

Why Do You Go to A Museum and Why Don't? – A Case Study of Motivations to Visiting Antalya Museum, Turkey

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Abstract

Museums are critical for resource conservation, while they can provide a recreational setting and enhance visitor's leisure experience. Museums also play an important role in the hospitality and tourism industry, as they attract domestic and international travelers. Museums serve as social, cultural, and economic enrichment. The purpose of the research included understanding the motivations to visit the Antalya Museum in Turkey in order to suggest a marketing communication design. Underpinned by the theory of planned behavior, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 85 visitors and 85 non-visitors who were selected by a purposeful sampling in order to elicit salient beliefs on their museum visits. The results showed three types of beliefs. With respect to behavioral beliefs, the most frequently reported advantage of visiting the museum was learning, followed by experiencing exhibits, while more than half of the visitors and non-visitors did not identify any disadvantages. Regarding normative beliefs, both the visitors and non-visitors perceived that their family members and friends supported their museum visits, whereas more than half of them did not recognize anyone who disagreed with their museum visits. Concerning perceived control beliefs, both the visitors and non-visitors explained that transportation and location were the major facilitator for their visits, whilst nearly half of the visitors did not report any obstacles to their visits. It is suggested that the motivations to visit the museum, such as learning, family support, and accessibility, should be incorporated into the design of communication messages when promoting the museum visits.

Keywords: Museum, motivation, theory of planned behavior, salient beliefs, promotion

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Background

Museums play an important role in the recreation and tourism industries, as they attract a number of visitors and have become a destination for domestic and international travelers (Brida, Meleddu, & Pulina, 2012b; Jansen-Verbeke & Rekom, 1996) and an economic source (Brida, Disegna, & Scuderi, 2013). Despite the significant role, museums have been encountered an increase competition with other attractions and struggled for governmental fund and public support (American Association of Museums, 2012). This has led museum to become market-oriented, paying attention to public needs and expectations. Understanding why some people visit a museum and why others do not visit provides insights for a marketing strategy of the museum and tourism policy. The purpose of the research was to understand the motivation of people toward visiting Antalya Museum in Turkey. In order to obtain a clear understanding of the reason behind visiting or not visiting the museum, the salient beliefs about visiting the museum of visitors and non-visitors needs to be elicited.

Many authors have reported the contributors motivating people to visit museums (Axelsen, 2007; Burton, Louviere, & Young, 2009; Falk, Heimlich, & Bronnenkant, 2008; Packer, 2006; Packer & Ballantyne, 2002; Powell & Kokkranikal, 2015; Thyne, 2001). Falk and Dierking (2000) contended “free-choice learning” as a major anticipated outcome of all museum visitors’ experiences. Thyne (2001) used the laddering technique to uncover the reasons to visit the museum in New Zealand and reported socialization being with family and friends as a major purpose of visiting the museum in addition to education and learning. Packer and Ballantyne (2002) compared the motivations to visit educational leisure settings at a museum, an aquarium, and an art gallery in Australia and found that museum was the important place of learning. These research findings revealed learning is one of the major motives for museum visitors regardless of the degree of its prominence. A museum researcher John Falk (2009), who extensively reviewed studies on the motivations of museum visits, maintained that an obvious reason for a museum visit – learning – was overlooked. “Some come to learn explicitly, some come to learn implicitly, but all come to learn!” (p.56). Learning seems to be indispensable reason for visiting a museum.

Falk and his colleagues (Falk, 2006, 2009) conducted interviews with visitors at the California Science Center about their reasons to visit there and concluded that their expectations and motivations for a museum visit could be clustered the visitors into five identity-related categories: explorer, facilitator, experience seeker, professional/hobbyist, and spiritual pilgrims. These five identities indicate that there is a particular aspect that each of the identities has to fulfill. Fulfilling the need of playing these identities is the motive for museum visitors. Sheng and Chen (2012) conducted questionnaire surveys at five museums in Taiwan to investigate visitor’s expectations and identified five types of experience expectations: easiness and fun, cultural entertainment, personal identification, historical reminiscence, and escapism. Their findings also indicate that people show a particular expectation to fulfill when they visit a museum and that they visit a museum when they feel a need of satisfying one or more of the five types of expectations. These study findings suggest museum managers to consider certain predilections toward museums and design promotional

communication messages and attractive exhibitions in a way to fulfill such predilections to promote their museums.

Powell & Kokkranikal (2015) conducted interviews with visitors to the Imperial War Museum in the U.K. and reported that socialization, interactions with exhibits, and the location of the museums were important motivating factors. They found that extrinsic motivations were more dominant than the intrinsic one to visit the museum, while motivations were multi-faced and a combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic ones. In contrast to these findings, Mastandrea et al. (2016) found that intrinsic motivations were more influential than the extrinsic ones for university students in Italy to visit a museum. Young audiences perceived external behavioral control, such as a lack of information, time, and chance, high price, as a constraint and driven by interest in arts, fulfilling pleasure, and emotional engagement. The authors suggested that for young people, an opportunity to visit would need to be reminded. These research findings suggest that there are multiple unequivocal reasons to visit as well as interpersonal purposes. They also suggest museum marketers to segment their target audiences, position themselves in a way that they can serve such a segmented audience, and provide each targeted segment with a particularly designed experiences and events in order to promote their museums.

As we have argued above, museum visitors have beliefs on their museum visits, while some people believe some constraints to visit or are unaware of the needs to fulfill at a museum. Uncovering what people believe in regard to their museum visits will allow museum marketers to design promotional communication, events, and exhibitions presentations to attract visitors to their museums. Research is needed to understand the reasons why people visit or do not visit a certain museum in order to obtain such a guideline for museum marketing.

Arguably, one of the most widely applied theoretical frameworks by which to explain behavioral performance is Ajzen's (1991, 2012) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). This theory postulates that an individual's intention to perform a behavior is a central motivational factor to influencing a behavior and that the intention is assumedly directly influenced by three determinants: attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. These direct determinants are affected by respective counter-beliefs in regard to performing the behavior. Attitude toward the behavior is formed by behavioral beliefs, which are the expected outcomes and consequences of performing the behavior as well as the evaluation of each of the outcomes and consequences. Subjective norm is constructed via normative beliefs, which are the perceived social pressures of whether important referents approve or disapprove of his/her performing the behavior. Perceived behavioral control is formulated via control beliefs, which are the perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede the ease of the behavioral performance.

According to the TPB, it can be predicated that understanding the relevant salient beliefs on a particular behavior will allow us to predict the behavioral occurrence. Additionally, investigating the salient beliefs of a particular behavior may enable us to not only identify what makes an individual perform the particular behavior but also to uncover what makes him/her not perform the behavior. Focusing on the salient beliefs on a particular behavior will contribute to examining the likelihood that a certain behavior will occur, which may help design a marketing communication strategy to

promote the museum visits. Research is needed to investigate the beliefs about visiting Antalya Museum. Additionally, in order to understand why some people do not visit the museum, research focusing on non-visitors is needed. Therefore, research about the beliefs on visiting Antalya Museum was needed with two groups: visitors and non-visitors. This exploratory belief elicitation research was aimed at identifying the visitor's and non-visitor's salient beliefs about their visits to Antalya Museum.

Antalya Museum is one of the largest archeological museums in Turkey and exhibits a comprehensive archeological collection. Antalya is a Mediterranean beach resort city that attracts international tourists all year round. Antalya Museum is located at a scenic coastline and close proximity to central down town of the city. It can be reached by frequent public bus and tram.

Methods

Following the theoretical rationale and measurement procedures of Ajzen (n.d.), Beeton et al. (2005), and Ham et al. (2008), elicitation research was undertaken at Antalya Museum in November 2015. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted at the site with a convenience sample of visitors and non-visitors. Interview respondents included adults who were 18 years of age or older. Interviewers approached an individual visitor at the museum to invite him/her to the interview. They also approached adult individuals outside of the museum to ask them whether they have ever visited a museum in the past, and if not, they were invited to the interviews.

Following widely applied TPB-based instrument, the interview guide contained six open-ended questions, each of which related to one of the TPB's three main beliefs (i.e., behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs), in addition to questions on demographic information.

1. What do you see as the advantages or good things that could occur by visiting Antalya Culture and Arts today?
2. What do you see as the disadvantages or bad things that could occur by visiting Antalya Culture and Arts today?
3. Who (individuals or groups whose opinions you consider personally influential) do you think would support or approve of your visiting Antalya Museum today?
4. Who (individuals or groups whose opinions you consider personally influential) do you think would object or disapprove of your visiting Antalya Culture and Arts today?
5. What factors or circumstances enable or make it easy for you to visit Antalya Culture and Arts today?
6. What factors or circumstances make it difficult for you to visit Antalya Culture and Arts today?

The questions were adopted from Ham et al.'s (2009) study, changing wordings to fit this research. The interviewers were multilingual in English, Turkish, and/or Russian, as the city collected international tourists and these languages are typically used among tourists.

The interview responses were transcribed verbatim in English even if the original language was another language. A content analysis of the interview responses identified beliefs with respect to visiting the museum and provided an inventory of behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs potentially salient to the behavior. In the analysis, the texts were broken into discrete elements so as to better examine the similarities and differences among the responses, and major ideas and recurring themes were identified.

Results

Respondents

A total of 170 respondents participated in the interviews, including 85 visitors and 85 of non-visitors. As the Table 1 shows, the majority of visitors and non-visitors responded in English (85% and 67%, respectively), while more number of the non-visitors (29%) responded in Turkish than the visitors (13%). The major age ranges of the visitors were 20s (29%), 30s (28%), and 40s (16%), while almost a half of the non-visitors were 20s (49%). The gender of visitors and non-visitors split almost equally.

Table 1. Respondent's demography

<u>Language spoken</u>	<u>Age range</u>	<u>Gender</u>
Visitors (n=85)		
English	72 (85%)	18-19
Turkish	11 (13%)	20s
Russian	2 (2%)	30s
		40s
		50s
		60s or over
		Unknown
		n
		6 (7%)
		24 (28%)
		14 (16%)
		6 (7%)
		9 (11%)
		1 (1%)
		Female
		42 (49%)
		Male
		42 (49%)
		Unknow
		1 (1%)
Non-visitors (n=85)		
English	57 (67%)	18-19
Turkish	25 (29%)	20s
Russian	3 (4%)	30s
		40s
		50s
		60s or over
		8 (9%)
		42 (49%)
		15 (18%)
		13 (15%)
		5 (6%)
		2 (2%)
		Female
		44 (52%)
		Male
		41 (48%)

The TPB-based interview question uncovered a range of visitor motivations to the museum. Table 2 presents a summary of responses in respect to each of the three TPB belief categories: behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control beliefs. The total percentage calculated exceeds 100% because respondents offered multiple responses.

Table 2. Frequency of Responses on Behavioral, Normative, and Control Beliefs

Visitors (n=85)	Frequency (%)	Non-visitors (n=85)	Frequency (%)
Behavioral Belief			
<i>Advantage</i>		<i>Advantage</i>	
Learning	60 (70.6)	Learning	38 (44.7)
Experiencing exhibits	21 (24.7)	Experiencing exhibits	36 (42.3)
Others/Miscellaneous	14 (16.4)	No advantage	13 (15.3)
		Miscellaneous	13 (15.3)
<i>Disadvantage</i>		<i>Disadvantage</i>	
No disadvantages	42 (49.4)	No disadvantages	43 (50.5)
Low quality of presentation	17 (20.0)	Getting bored	10 (11.8)
Being crowded	4 (4.7)	Spending time/money	10 (11.8)
Getting bored	4 (4.7)	Becoming unpleasant/disappointed	6 (7.1)
No answer	2 (2.3)	Inadequate facility quality	5 (5.9)
Others	9 (10.6)	Being crowded	4 (4.7)
		No Answer	2 (2.3)
		Others	6 (7.1)
Normative Belief			
<i>Approval</i>		<i>Approval</i>	
Family	28 (32.9)	Family	41 (48.2)
Friends	19 (22.4)	Friends	28 (27.1)
Advertising	12 (14.1)	Lecturer	12 (14.1)
Myself	10 (11.8)	No One	10 (11.8)
Lecturer	7 (8.2)	Advertising	4 (4.7)
Others	6 (7.1)	Others	8 (9.4)
No One	3 (3.5)	No Answer	1 (1.2)
No Answer	2 (2.3)		
<i>Disapproval</i>		<i>Disapproval</i>	
No One	44 (51.8)	No One	48 (56.5)
Family	12 (14.1)	Friends	23 (27.1)
Friends	10 (11.8)	Family	8 (9.4)
Others	6 (7.1)	Others	5 (5.9)

Perceived Control Belief

<i>Facilitator</i>			<i>Facilitator</i>		
Transportation	34	(40.0)	Transportation	36	(42.4)
Location	23	(27.1)	Location	26	(30.6)
Weather	7	(8.2)	Entrance Fee	8	(9.4)
Tour	5	(5.9)	Time/commitment	5	(5.9)
Time/commitment	4	(4.7)	Museum card	5	(5.9)
Others	21	(24.7)	Friend	4	(4.7)
			Advertisement	4	(4.7)
			Weather	4	(4.7)
			Nothing	4	(4.7)
			Others	3	(3.5)
<i>Impediment</i>			<i>Impediment</i>		
Nothing	41	(48.2)	Nothing	15	(17.6)
Weather	20	(23.5)	Entrance fee	15	(17.6)
Time/commitment	7	(8.2)	Time/commitment	9	(10.6)
Entrance fee	5	(5.9)	Transportation	9	(10.6)
Location	4	(4.7)	Weather	9	(10.6)
Others	12	(14.1)	Low interest	5	(5.9)
			Location	4	(4.7)
			Others	6	(7.1)

Note: The total percentage calculated exceeds 100% because respondents offered multiple responses.

Behavioral Belief

The majority of the visitors (70.6%) reported learning as an advantage of visiting the museum, while 44.7% of the non-visitors reported so. Close to one fourth of the visitors considered experiencing exhibits to be an advantage, whilst 42.3% of the non-visitors did so. Fifteen percent of the non-visitors responded that there were no advantages brought by a museum visit. Other responses concerning advantages of visiting the museum reported by the visitors (16.4%) included beautiful plants and enjoyment, while many other responses were not associated with the advantages. Those reported by the non-visitors (15.3%) involved sharing information with others, high quality of exhibits, and free-time activity, while many other responses were not associated with the advantages.

A half of the visitors (49.4%) and non-visitors (50.5%) did not find any disadvantages of visiting the museum. The quality of presenting exhibits was regarded as disadvantage by visitors (20%). Non-visitors viewed spending their time or money (11.8%), becoming unpleasant or disappointed (7.1%), and inadequate quality of facility (5.9%) as disadvantageous. Getting bored was also a disadvantage for the visitors (4.7%) and non-visitors (11.8%). Both visitors (4.7%) and non-visitors (4.7%) found crowdedness as a disadvantage. Other responses regarding disadvantages mentioned by the visitors (10.6) involved inadequate facility quality, spending time/money, and others. Those by the non-visitors (7.1%) included location, language, and being meaningless.

Normative Beliefs

Normative beliefs discuss the approval or disapproval of important others towards visiting the museum. More than thirty percent of the visitors (32.9%) and non-visitors (48.2%) felt their family member's approval or encouragement. Friends also play a part in approval of visiting the museum for visitors (22.4%) and non-visitors (27.1%). Advertising, such as people's and guidebook's reviews and recommendations, was found to be an approving source for the visitors (14.1%) and non-visitors (4.7%). The self played an important role in deciding the museum visit for the visitors (11.8%). Both the visitors and non-visitors reported that lecturers (8.2% and 14.1%, respectively), other people than already mentioned people (7.1% and 9.4%, respectively), and no one (3.5% and 11.8%, respectively) would approve of their visits.

Both the visitors (51.8%) and non-visitors (56.5%) reported that no one would disapprove of their museum visits. Family members played an important role in feeling being disapproved of their museum visits by the visitors (14.1%) and non-visitors (9.4%). The visitors and non-visitors also regarded friends would disapprove of their museum visits (11.8% and 27.1%, respectively). Others influenced disapproving visiting the museum for visitors (7.1%) and non-visitors (5.9%).

Perceived Control Beliefs

The findings revealed some facilitators and obstructs of visiting the museum. The visitors and non-visitors also recognized some facilitators and impediments of their museum visits. Both the visitors (40.0%) and non-visitors (42.4%) explained that transportation made their visits to the museum easy. The location of the museum facilitated their visits for some visitors (27.1%) and non-visitors (30.6%). Weather facilitated the visitors (8.2%) more than the non-visitors (4.7%). Time and/or other commitment was regarded as a facilitator by the visitors (4.7%) and non-visitors (5.9%). Participating in a tour encouraged the visitors (5.9%) to visit the museum. For the non-visitors, the entrance fee (9.4%), a museum card (5.9%), which offers the owner unlimited number of free entrance in a year, friends (4.7%) and advertising (4.7%). Other responses of the visitors (24.7%) included friends, advertisement, curiosity, entrance fee, museum card, and others. Those of the non-visitors (3.5%) included tour and university commitment.

Close to a half of the visitors (48.2%) did not perceive any impediment to visit the museum, although a smaller number of non-visitors (17.6%) did so. Weather was a constraint for the visitors (23.5%) and non-visitors (10.6%) as well as time and/or other commitment for the visitors (8.2%) and non-visitors (10.6%). A larger number of the non-visitors viewed the entrance fee (17.6%) was an obstacle to visit the museum than the visitors (5.9%). A small number of both visitors (4.7%) and non-visitors (4.7%) reported location of the museum was a difficulty. Transportation (10.6%) and lack of interest (5.9%) were a difficulty in visiting the museum for the non-visitor. Other responses (14.1%) by the visitors included transportation, language, visibility/signage of the museum, unfamiliarity with the city, and others. Other responses (7.1%) of the non-visitors involved friends and family, museum card, and others.

Discussion

The findings of the research showed that both visitors and non-visitors perceived similar advantages and disadvantages of visiting the museum. More number of the visitor than the non-visitors perceived the positive outcomes of visiting the Antalya Museum, such as learning something new and experiencing the exhibits. Although none of the visitors reported any advantage of visiting the museum, a small percentage of the non-visitors reported so. These finding may indicate that people who haven't visited the museum perceive fewer or no benefits, which partially explains their lack of interest to visit the museum.

The disadvantages that were reported by the visitors who had viewed and experienced the exhibits were related to the quality of exhibit presentation, while those by the non-visitors were experiencing boredom and unpleasantness/disappointment at viewing the exhibits. Additionally, although it was a small number, more numbers of the non-visitors than visitors viewed time and entrance fee required to visit the museum as a disadvantage. These findings suggest two alternative actions to be taken by the museum. First, the exhibition design may be improved because the ways to present exhibits can influence how visitors experience and understand what is presented in the museum. The manner in which the exhibits are presented can be changed into a way that can attract and hold visitor's attention and interests. Second, the positive outcomes of visiting the museum, such as learning new facts and the quality collections, should be clearly communicated with the public, and thereby the museum would be recognized as worth spending time and money.

It was found that both the visitors and non-visitors perceived support from their family members and friends for their museum visits. The visitors seemed to be less influenced by other individuals than non-visitors but felt social pressure from advertisement and have determined their visits by themselves. Advertising is critical particularly for tourists to decide on where to visit. As museums are generally one of the major attractions at the travel destination (Brida et al., 2012b; Jansen-Verbeke & Rekom, 1996), the information about the museum can contribute to the decision-making of tourists. The visibility of the museum should be heightened in order for tourists to be aware of the museum. It is also suggested that a communication message in advertisement emphasizing the family support may be effective to attract people, particularly those who have not visited the museum. For example, a message may look like "the museum is for family recreation", "your child learns at the museum", or "share your knowledge with your children." If the museum is viewed as a place for holiday activity and family recreation, it will more likely be recalled or at least aware of when people make a holiday plan.

The accessibility to the museum appeared to be a major facilitator for the museum visits. Both the visitors and non-visitors perceived that the transportations to and location of the museum had made or will make them easy to visit the museum. This showed that the museum embraces a strong advantage in attracting visitors. Additionally, the cost of visiting the museum was a constrain for the non-visitors, which supported the previous research by Brida et al. (2012a) who found entrance fees discouraged repeat visits, particularly for those in a low income group. This finding suggests widely advertising a museum card that offers an unlimited entree in a year for residents in Turkey. The museum card allows the owners to visit almost all

public and many of private museums and heritage sites across the nation with one time fee. It may be helpful to communicate with the public about the benefits that can be gained from visiting the museum and the worth of paying for them.

Additionally, it should be noted again that almost a half of the visitors did not perceive any constraints to visit the museum, while a small number of the non-visitors did so. Some of the non-visitors also reported the no advantages derive from visiting the museum, and a wider range of disadvantages were reported by the non-visitors than the visitors. These findings may indicate that non-visitors were likely to identify a reason for not visiting the museum in order to justify their action, which may be explained by cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) that postulates a tendency for individuals to seek consistency between their attitudes and behaviors. It may be advisable for the museum to try to alter the non-visitors' attitudes toward visiting the museum in a favorable manner, which may consequently lead to favorable cognition and/or behavior as well. Communicating with the public about the advantages of the museum – learning, great collections, location, and museum card - in a way to influence their attitudes is needed.

Major differences between the visitors and non-visitors

The most frequently mentioned responses were identical in all three beliefs for visitors and non-visitors. Second or third most frequently reported items might be a significant indicator to differentiate between the visitors and non-visitors. For example, non-visitors reported that visiting the museum did not produce a benefit for them while it creates boredom, which may indicate a need to communicate positive outcomes of the museum visits with the public. For the current museum visitors, weather seemed to have influenced their decision to visits. The ability or at least willingness to pay for the entrance fee may be a key differentiator among individuals who did and did not visit the museum. People who currently do not go to the museum may have likely found variety of reasons for not visiting the museum to justify themselves.

Suggestions for the museum

The knowledge of the beliefs of current and potential visitors on the museum visit will provide a guideline to develop a promotion strategy to encourage their visits to the museum. The findings of this research suggested the following actions for the Antalya Museum to take in order to promote the museum visits:

- The expected benefits gained from visiting the museum should be communicated with the public, such as learning and experiencing the quality collections, and thereby the museum would be perceived to be worth spending time and money by both visitors and non-visitors.
- The benefits of a museum card should be clearly communicated with local residents for their purchase, so that they may view the entrance fee as inexpensive.
- Advertisement of the museum should be carried out through a wide variety of vehicles, such as guidebooks, magazines, brochures, tour guides, and hotel concierges, so as to reach individuals who may not be aware of the museum as their holiday activity or tourist attraction.

- An easy access to the museum in a central downtown location should be clearly described in a promotional message.
- The museum can be promoted as a weather accommodating activity, such as for rainy days, cold temperature, and too hot to be outside.
- Family support for the museum visit may be emphasized, such that children likes to go or wife/husband wants to go together, so as to regard the museum visits as family recreation or a good day out.
- The exhibition design can be improved in a way that can attract and hold visitor's attention and interests.

Limitations

Careful attention should be paid when interpreting the results. The convenient sampling did not allow the researchers to obtain representative responses to generalize the findings. Systematic random sampling is suggested. Data collection took place only in one month and should be carried out for a longer period of time or across seasons so as not to be influence by potential seasonal differences. Qualitative responses from visitors and non-visitor should also be quantitatively collected and analyzed so as to project the results to the population.

Conclusion and implications for future research

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) framework helped uncovering the salient beliefs on visiting the Antalya Museum, and belief elicitation was found to be informative to guide the design of promotional communication messages to current and future visitors to the museum. The most frequently mentioned responses were identical in all three belief categories for visitors and non-visitors. The second or third major response can be taken into consideration in developing a marketing strategy. Only a range of three types of beliefs was qualitatively revealed, and the importance and weight of each of these beliefs will need to be quantitatively examined in future, so that which type of belief and what specific message may be focused on in order to promote museum visits.

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