

Storytelling no Turismo Cultural: o poder do “Era uma vez...”

Storytelling in Cultural Tourism: The power of “once upon a time...”

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Resumo | O turismo cultural no qual faz parte a vertente Storytelling assume cada vez maior relevância nos dias de hoje. Não só por ser um produto único, mas também porque faz a ponte entre os residentes e os turistas, aproxima-os uns dos outros de uma maneira que a vertente tradicional do turismo jamais faria. Contudo a informação existente sobre este tema ainda é escassa, especialmente na sua vertente turística. Este trabalho tem como objetivo apresentar dados sobre o subproduto do turismo cultural, o Storytelling, assim como mostrar a sua relevância para a actividade turística.

Palavra-chave | *Storytelling*, novos produtos em turismo, economia das experiências, comportamento do consumidor em turismo

Abstract | Cultural tourism in which Storytelling is an important part of is increasingly relevant these days. Not only because it's a unique product, but also because it fills the gap between residents and tourists, bringing them closer together in a way that traditional tourism would never be able to do. However, the existing information about this subject is still scarce, particularly in the tourist industry. This paper aims to present a conceptual review on Storytelling, as well as to show its importance to tourism.

Keywords | Storytelling, new products in tourism, economy of experiences, consumer behavior in tourism

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1. Introduction

The supply in tourism is in constant growth and everyone claims having unique and differentiated products. However, one of real unique tourism offer are stories. Cultural tourism, represents approximately 40% of all world travel and tourism (OECD, 2009). It is without a doubt one of the most important tourism products, not only for economic reasons, but also because it potentiates many with other tourism products.

The goal of this paper is to make a study on Storytelling and to draw up consumer behavior variables related to this tourism product. Through this consumer behavior study it will be possible to analyze the choices and motivations of the tourists who choose this type of product, as well as acquire a better understanding of their decision-making process, especially the interaction between motivations, cultural distance, travel value and behavior intentions.

2. Theoretical contextualization

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) established in 1985 two definitions for Cultural Tourism – the first one in a broad sense which consist of “all movement of persons who which satisfy their needs for diversity and contribute to

their intellectual and personal value as well as provide new experiences and encounters”, the second one is more specific and concerns the “the fluxes of persons motivated to visit, travel and study cultural heritage, nature or worship” (UNWTO, 1985).

If we think about culture in a broader sense, most tourists consume or will consume in any given time cultural products. Also all tourist destinations offer one way or another some form of cultural proposal (Dominguez, 2012).

The actual dimension of cultural tourism is difficult to assess, however both UNWTO and OECD estimated that in 2007 represented approximately 40% of all international tourism, well above the 37% from 1995. It is possible to estimate the total number of cultural tourists, in less than twenty years the number raised from 195 Million to 453 Million (Table 1), showing the importance of this product worldwide.

In Europe, cultural tourism has been recognized as an important agent of social and economic change (Richards, 1996). The growth of cultural tourism, in different contexts and spatial scales is an answer to the features and changes in post-modern society and also is a sign of hope to destinations that have a significant cultural heritage (Carvalho, 2010).

Table 1 | Total volume of international cultural tourism

Year	Total international arrivals	(%) of cultural travelers	Total cultural travelers
1995	527 Million	37%	195 Million
2000	674 Million	37%	249 Million
2005	809 Million	37%	299 Million
2010	898 Million	40%	359 Million
2013	1,087 Million	40%	434 Million
2014	1,133 Million	40%	453 Million

Source: UNWTO information (1995 – 2014)

Any travel includes cultural elements, and therefore, by its own nature the art of travel moves tourists from its own culture and places them temporarily in a different cultural environment. However, cultural tourism offers something more for both tourists and the community that welcomes them (Mckercher & du Cros, 2002). Cultural tourism includes every specific aspects of a country, region or a community's culture (Raj, 2004) and the activities of the destination everyday culture (Smith, 2003). On the other hand, by knowing the cultural destination history and stories, tourists become more curious about the destination and want to learn something more on their visit.

Cultural tourism is a bridge to the past, because culture contains a perspective of the past about the memory and History of the place. We can even say that the symbolism related to the past comes down to values provided, to material objects as well as intangible values. In fact, tourism should be a living experience that allows visitors' to have a "living experience", to perform activities which will allow them to learn about the visited places (Phipps, 2007). The value associated with this perspective of "living experience" provided by the tourism experience has in its core foundation the conviction that there are meanings attributed to a destination, which sometimes can go unnoticed, because tourists' trips are constrained by time (Rodriguez & Corazon, 2011).

Storytelling is the connection that allows the local inhabitants to share and verbalize events, places, people, objects, activities, as well as moments in time (Eduards, Fenandes & Matos, 2003). The use of stories can also satisfy feelings of nostalgia that the local population may have about activities that were lost as a consequence of urbanization. It is also worth mentioning that in addition to serving as a bridge between the visited and the visitors, the use of narratives also provides an element that is original and unique and that many destinations need to assure the tourism activity sustainability (Steward & Stratern, 2003).

In all the stories is possible to identify the authors and create emotional bonds between the storytellers and listeners (Herskovitz & Crystal, 2010). Destinations can be seen as "storyscapes" in which the narrative can be transformed and sorted through the interaction between destination, storytellers and tourists (Chronis, 2005).

Tourists have a complex and interesting relation with myths and legends. That is, myths are the "pull" factor that stimulates the demand, on the other hand a "push" factor may occur in the destination if the tourists feel that the tourist guide, meaning storytellers, demystifies the locations they visit (McGrath, 2003). Based on what is stated before we propose that:

H1: The push and the pull motivations have a positive effect on the value assigned to travelling to cultural tourism destinations.

Cultural distance can be equally an important motivating factor in tourist demand, especially in cultural tourism, since the cultural difference itself brings out tourists' curiosity to know more about the other. This motivational aspect also influences the value allocated to the trip. Therefore it is proposed that:

H2: The cultural distance has a positive effect on the value assigned to travelling to cultural tourism destinations.

Storytelling offers individuals the means to escape and tourism experiences have the power to grant a symbolic status to tourists, because they can become part of something bigger (McCabe & Foster, 2006). The narratives appeal emotions and also have the power to give a personal touch to tourism destinations. Storytellers' empathy and sympathy are key elements in the emotional connection tourists share with the destinations they visit.

Empathy is the capacity to understand what other people feel and think. It is also a tool that facilitates social understanding and the key to success in the world of personal relationships (Waal, 2009). On the other hand, sympathy is an emo-

tional response to the state of another individual, in which the other person emotion isn't experienced (Hojat, Vergare, Maxwell, Brainard, Herrine & Isenberg, 2009; Cecconello & Koller, 2000).

Studies guarantee that empathy and sympathy are essential elements in Storytelling process. Those emotional aspects make tourists understand the feelings and emotions conveyed by the authors, potentiating their involvement with the storytellers and the destinations. Therefore, Storytelling may be used as a powerful tool of marketing, not only to appeal or gain the loyalty of costumers, but also to motivate and alter tourists' behaviors and future intentions (Akgun, Keskin, Ayar & Erdogan, 2015).

Storytelling adds also value to tourist experience, since it's through it that historical and cultural heritages can be disclosed. Historical facts relating to these inheritances can be consumed, as environments reproductions of past. We feel closer to people that frequently listen to our stories (Lee, 2005). Based on what is stated it is proposed that:

H3: Empathy and sympathy of the Storyteller influence positively the value assigned to

traveling to cultural tourism destinations.

And

H4: Empathy and sympathy of the Storyteller influence positively the behavioral intentions of tourists regarding cultural tourism destinations.

The value of Storytelling especially with regards to the travel experience can be confirmed when trying to ascertain which is the element that most influences individuals' behavior (March, 1995). Emotions control human behavior, specifically in the field of consumption, consumers buy emotionally and then justify their decision with logic and rational arguments (Cardoso, 2009). Thus, due to its emotional component, it is proposed that Storytelling has an important effect on the future intentions of tourist behavior in relation to the visited destinations and the lived experiences. Therefore, we propose the following:

H5: The value assigned to traveling to cultural tourism destinations positively influences the future intentions of tourist behavior.

The above presented connections are summarized in figure 1.

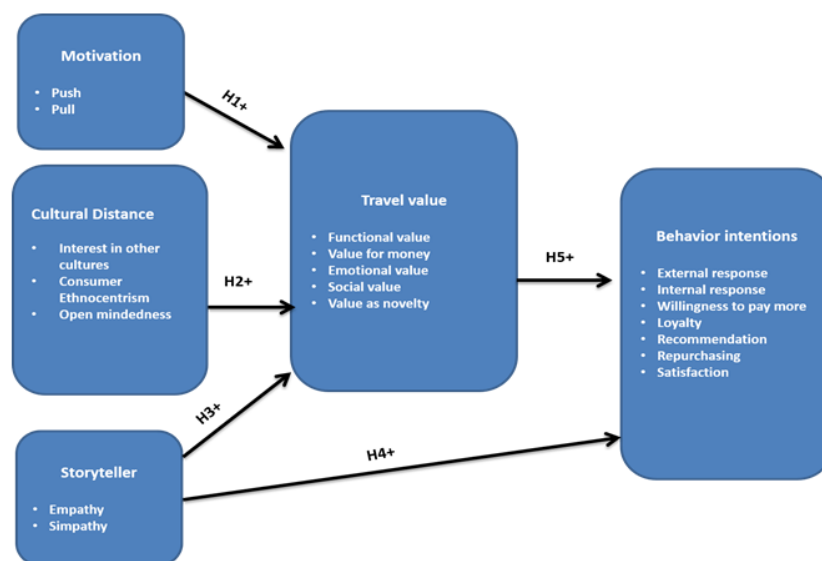


Figure 1 | Conceptual model: Storytelling

3. Methodology

This is a conceptual study based in an extensive literature review. Based on that review it was possible to build a consumer behavior conceptual model portraying cultural tourists' decision-making process with storytelling consumption, showing the interaction between motivations, cultural distance, travel value and behavior intentions (Figure 1).

Although this is a conceptual study, the authors have the intention to empirically contrast the model. In the future we propose an empirical study with data collection through a questionnaire in cultural destinations. The measurement of the given constructs will be made with adapted scales that were previously established and tested:

- (i) Pull and Push Motivation (Mcgrath, 2003)
- (ii) Cultural distance: Interest in other cultures, Consumer ethnocentrism and Open-mindedness (Kim & Littrell, 2001).
- (iii) Value of the travel: i) functional value, ii) value for money, iii) emotional value, iv) social value, v) value as a novelty (Babakus & Boller, 1992; Bello & Etzel, 1985; Patterson & Spreng, 1997; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Weber, 2001).
- (iv) Behavior intentions: i) External response, ii) Internal response, iii) Willingness to pay more, iv) Loyalty, Recommendation and Repurchasing, v) satisfaction (Babakus & Boller, 1992; Oliver, 1993; Patterson & Spreng, 1997; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988).

4. Results and Conclusions

The role of Storytelling in tourism can be seen in different ways, one of which is that a

story "transforms what would be an indifferent and unimportant space into an attractive tourist destination" (Chronis, 2012, p. 445). In a world where the supply of tourism products, services and destinations are constantly growing, where everyone assures they are unique, but in most cases are nothing more than copies of each other, one of the few offers that can be truly considered unique are the stories that destinations can tell about their past, present and future (Bryon, 2012).

The purpose of this study was to better understand the phenomenon of storytelling and its importance for tourism, especially cultural tourism. Also, it was our aim to build a conceptual model on cultural tourists' decision-making process with storytelling consumption.

Studies claim that Storytelling is a differentiator element in tourism products, especially when it comes to highly competitive markets. Stories strengthen the identity, add value, influence product's price and image (Mora & Moscarola, 2012; Pierre & Florine, 2013). It is also argued that the Storytelling helps tourists become more familiar with the destinations (Lee & Shin, 2014).

Storytelling is a powerful tool. The stories allow individuals to see the world through the perspective of characters very different from them. They free individuals from their daily experiences constraints. In doing so, stories weave alternative relationships, providing us vivid windows of our future (Irene, 2014).

This paper proposes a conceptual model to evaluate the influence of Storytelling in the assigned value and future intentions of the tourists' behavior in cultural tourism destinations. It is expected, therefore to contribute to the analysis of an increasingly important aspect of cultural tourism.

Storytelling has a catalyst effect in cultural tourism destinations since the relationship between the visitor and the storyteller promotes the involvement of visitors with the destination, increasing tourists' loyalty to the destination through a me-

morable experience (Lee, 2005). The understanding of this phenomenon is therefore essential for managers.

The main limitation of this work is the fact that is still purely theoretical; however, the goal is to test it empirically in the near future. It is also suggested that future researches should deep explore the relationship between place, residents and visitors. Something that will only be possible with the implementation of surveys to tourists, residents and storytellers. Future studies with those empirical collections will allow cultural destinations managers to better define marketing strategies to attract these tourists.

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