Cultural and Knowledge Seeking by Visitors at World Heritage Sites: The Case of Coimbra

A Procura de Cultura e Conhecimento Pelos Visitantes nos Sítios de Património Mundial: O Caso de Coimbra

Vivina Carreira
vivina@esac.pt
Polytechnic of Coimbra / University of Seville

M. Rosario González-Rodríguez
rosaglez@us.es
Department of Applied Economics I, University of Seville

M. Carmen Díaz-Fernández
cardiaz@us.es
Department of Business Administration and Marketing, University of Seville

Abstract

This paper develops within cultural tourism studies, focusing on a World Heritage Site (WHS) and demonstrates the importance of perceiving cultural tourists' preferences so that organizing entities and decision-makers can design different cultural tourist products to meet their expectations. A survey was conducted by self-administered questionnaires designed to identify, among other characteristics, the degree to which cultural tourists are interested in highly demanding travel experiences that will enhance their knowledge of local culture and history, with participatory activities with interpretation, and other events that require a high level of engagement, through immersive intellectual and emotional activities. Results seem to reveal perceptions of culture as a source of new values and the preference for innovative, intellectually challenging site presentation and interpretation

Keywords: Culture, heritage, non-formal education, motivations, satisfaction.

JEL Codes: Z32; Z39

Resumo

Este artigo insere-se no âmbito dos estudos de turismo cultural, centrando-se num Sítio de Património Mundial e demonstra a importância de perceber as preferências dos turistas culturais para que as entidades organizadoras e decisoras possam conceber diferentes produtos turístico-culturais para atender às suas expectativas. Foi realizada uma pesquisa por meio de questionários destinados a identificar, entre outras características, o grau de interesse dos turistas culturais por experiências de viagem altamente exigentes que melhorem o seu conhecimento da cultura e história locais, com atividades participativas com interpretação e outros eventos que exigem um elevado nível de envolvimento intelectual e emocional. Os resultados parecem revelar perceções da cultura como uma fonte de novos valores e a preferência por apresentações e interpretações inovadoras e intelectualmente desafiadoras dos sitios visitados.

Palavras-chave: Cultura, património, educação não-formal, motivações, satisfação.

Códigos JEL: Z32; Z39

1. INTRODUCTION AND STATE OF THE ART

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has in several Reports emphasized the notion that tourism, which is already a very strong and coveted industry sector, will continue to raise its numbers, specifically the cultural tourism segment (Richards, 2018). Many targeted destinations are those that have been distinguished by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), because the distinction draws attention to its significance and singularity.

Coimbra, in Central Portugal, has been listed as a World Heritage Site (WHS) in 2013 and parts of the classified ensemble are already struggling with excess of tourists and with difficult management challenges. There are solutions that can be tried such as the creation of alternative differentiated tourism products in peripheral places and neighboring small towns (Carreira et al., 2021b) or the design of tourism products which can also be offered in some parts of the city that are less visited because they are not UNESCO listed, thus, dispersing tourists and visitors from the main sites in overload. (Quinteiro et al., 2020)

Literature review takes into consideration the evolving paradigm of culture and cultural tourism focusing on the main recent trends. An empirical research used a survey which was conducted between June 2018 and September 2019, having resulted in 582 validated questionnaires. The variables used for the purpose of this study are specifically targeted at finding out cultural tourists' interest in having activities performed or experienced in historical sites (Zhu, 2012; Uriely, 2005; Tiberghien et al., 2017; Noor et al., 2014) and whether their interests fall within the present paradigm of cultural tourism that calls for the creation of differentiated cultural tourism products that will provide them authenticity and memorable emotional experiences.

1.1 Theoretical background

Since the World Tourism Organization (WTO, 1985) offered its first definition of 'cultural tourism' more recent and comprehensive definitions have been given by either organizations or scholars (*inter alia* Barbieri & Mahoney, 2010; Du Cros & McKercher, 2014; Richards, 2018). The current UNWTO (2017: 18) definition emphasizes that "the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination". And it goes on saying that tourists want to experience "arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions." (UNTWO, 2017:18)

Massification eventually was felt in cultural tourism models which yielded a reaction wherein tourist destinations began to give more importance to cultural tourism sub-segments or niches and the last decades have witnessed an increase in the use of culture and creativity to market tourist destinations, as culture has come to be seen as a resource that allows for the creation of differentiated content for tourism. The UNWTO *Report on Tourism and Culture Synergies* (2018) confirms this by revealing that 89% of national tourism entities target cultural tourism because of the dimension it gained and the number of people it mobilizes.

UNESCO has also broadened the concept of 'heritage' covering now a much wider range of elements. Zhang (2017: 1) goes as far as saying that visitors may not view heritage as something that is "already there" but as something in a "state of becoming", an idea that calls to mind the concept of existential authenticity, wherein authenticity is lived by the individual as a participant in experiences that activate his existential state (Wang, 1999; Zhou et al., 2013). More important than definitions, however, is the proposal of practical examples of activities that will be used to create meaningful experiences for tourists.

1.2 New opportunities derived from tourism and culture synergies

Synergies and interconnections between culture and tourism can generate mutual benefits, as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Report on *The Impact of Culture on Tourism* (2009) observed: "The increasing use of culture and creativity to market destinations is also adding to the pressure of differentiating regional identities and images, and a growing

range of cultural elements are being employed to brand and market regions" (Apud UNWTO, 2018: 81; see also Ekinci et al., 2013; González, 2008).

The apparent expansion of a form of tourism that began with the 19th Century *Grand Tour*, in which the young, mainly English, aristocrats finished their education with a long trip throughout Europe, to put it in simple terms, highlights one of the main issues in the study of cultural tourism in recent decades – the tendency for the scope of cultural tourism to expand along with an evolving notion of 'culture'. Again, this new balance reflects broader trends in the development of cultural tourism, which have progressively swung away from the consumption of tangible sites towards experiences based on intangible culture and creativity. This experiential approach is embodied in Smith's new definition of cultural tourism as: "passive, active and interactive engagement with heritage, arts and the culture(s) of communities, whereby the visitor gains new experiences of an educational, creative and/or entertaining nature." (Smith, 2016: 17)

A substantial part of cultural tourists was no longer satisfied with contemplating culture or heritage, the so called 'experience society' required that "the raw materials of culture had to be developed into holistic experiences through theming, animation, interpretation and packaging" (UNWTO, 2018: 67).

Nevertheless, the distinction between tangible and intangible heritage is really not meaningful and even artificial as Luxen (2003) argues because "Physical heritage only attains its true significance when it sheds light on its underlying values. Conversely, intangible heritage must be made incarnate in tangible manifestations, in visible signs, if it is to be conserved" (Apud UNWTO, 2018: 69). Monuments and heritage sites are given more life and appreciation by visitors when they are "animated", whether with music, poetry, performing arts or interpretation.

This is in line with the evolving paradigm of cultural (tourism) consumption wherein culture evolved from a by-product of industrial growth to being "industrialized" through the growth of cultural and creative industries to a concept of "culture" as a source of new values alongside economic ones, such as a means of creating identity, stimulating social cohesion and being a platform for tourism (and vice versa) (UNWTO, 2018: 66; Sacco et al., 2018).

Being on the UNESCO list starts to be a very controversial issue because there are many stakeholders' interests to be taken into consideration – residents, tourists, economic operators, official governing authorities, and associative entities. For many scholars (Moscardo, 2003; Mckercher et al., 2005), the big challenge in heritage managing is to reach a balance point of sustainability by being able to meet tourists' expectations and enhance their tourist experiences while preserving resources for the future generations. For that, all the stakeholders' interests and opinions should be heard, including tourists themselves.

Scholars have thus been studying the demand of WHS in the last decades departing from many perspectives and approaches, of which the following come to mind, among others. From the perspective of assessing the economic and social impacts of a UNESCO designation (VanBlarcom & Kayahan, 2011; Santa-Cruz & López Gusmán, 2017); from the stance of identifying tourists' motivations, behaviors and perceptions as a way to help managers to understand their behaviors (Kolar & Zabkar, 2010; Poria et al., 2013; Remoaldo et al, 2014); from the perspective of authenticity perception (Wang, 1999; Zhou et al., 2013; Chhabra et al., 2003; Bryce et al., 2015; Domínguez-Quintero et al., 2020; Carreira et al., 2021a); from the point of view of the benefits of having interpretation-based activities in the sites which call upon mindfulness and promote sustainability (Moscardo, 2003; Weiler et al., 2016; Ababneh, 2018; Noor et al., 2014; Landorf, 2009); from the point of view of identity issues, better engagement with the places, personal experience, cultural identity, connection with ancestors and nostalgia (Chhabra et al., 2003; Gonzalez, 2008); from the perspective of considering the UNESCO status as a guarantee of quality and singularity, attaching an image of prestige at international and national levels, causing thus a new look and interest of residents in their town and people's pride on their culture and its conservation (Evans, 2002; Jimura, 2019), and finally, there is a group of authors approaching this issue from the perspective of education, searching for knowledge and proposing immersion in memorable experiences through participating in activities within the sites, stimulating intellectual creativity and co-creation experiences (Richards, 2011, 2018; Richards & Wilson, 2006; Stone & Petrick, 2013; Richards & van der Ark, 2013; Zhang, 2017; Quinteiro et al., 2020; Sacco et al., 2018). The present research lies within the scope of this perspective.

1.3 Alternative products to meet cultural tourists' demand in Coimbra

As already mentioned above, difficult management challenges are posed by a greater influx of visitors to UNESCO listed areas. Some of the solutions proposed by scholars to mitigate the problem of over-tourism in certain sites are to diversify destinations and activities, redirecting tourist flows to areas not visited so often, incorporating educational approaches that include knowledge of the destination, its mores and traditions, involving some degree of experiencing and creativity. In the case of Coimbra, some suggestions have been advanced to attract tourists to other than the main nuclear parts of the classified ensemble and promote development in other parts of the city, such as developing the literary tourism niche, a differentiated cultural tourist product capable of re-orient tourists and visitors from the sites in overload and highlight the potential for tourism on the left bank of the Mondego River, which is currently less visited and valued, and where the places most associated with literature are located (Quinteiro et al., 2020).

Other possible solutions for the case in question would be thematic routes designed to be drivers of local development through adequately designed non-formal educational tourist programs to foster an in-depth knowledge of destinations. Education is critical in raising awareness towards sustainable development and cultivate the sense of oneness between environmental sustainability and cultural creativity. (Mammadova, 2018)

Culture assets are multi-valued; they are valued for what they are and stand for and they are valued as testimony and legacy for future generations. And, according to Saavedra-Ordinola (2016: 167) there are several other benefits of cultural heritage and its dissemination through routes with interpretation. "Among them we have: a) added value of intangibility, b) transition from the sectorial chain to value networks, c) new models of consumption and leisure, d) dynamic role of micro and small companies, e) use and experimentation with current technologies, and f) a broad sectorial spectrum involved." (our translation)

1.4 Interpretation as communication

One of the controversial issues regarding the objectives of educational tourism has to do with providing a critical view of the visited reality, so it is essential that tourists actively participate in their own process of learning. This is a complex process and requires, on the part of those who promote the visit, the use of competent and well-designed pieces of information based on local real elements as well as the adoption of effective methodologies to provide tourists with enough autonomy for the understanding of the object. One of these learning mediation strategies between the tourist object and the visitor is interpretation, a tool to be promoted by educational tourism (Saavedra-Ordinola, 2016; Tilden, 1977).

Interpretation techniques can be applied to any tourist project, being particularly important in activities such as guided tours, visits to museums, art galleries, zoos or other theme parks, protected areas, historic buildings, and archaeological sites. Regarding the case of either guided or autonomous tourist routes and considering that these projects are not just a sequence of visits but can be an important reading framework of the site, the value of interpretation is even stronger. In both cases, mediation between the tourist and the cultural heritage is essential; in guided tours the guide is fundamental, in autonomous visits, the materials supporting the visit, either in digital form or written support, are very important.

These conveying elements can motivate the audience or fail to. Recreational and educational activities will promote awareness, in both visitors and local people, about the need to utilize sustainably natural and cultural resources. Saavedra-Ordinola (2016: 162) defines a guided tour with interpretation as:

(…) a journey where the use of various senses, a message structured with simplicity, brevity and relevance to the ego, as well as the active participation of the visitor are key pieces, achieving the goals of contact between the person and the heritage, greater efficiency in its administration and better achievements in its conservation and daily social presence. (our translation)

The work of a guide with such responsibilities is huge as these professionals have to be able to identify the heritage, to create the educational and creative content and activities to "educate" visitors, and local people, in promoting the awareness about natural and cultural assets, which will in turn generate the necessary awareness for its protection and sustainable utilization. Besides needing

a cross-disciplinary training, these professionals need to differentiate messages according to their public. If we think of young visitors, for example, the message needs to be accessible to them; and the young public is very demanding nowadays and their very awareness is a guarantee of sustainability.

1.5 The way to sustainability

Focusing on the definition developed by Freeman Tilden, he considers interpretation of heritage as an educational activity "which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information" (Tilden, 1977: 9). Later, on a Conference, Tilden added that interpretation is also a recreative activity.

Some authors (Moscardo, 2009; Noor et al., 2014, among others) refer to the concept of "mindfulness" – "the state of mind in which the tourist is actively engaged with the site or event and mentally processing information pertinent to the experience" (Noor et al., 2014: 140). "Actively engaged" visitors tend to better appreciate the sites and are more permeable to conservation and sustainability concerns. One of the factors that can induce the state of "mindfulness" is the information and interpretation given to visitors.

The success of the tourist experience associated with tourist itineraries is largely based on the type of resource, on which the itinerary is built, as well as on its features. However, it must be emphasized that the content presented must be appropriate to the different audiences, and guides should be trained to do so in a specialized and competent manner.

Heritage and cultural assets can then be used for sustainable development in various sectors. However, indicators and quantifying elements such as figures and statistics become paramount to support decision-makers and developers.

The following quantitative research and data analysis will give answers to the six questions this study intends to enlighten:

1) How motivated are visitors by different activities, including those approaching cultural, historical, and literary topics that provide knowledge and education?

2) Are visitors more interested in only visiting heritage sites and museums per se or in sites which offer participatory activities?

3) How is authenticity of sites and performances perceived by visitors?

4) What is the degree of overall satisfaction with the attractions, activities, and experiences?

5) Does cultural motivation influence the perception of authenticity (object-based and existential authenticity) of the UNESCO heritage site?

6) Do authenticity perceptions (object-based and existential authenticity) of the heritage site influence tourists' overall satisfaction with the experience?

To answer questions 5) and 6) the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Cultural motivation influences positively authenticity perception.

H1a: Cultural motivation influences positively object-based authenticity perception.

H1b: Cultural motivation influences positively existential authenticity perception.

H2: Authenticity influences positively tourists' overall satisfaction.

H2a: Object-based authenticity perception influences positively tourists' overall satisfaction with the visit.

H2b: Existential authenticity perception influences positively tourists' overall satisfaction with the visit.

H3: Object-based authenticity perception influences positively existential authenticity perception.

H4: Object-based authenticity influences satisfaction positively through existential authenticity.

2. METHOD, SAMPLE, AND DATA

2.1 Study site and context

Coimbra, in Central Portugal, houses one of the oldest universities in Europe whose history goes back to the 13th Century. In June 2013, the ensemble University of Coimbra - Alta and Sofia, composed of many medieval palaces, churches, a baroque library, museums, and a Botanical Garden,

was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list. In July 2019, the Machado de Castro National Museum was integrated into this listed group. This designation was due both to its material heritage and for its intangible legacy. The increase in the number of visitors is remarkable, which also poses critical challenges to cultural tourism managers.

2.2 Data collection

The research took place between June 2018 and September 2019. The methodology used was the questionnaire survey, with a total of 582 validated questionnaires being collected.

The questionnaire was designed with a diversified panel of variables within the scope of a wider research project to assess the tourist destination of Coimbra as a WHS both in terms of socio-economic, cultural and attitudinal impacts, its image, motivation and tourist satisfaction and knowledge of the different monuments of the city, and to evaluate impacts in the peripheral areas.

Based on the total study population – total number of tourists visiting Coimbra, according to the National Statistics Institute (INE) – the maximum margin of error associated with a sample of 582 respondents is 4.1%, with a 95% confidence level.

The sample obtained is characterized by a similar distribution between sexes, 51% female and 49% male; a balanced age distribution, with 38% of respondents falling in the 20-34 age group, 24% in the 35-49 age group, 15% in the 50-64 age group, 14% were up to 19 and the remaining 7% were over 65 years. 54% of respondents were foreign tourists and 46% national tourists. In addition, 59% of respondents were visiting Coimbra for the first time and 41% had done so before.
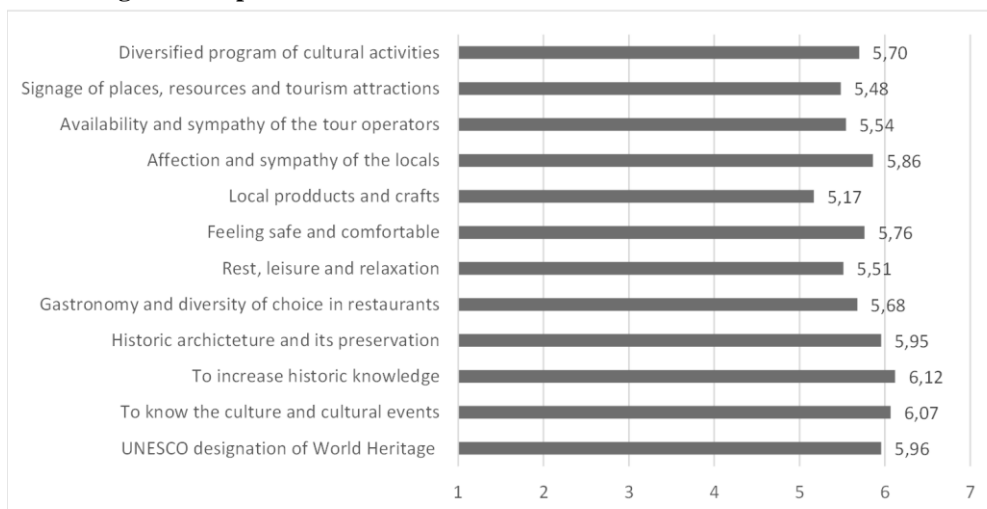
The variables used in this study intended to assess the respondents' main motivation factors, to find out what they looked for in their visit, to assess their perception of the authenticity in places visited and their degree of satisfaction. In the analysis of results, variables valued on the 7-point Likert scale were used, where 1 meant "completely in disagreement", and 7 meant "totally in agreement".

A survey by questionnaire was implemented – a technique most used in the field of tourism studies, improving the quality of the research with an original matrix of information.

3. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

To obtain answers to the first two questions – what motivates visitors to come to WH Coimbra, monuments and museums per se or do they value participatory activities in them that would provide knowledge and education? – they were asked three questions: what is the importance of 12 motivational elements for the choice of Coimbra, what did they look for in their visit and which monuments they visited as well as the degree of satisfaction they derived from the visit. The answers are displayed in Figures 1, 2 and 3.

Figure 1. Importance of motivational elements for the choice of Coimbra

Motivational element	Value
Diversified program of cultural activities	5,70
Signage of places, resources and tourism attractions	5,48
Availability and sympathy of the tour operators	5,54
Affection and sympathy of the locals	5,86
Local prodducts and crafts	5,17
Feeling safe and comfortable	5,76
Rest, leisure and relaxation	5,51
Gastronomy and diversity of choice in restaurants	5,68
Historic archicteture and its preservation	5,95
To increase historic knowledge	6,12
To know the culture and cultural events	6,07
UNESCO designation of World Heritage	5,96

Source: questionnaires administered by the authors

Answers to the first question reveal that the two most important motivational factors were "to increase historic knowledge" and "to know the culture and cultural events" and the "UNESCO designation" comes in the third place, immediately followed by interest in "historic architecture and its preservation".

**Figure 2. What do you look for in your visit?**
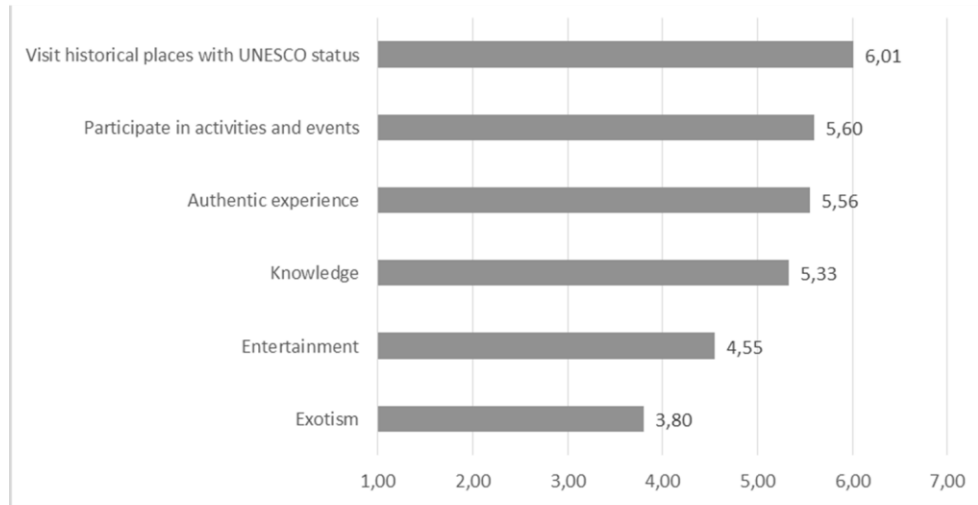
Source: questionnaires administered by the authors

It is interesting that in the answers to the question "What do you look for in your visit?" (Figure 2), "to visit historical places with UNESCO status" comes first. It is interesting; however, not surprising, because it is expected that when visiting a WHS for the first time the listed assets be the prevailing motivational element. And, in fact, the research showed that 59% were visiting Coimbra for the first time.

We can only speculate that the other 41% had that priority in their first visit, and then revealed interests that are very much in line with the three most important motivational elements for those coming for the first time: "participate in events", live "authentic experiences" and obtain "knowledge".

To the question "Are visitors interested in only visiting heritage sites and museums per se or in sites which offer participatory activities?", a list of sites was given which usually offer participatory activities and their degree of satisfaction with those activities was also enquired.

Figure 3. Visited monuments with participatory activities and degree of satisfaction
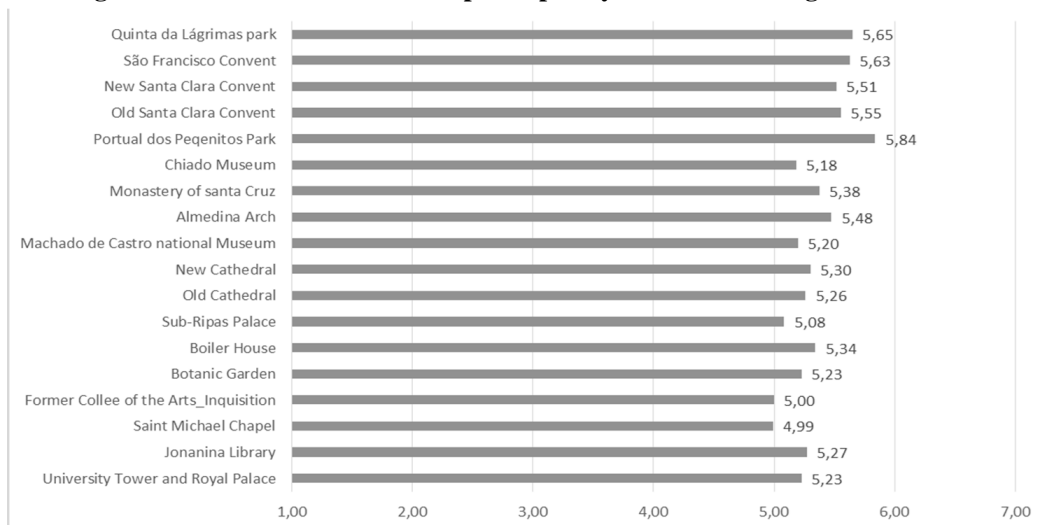
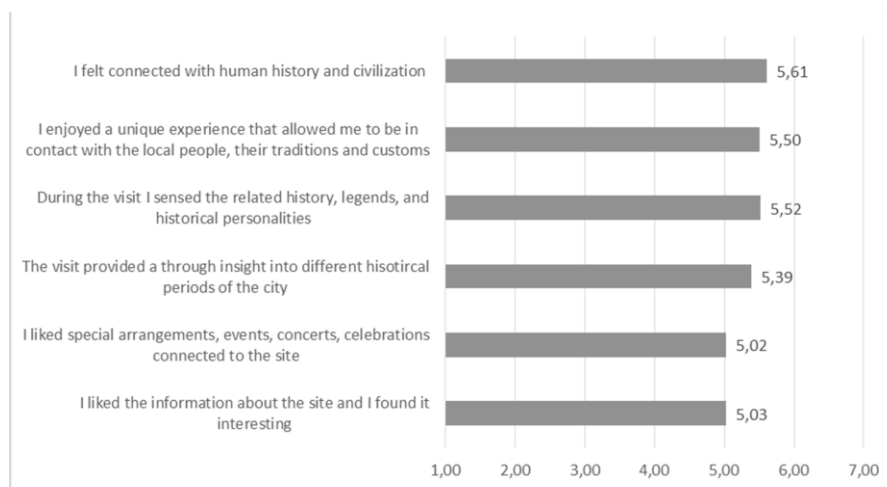Source: questionnaires administered by the authors

The average results reveal a very close percentage of visits and degree of satisfaction with participatory activities in two places – a thematic park "Portugal dos Pequenitos" and the "Quinta das

Lágrimas park" – both with innovative activities indoors and outdoors. Moreover, the "Quinta das Lágrimas park" also has an exquisite five-star hotel, a modern spa, a top-ranked restaurant, an outdoor amphitheater for concerts and many symbolic places that celebrate a real and royal forbidden love story.

Most of the other places highly ranked also provide concerts, art exhibitions or performing arts. The fact remains, however, that on a scale from 1 to 7, the satisfaction rate never reaches 6, which must mean that much can still be done to satisfy these visitors.

Visitors' engagement can be influenced by their motivations, perceptions of authenticity, attitude (preconceived ideas, previous awareness) and their notions of authenticity are largely driven by connection and association with the place and quality of experience of the site (Bryce et al., 2015; Zhou et al., 2013; Kolar & Zabcar, 2010). The answers to the question "What is your perception of authenticity of sites and activities performed?" are displayed in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Perception of authenticity

Source: questionnaires administered by the authors

The concept of authenticity has been a central topic within the framework of cultural tourism research studies and many scholars and researchers have often approached it from different ideological stances, among others Wang, 1999; Zhu, 2012; Zhou et al., 2013; Bryce et al., 2015; Kolar et al., 2010; Chhabra et al., 2003; and it still remains a concept that has not reached consensus and whose limitations and functionalities continue to be explored.
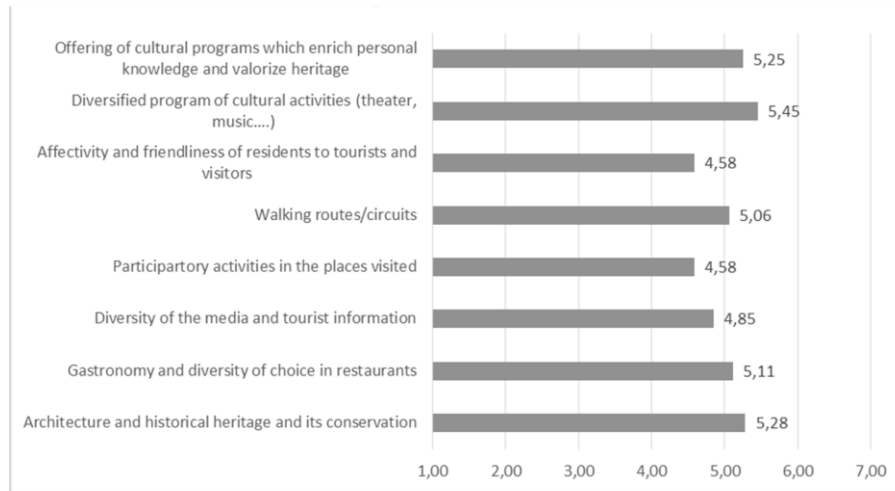
Wang's three-fold typology of authenticity in tourist experiences has reached a high level of acceptance having been used in many researches. Wang (1999: 352) identifies three types of authenticity: 'objective authenticity' which is based on the properties of the object itself; 'constructive authenticity' (or symbolic authenticity) which refers to the authenticity projected over toured objects by tourists or tourism producers in terms of their expectations, beliefs, preferences or desires; and 'existential authenticity' (activity-related) which refers to a potential existential state of being that can be activated through immersion in tourist activities, regardless of the authentic features of toured objects.

Objective authenticity derives then from visitors' perception of architectural features, when the site maintains a strong identity character be it through landscape or building materials, from a feeling of a sense of antiquity, long history, and harmony with the environment. Existential authenticity has to do with the subjective experience lived by the visitor. It is associated with tourists' feelings and emotions when the site provides a unique spiritual experience and intimate feeling of human history and culture or when it is perceived in experience – cultural, gastronomic, involvement with the landscape or the local people.

Judging from the answers given and displayed in Figure 4, authenticity was perceived, either from the physical places visited, from knowledge/information gained/communicated or from an activation of an existential state that allowed visitors to experience the place through the resources, the culture and contact with people, their traditions and mores.

The perceived value and authenticity concur to a feeling of satisfaction and an attitude that describes a person's favorable feeling about a site, an object, or a destination. Although visitors may not visit again, they provide positive word-of-mouth (Ekinci, 2013). The answers about overall satisfaction with the attractions, activities and experiences are displayed in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Degree of overall satisfaction with the experience

Offering of cultural programs which enrich personal knowledge and valorize heritage	5,25
Diversified program of cultural activities (theater, music....)	5,45
Affectivity and friendliness of residents to tourists and visitors	4,58
Walking routes/circuits	5,06
Participartory activities in the places visited	4,58
Diversity of the media and tourist information	4,85
Gastronomy and diversity of choice in restaurants	5,11
Architecture and historical heritage and its conservation	5,28

Source: questionnaires administered by the authors

The three better-ranked activities were "diversified program of cultural activities", "architecture and historical heritage and its conservation", and "cultural programs which enrich personal knowledge and valorize heritage", followed by two other cultural experiences: gastronomy and walking routes.

To respond to the questions 5) and 6) two analyses were conducted. First, an exploratory factor analysis has been carried out to check for the dimensionality of the variables, cultural motivation, authenticity, and satisfaction. Second, a regression analysis based on Partial Least Squares (PLS), a variance-based structural equation modelling technique, has been employed to test the hypotheses H1 to H4.

Results from the exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation reveal that the indicator loadings higher than 0.7 support the one-factor structure for the variables, cultural motivation, and satisfaction. In fact, the indicators used to describe the factor structure of these variables, strongly load on the same, stand-alone factor. Indicator loadings higher than 0.7 for the variable authenticity seem to support the two-factor structure, named as object-based authenticity and existential authenticity in accordance to Kolar and Zabkar (2010) research. For the purpose of our study, we have decided to keep the two dimensions of authenticity as two variables with a one-factor structure each as also observed when running the exploratory factor analysis for each dimension separately. The reliability of the latent factors structure is tested calculating Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951). All latent factor scales present a very good internal consistency, with alpha coefficients always higher than 0.80. Thus, the one factor structure of the variables suggests defining the latent variables as reflective variables for the subsequent analysis based on PLS regression analysis.

A PLS regression model must be analysed and interpreted in two stages: the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model allows evaluating if the latent variables are measured correctly through the items observed. The structural model is assessed through the magnitude, sign, and significance of the regression coefficients.

Measurement model. The assessment of the measurement model for reflective contructs entails an evaluation of reliability and validity (Hair et al., 2017). The indicators of the four reflective constructs meet reliability requirements since, in general, the factor loadings are higher than 0.7 as also observed from the exploratory factor analysis. Composite Reliability for the constructs are greater than 0.7 and the Average Variance Extracted of the constructs are higher than 0.5, therefore, convergent validity is acceptable for all constructs (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, variables achieve discriminant validity following the Hetrotrait-Monotrait ratio of Correlations (HTMT) criteria. HTMT inference tests show that none of the confidence intervals contain the value one, hence this

result suggests that each construct is distinct from other constructs (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015).

Structural model. In the second stage of analysis, the structural model was assessed. Table 1 shows the path coefficients and the hypotheses testing by using 10,000 bootstrap resamples. From Table 1, it can be observed that cultural motivation influences significantly and positively object-based and existential authenticity (β_1= 0.217 and β_2= 0.197). Hence, Hypotheses H1a and H1b are confirmed. Object-based and existential authenticity exert a positive and significant influence on satisfaction (β_3= 0.564 and β_4= 0.324). Thus, Hypotheses H2a and H2b are confirmed. It is also observed that object-based authenticity has a significant and positive influence on existential authenticity (β_5= 0.564). Thus, Hypothesis H3 is confirmed. Hypothesis H4 is also supported since a positive and significant effect of object-based authenticity on satisfaction through existential authenticity is observed (β_6= 0.183). The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), as an approximate fit of the factor model (Henseler, Hubona, & Ray, 2016), is also calculated. SRMR model fits values of 0.081, below 0.10, considered as acceptable for PLS structural equation modelling.

Table 1: Structural Model results

Relationships	$R^2_{SAT} = 0.542**$	t-student pvalue	Hypotheses
Direct Effect			
H1a: Cultural motivation →Objecbased Authenticity ($\beta_1 > 0$)	β_1= 0.217*	t=2.57 pvalue=0.0052	Supported
H1b: Cultural motivation→Existential Authenticity ($\beta_2 > 0$)	β_2= 0.197*	t=2.05 pvalue=0.0204	Supported
H2a: Object-based Authenticity -→Satisfaction ($\beta_4 > 0$)	β_4= 0.324**	t=3.86 pvalue=0.00006	Supported
H2b: Existential Authenticity→ Satisfaction ($\beta_5 > 0$)	β_5= 0.315**	t=3.25 pvalue=0.000611	Supported
H3: Object-based Authenticity-→Existential Authenticity ($\beta_3 > 0$)	β_3= 0.564**	t=4.68 p<0.00001	Supported
Mediation effect			
H4: Object-based Authenticity→Existential Authenticity→Satisfaction ($\beta_6 > 0$)	β_5=0.183*	t=1.986 pvalue=0.0238	Supported

** p<0.01 *p<0.05. Bootstrapping based on n=10000 subsample. A one-tailed for a t-student distribution is applied.

3.1 Discussion and conclusions

The results of the research carried out seem to sustain the hypothesis stated in the theoretical part wherein cultural tourists who visit Coimbra in the post-UNESCO fit into the current new paradigm of culture, a concept in which the cultural tourist seeks knowledge about the places, experiences through participation in "edutainment" activities in the places visited, interpretation of the places visited, cultural routes or itineraries in which well-prepared guides provide access to the collective history of the place, its events, characters, spaces and also legends.

Interpretation activities are essential to assign value and meaning, because meaning is generated when connections are made between certain spaces, the events that took place there and the people involved.

Our results from the regression analysis are in accordance with Bryce et al. (2015) research. As observed from our study, Bryce et al. (2015) demonstrated that cognitive attitude such as knowledge or ignorance of the history of the visited place affects the perception of its authenticity. From the findings, the perception of authenticity (both objective and existential) determines the visitors' degree of satisfaction with the experience. These relationships are also observed in Bryce et al (2015) study. Furthermore, the influence of objective authenticity on existential authenticity analyzed in our study has also been showed in Kolar and Zabkar (2010) research. This last result is interesting since this relationship determines a higher influence of the objective authenticity on satisfaction when considering the indirect effect of objective authenticity on satisfaction through existential authenticity (total effect=direct effect-0.324- + indirect effect-0.183- = 0.507).

3.2 Implications, limitations, and future research

Information about the perceptions of authenticity by visitors or tourists and their degree of satisfaction with whatever is offered is a tool with implications for the tourism industry as far as marketing and segmentation are concerned. It is also important for the municipal and cultural entities, and private businesses, because it can provide an opportunity to foster new sustainable forms of territorial fruition, which require the design of methods and technical tools, oriented towards promoting and safeguarding resources.

The dangers associated with badly managed tourism development are real: loss of some of the attributes for which properties have been inscribed on the UNESCO List; destruction of certain aspects of urban landscape by allowing overcrowding and indiscriminate commercialization of culture, among others.

This study revealed that the WH sites and the cultural offer around them as well as in other parts of the city correspond to visitors' expectations, allowing them to perceive authenticity to a great degree and feel satisfaction to a certain degree but never to its maximum, not even close. Thus, although many other studies remain to be conducted to enlighten this topic, it seems that visitors are culturally very demanding which makes it a very challenging task for those entities responsible to create alternative products, more educational contents, resorting to interpretation techniques, and creative utilization of resources.

Digital humanities, for example, are a new way of communicating content and a possibility to show resources in different ways. Educational digital contents may provide visitors as well as residents and professionals such as teachers with material to be used creatively.

REFERENCES

Ababneh, Abdelkader (2018), Tour guides and heritage interpretation of the past at the archaeological site of Jarash, Jordan, *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, Vol. 13, nº 3, pp. 257-272. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873x.2017.1321003.

Barbieri, Carla & Mahoney, Edward (2010), Cultural tourism behaviour and preferences among the live-performing arts audience: An application of the univorous-omnivorous framework, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 12, nº 5, pp. 481-496. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.767.

Bryce, Derek; Curran, Ross; O'Gorman, Kevin & Taheri, Babak (2015), Visitors' engagement and authenticity: Japanese heritage consumption. *Tourism Management*, Vol. 46, pp. 571-581. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.08.012.

Carreira, Vivina; González-Rodríguez, Rosario & Díaz-Fernández, Carmen (2021a), The relevance of motivation, authenticity and destination image to explain future behaviour intention in a UNESCO World Heritage Site, *Current Issues in Tourism*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13 683500.2021.1905617.

Carreira, Vivina; Azeredo, Joana; González-Rodriguez, R., & Díaz-Fernández, C. (2021b). The role of tourism education in overtourism and destination management. In Sharma, A. & Hassan, A. (Eds). *Over-tourism as Destination Risk: Impacts and Solutions*. Emerald Publishing, pp. 35-48. doi:10.1108/978-1-83909-706-520211003

Chhabra, Deepak; Healy, Robert & Sills, Erin (2003), Staged authenticity and heritage tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research,* Vol. 30, nº 3, pp. 702-719. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383(03)00044-6

Cronbach, Lee J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, Vol. 16, nº. 3, pp. 297–334.

Domínguez-Quintero, Ana; González-Rodríguez, Rosario & Paddison, Brendan (2020), The mediating role of experience quality on authenticity and satisfaction in the context of cultural-heritage tourism, *Current Issues in Tourism,* Vol. 23, nº 2, pp. 248-260. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2018.1502261.

Du Cros, Hilary & McKercher, Bob (2014), *Cultural Tourism*, London/New York, Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203790601.

Ekinci, Yuksel; Sirakaya-Turk, Ercan & Preciado, Sandra (2013), Symbolic consumption of tourism destination brands, *Journal of Business Research,* Vol. 66, nº 6, pp. 711-718. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.09.008.

Evans, Graeme (2002), Living in a world heritage city: stakeholders in the dialectic of the universal and particular, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Vol. 8, nº 2, pp.117-135. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250220143913.

González, Miguel Vidal (2008), Intangible heritage tourism and identity, *Tourism Management*, Vol. 29, nº 4, pp. 807-810. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2007.07.003.

Hair, Joseph F.; Hult, G. Tomas. M.; Hult; Ringle, Christian & Sarstedt, Marko (2014). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Henseler, Jörg; Ringle, Christian, M. & Sarstedt, Marko (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modelling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 43, pp. 115–135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8.

Henseler, Jörg; Hubona, Geoffrey & Ray, Pauline A. (2016). "Using PLS Path Modeling in New Technology Research: Updated Guidelines. *Industrial Management & Data Systems,* V. 116, nº 1, pp. 2–20.

Jimura, T. (2019), "World Heritage Sites. Tourism, Local Communities and Conservation Activities" in Jimura, T. (Ed.), *Local Communities in and around World Heritage Sites*, Wallingford, CABI, pp. 65-80. https://doi.org/10.1079/9781786392688.0000.

Kolar, Tomaz & Zabkar, Vesna (2010), A consumer-based model of authenticity: An oxymoron or the foundation of cultural heritage marketing? *Tourism Management*, Vol., 31, nº 5, pp. 652-664. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.07.010.

Landorf, Christine (2009), Managing for sustainable tourism: a review of six cultural World Heritage Sites. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, Vol. 17, nº 1, pp. 53-70. https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580802159719.

Luxen, Jean-Louis (2003), *The Intangible Dimension of Monuments and Sites with Reference to the UNESCO World Heritage List*, Victoria Falls, ICOMOS, 14th General Assembly.

McKercher, Bob; Ho, Pamela & du Cros, Hilary (2005), Relationship between tourism and cultural heritage management. Evidence from Hong Kong, *Tourism Management*, Vol. 26, nº 4, pp. 539-548. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2004.02.018.

Mammadova, Aida (2018), Education for the creative cities: Awareness raising on urban challenges and biocultural preservation, *Journal of Education and Reading*, Vol. 7, nº 2, pp. 60-64. https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v7n2p60.

Moscardo, Gianna (2009), "Understanding tourist experience through mindfulness theory" in Kozak, Metin & DeCrop, Alain (Eds). *Handbook of Tourism Behavior*, New York, Routledge, pp. 99-115. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203881804.pt4.

Moscardo, Gianna (2003), Interpretation and sustainable tourism: functions, examples and principles, *Journal of Tourism Studies*, Vol. 14, nº. 1, pp. 112-123. https://doi.org/10.33 16/ielapa.200305730.

Noor, Shuhaida; Rasoolimanesh, Mostafa; Jaafar, Mastura & Ganesan, Vithya, (2014), What influences visitor mindfulness at World Heritage Sites? *Tourism, Culture & Communication*, nº 3, pp. 139–150. http://dx.doi.org/10.3727/109830415X14213698267271.

Poria, Yaniv; Reichel, Arie & Cohen, Raviv (2013), Tourists perceptions of World Heritage Site and its designation, *Tourism Management*, Vol. 35, 272-274. https://doi.org/10.10 16/j.tourman.2012.02.011.

Quinteiro, Sílvia; Carreira, Vivina & Gonçalves, Alexandra (2020), Coimbra as a literary tourism destination – landscapes of literature. *The International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research,* Vol. 14, nº 3, pp 361-372. https://doi.org/ 10.1108/IJCTHR-10-2019-0176.

Remoaldo, Paula; Ribeiro, José; Vareiro, Laurentina & Santos, José (2014), Tourists' perceptions of world heritage destinations: The case of Guimarães (Portugal), *Tourism and Hospitality Research,* Vol. 14, nº 4, pp. 206-218. https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358414541457

Richards, Greg (2018), Cultural tourism: A review of recent research and trends, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, Vol. 36, pp. 12-21. https://doi.org/ 10.1016/j. jhtm.2018.03.005.

Richards, Greg (2011), Creativity and tourism: The state of the art, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 38, nº 4, pp. 1225–1253. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2011.07.008.

Richards, Greg & Wilson, Julie (2006) Developing creativity in tourist experiences: A solution to the serial reproduction of culture? *Tourism Management*, Vol. 27, nº 6, pp 1209-1223. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2005.06.002.

Richards, Greg & van der Ark, Andries (2013), Dimensions of cultural consumption among tourists: Multiple correspondence analysis, *Tourism Management*, 37, pp. 71-76. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.01.007.

Saavedra-Ordinola, Deyvi (2016), La comunicación del patrimonio a través de los itinerarios interpretativos y su aporte al desarrollo de la economía creativa, *Mercurio Peruano*, nº 529, pp. 154-169.

Saaco, Pier Luigi; Ferilli, Guido & Blessi, Giorgio (2018), From Culture1.0 to Culture 3.0: Three socio-technical regimes of social and economic value creation through culture, and their impact on European cohesion policies, *Sustainability*, Vol. 10, nº 11, 3923. https://doi.org/10.3390/su10113923.

Santa-Cruz, Francisco & López-Guzmán, Tomás (2017), Culture, tourism and World Heritage Sites, *Tourism Management Perspectives*, Vol. 24, pp. 111-116. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.08.004.

Smith, Melanie (2016), *Issues in Cultural Tourism Studies*, 3rd Edition, London, Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315767697.

Stone, Mathew & Petrick, James (2013), The educational benefits of travel experiences: A literature review, *Journal of Travel Research*, Vol. 52, nº 6, pp. 731-744. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287513500588.

Tiberghien, Guillaume; Bremner, Hamish & Milnec, Simon (2017), Performance and visitors' perception of authenticity in ecocultural tourism, *Tourism Geographies*, Vol. 19, Nº 2, pp. 287-300. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2017.1285958.

Tilden, Freeman (1977), *Interpreting Our Heritage*, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press.

UNWTO (2018), *Tourism and Culture Synergies*, UNWTO, Madrid. https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284418978.

UNWTO (2017), *Definitions. Committee on Tourism and Competitiveness*. https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420858 .

Uriely, Natan (2005), The tourist experience: Conceptual developments, *Annals of Tourism Research,* Vol. 32, Nº 1, pp. 199-216. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2004.07.008.

VanBlarcom, Brian & Kayahan, Cevat (2011), Assessing the economic impact of a UNESCO World Heritage designation, *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, Vol. 6 nº 2, pp. 143-164. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873x.2011.561858.

Wang, Ning (1999), Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience, *Annals of Tourism Research,* Vol. 26, nº 2, pp. 349-370. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-7383(98)00103-0.

Weiler, Betty; Skibins, Jeffrey & Markwell, Kevin (2016), Commentary: Interpretation and tourism: holy grail or emperor's robes, *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, Vol. 10, nº 2, pp. 235-238. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijcthr-03-2016-0026.

WTO (1985), *The State's Role in Protecting and Promoting Culture as a Factor of Tourism Development,* Madrid, WTO.

Zhang, J. J. (2017). Rethinking "heritage" in post-conflict tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 66, 194-196. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2017.06.005.

Zhou, Quilo; Zhang, Jie & Edelheim, Johan (2013). Rethinking traditional Chinese culture: A consumer-based model regarding the authenticity of Chinese calligraphic landscape, *Tourism Management*, 36, pp. 99-112. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.11.008.

Zhu, Yujie (2012). Performing heritage: Rethinking authenticity in tourism, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 39, nº 3, pp. 1495-1513. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2012.04.003.