysis there is meaningful correlation between each aesthetic value experience and customer satisfaction. Correlation values between the souvenir shops aesthetic experiential values and customer satisfaction were represented as being \( r=514; \) restaurant aesthetic experiential values and customer satisfaction \( (r=,593); \) museum aesthetic experiential values and customer satisfaction \( (r=,607); \) hotel aesthetic experiential values and customer satisfaction \( (r=,591); \) transportation aesthetic experiential values and customer satisfaction \( (r=,617). \) According to result of the correlation analysis H₁, H₂, H₃, H₄ ve H₅ hypothesis were accepted.

The high point of Maslows Hierarchy of need is aesthetic. Customers want to have aesthetic value experiences from a tourism product. The need is for a different kind of tourism product and unique cultural behaviour. While a hotel’s aesthetic values appeal to a Sea-Sand and Sun tourists; Museums and transportation aesthetic values appeal to a cultural tourists.