

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Integrating Experiential Marketing of Festival Activity to Promote Local Cultural Industry Development

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between SEMs, visitors' satisfaction, and visitors' revisiting intention. Structural equation modeling combines multiple regression and factor analysis to simultaneously estimate a series of interrelated dependence relationships. The researchers conducted a questionnaire survey to collect empirical data for use in the current study. Total of 500 questionnaires to which 456 were valid, the total rate of recovery was 91.2%. The results indicate that festival activity through Experiential Marketing Modules will not only increase level of visitor's satisfaction, but will also improve visitor's revisiting intention in the future. The finding suggest local authorities to strengthen the depth and substance of experiencing process to achieve the goal of festival activities, and further create environment where visitors can experience the essence and emotional surrounding of the festival.

Keywords: *Experiential marketing, Festival activity, Structural equation model.*

Introduction

In recent years the local governments around the world have aggressively pursued bids to host various activities for boosting culture and tourism development. Cultural activities hosted in local area can expect to increase tourism, create jobs, improve infrastructures, and promote the development of existed culture. Gursoy et.al [1] developed an instrument to measure the festival and special event organizers' perceptions of the impacts of festivals and special events on local communities. Their results indicated that the organizers' perceptions of the socio-economic impacts of festivals and special events have four dimensions, including community cohesiveness, economic benefits, social incentives, and social costs. While the local government struggled for host festival activities to showcase their cultural characteristics, marketing and promotion is clearly essential for successful festival activities. However, former marketing strategies for events or festival activities rely heavily on traditional marketing concepts. Traditional marketing strategies focusing on price or quality are not anymore a long-term source of competitive advantage. Schmitt [2] first defined experiential marketing as individual customer, after direct observation or participation of event, feels certain stimulus that induces motives and generate identified thoughts or consuming behavior. The

experiential marketing form consists of strategic experiential modules (SEMs). The five strategic experiential modules, namely sense, feel, think, act, and relate create different experiential forms for customers. These experiences are implemented through the experience providers and the ultimate goal is always to create holistic experiences for consumers. Schmitt [2] suggested that traditional marketing was developed in response to the industrial age, not the information, branding and communications revolution we are facing today. Indeed, marketing for festival activity is different to many other products, as visit decisions are made on the basis of projected and perceived images, rather than prior experience. The marketing of festival activity is not only associated with conveying an image of a place, but with attempting to sell an experience of a place through relating it to the lifestyle constructs of visitors. To cope with the trend of developing festival activity, we need to consider new concepts and approaches which utilize the opportunities offered by these new consumers. One such approach is experiential marketing which integrates elements of emotions, logic, and general thought processes to connect with the consumer. Accordingly, the study aim to analyze the influences on visitors' satisfaction and revisiting intention after participating in the

festival activities with strategic experiential marketing modules.

Methods

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between SEMs, visitors' satisfaction, and visitors' revisiting intention. Structural equation modeling combines multiple regression and factor analysis to simultaneously estimate a series of interrelated dependence relationships. This approach allows researchers to test the full model of strategic experiential modules, visitors' satisfaction, and visitors' revisiting intention by using several latent variables and multiple indicators.

The researchers conducted a questionnaire survey to collect empirical data for use in the current study. The questions in the questionnaire were based on information obtained from reviewing the existing literature, and the questionnaire was pre-tested and revised. The questionnaire was designed to measure experiential marketing modules, including sense, feel, think, act, and relate. The questionnaire to measure visitors' satisfaction with festival activity includes facility, promotion, service, content, and transportation. Additionally, the questionnaire used in this study to measure visitors' revisiting intention was built and modified upon previous research [3,4], which includes the areas of proactive participation, intention to return, and willingness to recommend. In keeping with the research purpose of this study, the participants in the survey were visitors to the Sinjhuang International Drum-Art Festival. Sampling was conducted at the information booth during the festival. The respondents were asked to rate the perceived experience, satisfaction level, and revisiting

intention using a five-point Likert scale, which in this case ranged from 'strongly disagree (=1)' to 'strongly agree (=5)'. The survey was conducted in June 2011 in Taiwan. Five hundred questionnaires were distributed to international hotels, yielding 456 usable surveys. The valid response rate was 91.2%.

The measurement model of SEMs hypothesizes that SEMs constitute an exogenous latent variable that can be represented by four endogenous measured variables: sense, feel, think, act, and relate. The measurement model of visitors' satisfaction with festival activity used here hypothesizes that the satisfaction of visitors is an exogenous latent variable that can be represented by five endogenous measured variables: facility, promotion, service, content, and transportation. Additionally, the measurement model of visitors' revisiting intention used here hypothesizes that the revisiting intention of visitors is an exogenous latent variable that affects three endogenous latent variables, i.e., proactive participation, intention to return, and willingness to recommend. All data were analyzed using the SPSS 12.0 and AMOS 5.0 software package.

Results and Discussion

Following the measurement model, the researchers conducted confirmatory factor analysis to measure the properties of the scales. The estimation of variables in this study was tested using maximum likelihood methods to determine whether the model fit the structural equation model. Table 1 presents the correlation matrix used for the analysis.

Table 1: Means (M), standard deviations (SD), and the correlation matrix used in the hypothesised model of strategic experiential modules, satisfaction, and revisiting intention

Measure	M	SD	SEM1	SEM2	SEM3	SEM4	SEM5	SA	RI
SEM1	3.99	0.56	1						
SEM2	4.44	0.56	0.42*	1					
SEM3	4.44	0.58	0.40*	0.81*	1				
SEM4	4.45	0.55	0.28*	0.70*	0.68*	1			
SEM5	4.41	0.58	0.42*	0.81*	0.66*	0.63*	1		
SA	3.85	0.54	0.68*	0.50*	0.48*	0.40*	0.49*	1	
RI	4.53	0.56	0.29*	0.54*	0.56*	0.46*	0.48*	0.38*	1

*p<.05

Note: SEM1 = sense experience, SEM2 = feel experience, SEM3 = think experience, SEM4 = act experience, and SEM5 = relate experience; SA = visitors' satisfaction; RI = visitors' revisiting intention

The theoretical model used in this study integrates strategic experiential modules, visitors' satisfaction, and visitors' revisiting models. The full structural equation model fit well: GFI=0.94,

RMR=0.02, AGFI=0.90, NFI=0.94, and CFI=0.96. As a result, the model fit corresponded with the estimation standards of a structural equation model, and the reliability and validity of this study were judged to be satisfactory. The

structured factors used in this study are shown in Fig.1. The structured factor of strategic experiential modules for visitors' revisiting intention was significant, at 0.56 ($p < 0.05$). The structured factor of SEMs for visitors' satisfaction was significant, at 0.62 ($p < 0.05$). The structured factor of visitors' satisfaction for visitors'

revisiting intention was significant, at 0.12 ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, SEMs have significant positive impacts on visitors' satisfaction and revisiting intention. Additionally, visitors' satisfaction has significant positive impacts on revisiting intention.

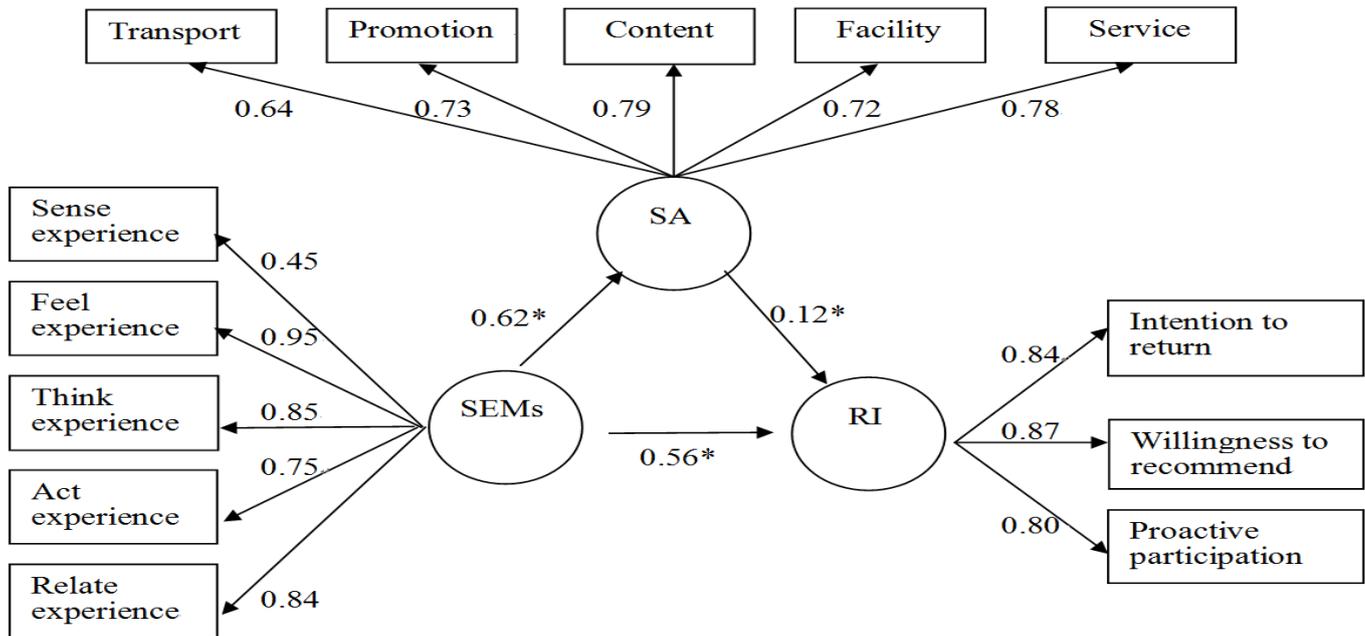


Fig. 1: Path model of SEMs, visitors' satisfaction, and visitors' revisiting intention

This research found that through experiential marketing method not only increase level of visitor's satisfaction, but also improve visitor's revisiting intention. The results may offer initial insights for local authorities to promote culture activities in the future. Taking advantage of experiential marketing is to establish the

connection in such a way that the visitors respond to culture activity offering based on both emotional and rational response levels. Through accessing the process of experiencing and strengthening the cultural content of activity to achieve remarkable success in activity, and further the goal of culture sustainability.

Reference

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