

Leadership in tourism: assessment of cultural tourist attractions

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Abstract This paper focuses on the leadership in cultural tourism. The aim of the paper is to complete the picture of cultural tourism and its cultural, social, as well as economic impacts on cultural destinations (e.g. cities, local attractions, museums, and other types of tangible and intangible heritage in general). We apply a special cultural taxonomy based on the review of tourism-related literature and on our own model that includes classifications of tourists' aims, types, and goals. Thence, we employ the tools of economic theory to assess and to quantify these impacts.

The outcomes of this research might help to develop a theoretically based methodology that might be employed when there is a need to assess the economic and social impacts on cultural attractions. We use an example of various cultural tourism destinations in London, Amsterdam, or Nottingham in order to prove our point and to demonstrate the applicability of our approach.

All in all, our results demonstrate the feasibility and practicability of the evaluation method based on the new tourism taxonomy. We argue that the method that is based on combined evaluation might be helpful for local stakeholders and policymakers (as well as for local residents and for tourists themselves, albeit indirectly) in assessing the tourism potential of local cultural attractions from the social, political, and economic point of view. All of the above might contribute to the leading potential of cultural tourist destinations in question and enhance their popularity and development.

1 Introduction

With the decreasing costs of travel including the transatlantic flights that were highly priced and affordable only to the upper-class travellers even over a decade ago or so, tourism is becoming a booming industry that embraces more and more people worldwide. Low-cost airlines that started around 2004 with the Ryanair, an Irish company that offered tickets for as little as 10-15 pounds, triggered a boom of cheap air travel. This is also combined with the rise of tourism e-services, Internet technologies and optimisation of travelling and booking (see Chiabai et al. 2014). In the 2000s, sharing economy and services like AirBnB or Booking.com revolutionised hotel booking and house and apartment rentals in most of the destinations worldwide making stays affordable even to the low-income travellers and backpackers.

Many countries record increasing share of their population travelling around and abroad to experience something new. In addition, it becomes clear that tourism represents a global economic industry creating millions of jobs and generating billions in profits and taxes. According to WTTC (2010), even in the times of economic and financial crisis, tourism and travel industry employed about 235 million people worldwide (about .2% of all world's employment) and generated 9.4% of world's GDP. These figures were only rising and reached 279.3 million employed in tourism and hospitality almost 10 years later (see WTTC 2006).

Moreover, this paper argues that cultural tourism constitutes a crucial part of hospitality and tourism industry. According to ETC (2005), about 20 % of tourists are driven and attracted by cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible) Some researchers estimate this to be even higher – around 35-40 % (see Richards 1996). Silberberg (1995) reports that almost 60 % of adults in the United States stop at a cultural site during their travels (see e.g. Silberberg 1995).

All these tourists are attracted by something new and extraordinary. New museums and restaurants are opening every day, new events, such as fairs, concerts, festivals and events of all sorts (including for example thematic events based on books and films like the Lord of the Rings theme parks in New Zealand) are emerging (Strielkowski 2017). All of these requires leadership and leaders who would put their time and efforts into making tourist destinations more appealing to the potential visitors. Thence, leadership is becoming an essential part of tourism and cultural tourism.

One of the most frequent and leading forms of tourism nowadays is the cultural tourism, meaning tourism that has a cultural connection (see e.g. Radovic et al. 2017). In this short phrase there are three words which invite consideration: tourism, cultural and connection. Tourism is the most straightforward of the three. The tourism part of it means something like a temporary change of location.

The question of culture is more difficult. Sometimes what is meant is high culture. A visit to Milan to attend an opera at the Teatro della Scala might be an example of cultural tourism. What about a visit to Paris to attend a football match? Some researchers would include this as an example of cultural tourism, perhaps drawing a distinction between high culture and low culture. Often, a beach holiday would be agreed not to be cultural tourism. But consider a visitor to England from China who takes a beach holiday for the purpose of understanding the English cultural phenomenon of the seaside holiday. By comparison with the meaning of tourism, the meaning of culture is more imprecise. It would be difficult to find a precise meaning that everyone would agree on and accept the common definition of it.

This paper tackles the uneasy issues of how to determine the cause for visiting a particular place and how to evaluate the potential outcomes of this visit. Tourists leave their trace through making cultural and economic impacts when travelling to and spending time in various tourist destinations. We argue that this trace and these impacts can be measured and, perhaps, quantified.

2 Cultural tourism

In general, research literature makes a number of various distinctions between different tourism types. Some of these are generally regarded as types of cultural tourism, others are not. It is very probably that dark tourism represents a form of cultural tourism, while, in the same time, beach tourism does not (even though some authors would not agree even on that). However, there is unclear what is going on when it comes to day tourism, event tourism, film and literature tourism, or gastro tourism. Cultural tourism has a specific nature and cannot be found among some common types of tourism.

Let us consider someone who spends her or his day on the beach. The person surely likes the experience and gains some value from it. However, a different person who visits a museum instead also gains similar value from the experience on the same given day. Both tourists in this example gain something but the nature of the gain is very different. The beach tourist is unlikely to have her, or his perspectives changed or to learn something new, while the tourist who attended a museum, might bring some unique insights or perspectives back. Thence, the value of the museum visit (an example of cultural tourism) is higher than the value of merely enjoying one's time on a beach.

Researchers in cultural tourism apply a system of typologies or classifications of tourists with respect to their behaviour, age, gender, occupation, status, choice of trip, etc.). Here is where cultural tourism taxonomy comes in to help with all these classifications.

It becomes clear that a logical tourism typology is a must for the profiting tourist industry. Moreover, it seems that a well-designed tourist typology can help the government and the tourism industry professionals and actors to make important decisions regarding the overall strategy and business solutions, investments, product development, marketing, advertising, pricing, etc., as a tourist typology can improve the understanding of the behaviour and segmentation of tourists on the tourism market and the opportunity to help them predict future trends (Swarbrooke and Horner 1999).

The majority of typologies focuses on the classification of tourists in general. For example, McKercher and du Cros (2002) classified cultural tourists into five different types built on two dimensions - the importance of cultural tourism for the tourists' decision to visit a destination, and the depth of experience gained.

There is a limited analysis of tourism typologies that deserves to be ameliorated and expanded. It seems that classification of tourists might be based on their behaviour which in turn might be a prerequisite for the cultural tourism taxonomy (see Ryan 1991; or Sharpley 1999). In addition, it seems that many cultural tourism typologies appear to be very general and lack enough data for better classification and understanding of tourism behaviour (Mehmetoglu 2004; or Swarbrooke and Horner 2006).

Furthermore, there is a issue of cultural influence of tourism which is also very important in the given context. For example, Matarasso (1997) suggests about fifty potential benefits that visitors can attract from the arts such as "Trusting the Arts", "Developing Pride in Local Traditions and Cultures," "Providing a Unique and Deep Source of Enjoyment," etc.

Additionally, everyone would agree that art is an integral part of the culture. Thence, all derivatives of art can be used for measuring the cultural impact and the importance of art. Nowadays, cultural tourists are represented by people who can gain cultural value from both tangible (museums, galleries, buildings, etc.) and intangible (folklore, local stories and legends, etc.) forms of heritage. However, it appears quite cumbersome to measure the cultural impact of these forms of cultural heritage, thence there is not much information on them in the research literature (Matarasso 1999). This is what needs to be improved and clearly added to the mainstream of tourism-related research.

All of the above makes the approach described in this concise conference paper quite a unique one with some interesting potentials and value-added in both research fields represented by the tourism studies and leadership.

3 Economic and cultural impact of tourism

It is clear that cultural tourism has both an economic and cultural impact. Each of these has been addressed in the literature, to a certain extent, both together and separately. One needs to clearly comprehend the causes and the outcomes of cultural tourism to understand the combined economic and social aspects of cultural tourism in all its realms.

The principal objective of this short paper is to investigate how people come to visit cultural tourist attractions, and what the cultural and economic impacts of their visits are. It is obvious that these impacts can be measured using many indicators or factors.

For example, one can use the net profits of the industry, or the number of visitors at a certain location, or perhaps even a number of likes left by people at the tourism-related fora like TripAdvisor and some other social networks.

Let us take a look at Figure 1 that follows and that illustrates the different levels of cultural and economic impacts by using various cultural tourist attractions as basic examples. Here, we are trying to compare the cultural tourism impact space using various famous locations in London, Amsterdam, and Nottingham, a city that became famous thanks to the legend of Robin Hood, but which features little of Robin Hood and which became famous in the 18th century thanks to its textile industry.

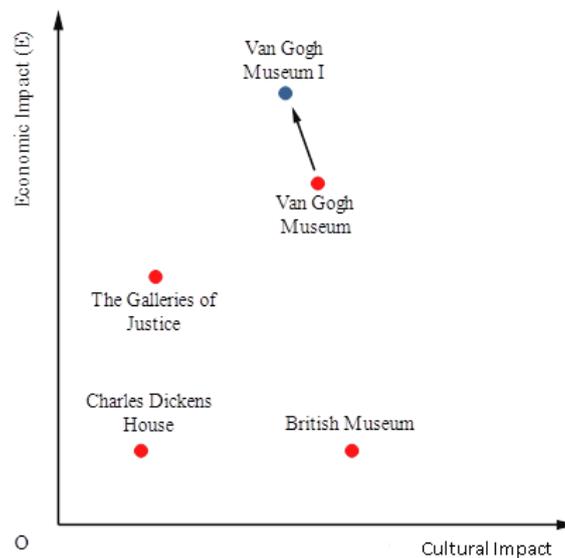


Fig. 1. Cultural tourism impact space
Source: Own results

Although they are real attractions, the attractions marked in Figure 1 have been chosen only to illustrate the idea of impact space. The British Museum and the Charles Dickens House (both in London, United Kingdom), the Van Gogh Museum (in Amsterdam, the Netherlands) and the Galleries of Justice (located in Nottingham, United Kingdom) are real, but the points representing them in Figure 1 are purely conjectural. In a sense, the objective of this research is to make it possible to draw real diagrams in impact space.

It becomes obvious that any cultural tourism visit has a two-fold impact that can be measured in social and economic terms. Different attractions have different economic and cultural effects. The above points in Figure 1 that is shown above illustrate this clearly. There is an effect area in which economic and cultural effects intersect on the same surface. The position on this area signifies the degree of economics and cultural consequences of a cultural visit.

One might notice that cultural and economic impacts of cultural tourism are quite similar in nature. Any tourist attraction that draws crowds is important and significant both in economic and in cultural sense. It might also be an important patriotic or heritage site that is also important for local residents. In the same time, if the attraction does not represent such a value and is only visited together with some other destinations or when taking, say, a day trip to some cultural city, its social, economic, as well as cultural impact tends to be quite low.

Nevertheless, economic and social benefits of any cultural destination depend on its location and attractiveness. While some destinations might be economically more attractive, others can yield higher social and cultural value.

Here, an important question one has to answer is where business or culture are more important for the local authorities and stakeholders. Money is not everything and if only economically efficient tourist attractions

are supported, this might cause some social unrest and protests. Sometimes, the cultural impacts of some tourist attraction might surpass its economic potential, and this is quite acceptable.

It also needs to be remembered that many tourist attractions are funded by the government. In this case, the costs of running and caring about this attraction is lower and can be feasible for the local stakeholders such as local tourism agencies or municipalities.

Suppose the government has to save or spend £ 10 million on cultural attractions in the tourism industry, how should they spend or save it? This is not an easy question, but any rational government would try to assess the costs of benefits of this investment and to evaluate the possible outcomes. Would these £ 10 million make additional £ 10 million or would they be wasted in vain? Careful modelling and assessment techniques conducted by the tourism industry professionals might provide answers to these uneasy questions.

In any case, understanding the causes and consequences of cultural tourism is crucial. In developing an integrated framework to understand and assess economic and cultural impacts, and economics-based approach such as shown in Figure 1 seems to be the best solution amongst all available alternatives. The reason for this is as follows. The essence of the economic approach applies the reasoning device of a hypothetical rational person. This is a person who acts following decisions and makes decisions by a process of reasoning. In considering what a rational person would do, there is a problem that if people are not rational, then their behaviour is unpredictable, and may not be influenced in a predictable way. Once the rational person is accepted as a reasoning device, they can be used to consider, in a unified way, all the consequences of cultural tourism.

Furthermore, one can model the rational person as deciding how much to spend at a cultural tourist destination. We can also model their response to cultural aspects of cultural attractions. An important part of this will be a rational person learning to like. For example, a cultural tourist who is visiting London to go to the Charles Dickens Museum will spend money at the destination and may also learn to like Dickens' novels more. Both of these are consequences of the cultural tourist's visit and they can both be modelled by using the economists' hypothetical rational person.

In addition, the social networks and Big Data would also allow tourism industry not only to measure the number of visitors to certain destinations or the money spent in those destinations but also to track their experiences and opinions through evaluations, reports, posts, or videos uploaded on Instagram or YouTube. All of the above represents an enormous value for further enhancing the leadership in tourism and ameliorating tourist destinations worldwide.

4 Conclusions

Overall, it appears that the newly developed cultural tourist taxonomy might become the key for modelling the causes and measuring the consequences of cultural tourism, created by integrating and enhancing the essence of the key concepts together.

In general, it becomes quite obvious in order to quantify the cultural impacts of tourism lots of data and fieldwork are required. Hence, the number of empirical studies in the research and professional literature covering these topics is quite modest. The research objectives of this study were identified based on the gaps in the relevant literature. This short paper makes some interesting contributions, to the literature, on both the theoretical and empirical side.

It might also be interesting to contemplate on the causes of cultural tourism. It seems that the causal chain model that is embedded into the new taxonomy might be helpful in distinguishing the types of cultural tourists using various dimension. This can be achieved by assessing the role of cultural destinations and attractions in making the tourists to actually pay a visit to this or that particular place.

Our outcomes show that the visitors to the destination can be classified in terms of three categories: (i) The cultural attraction was not relevant to the visits to destination (i.e. serendipitous and incidental cultural tourists); (ii) The cultural attraction was the only cause to the visit to destination (i.e. purposeful and sightseeing cultural tourists); (iii) The cultural attraction partially caused the visit to destination (i.e. intentional and casual cultural tourists). There are two aspects to the consequences of cultural tourism.

In addition, our results show that by adapting the causal method, the economic impact of a tourist attraction can be easily assessed. Moreover, it becomes apparent that the cultural impact of a visit on each individual can also be measured by distinguishing cultural tourists into preference-following (i.e. incidental, casual and sightseeing cultural tourists) and preference-forming (i.e. serendipitous, intentional and purposeful cultural tourists).

Based on the newly developed theoretical model presented in this concise paper, the empirical part of our research can be replicated at other attractions within the cities such as the Nottingham (a city that has a brand name but does not feature many interesting things to see and needs its tourism valour to be further enhanced and developed). It seems that by collecting more values for the economic and cultural impacts caused by other attractions in Nottingham, it could provide valuable information on the economic effectiveness and cultural influences of tourism development in the evaluated area (the city of Nottingham). It could thereby help the policy

makers to understand whether further tourism investment and development should be encouraged, and how, to deliver a balanced society. If research based on this were to provide substantive answers, then local government could compare the results among the attractions and tailor strategy and planning (e.g. further investment, cut-backs, promotions, etc.) accordingly.

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