

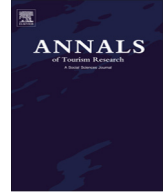


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# Creating memorable experiences in a reuse heritage site



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### ABSTRACT

This study identified hypothetical relationships amongst motivation, nostalgia, and memorable tourism experiences in a restaurant reconstructed from an old railway station. We administered a face-to-face questionnaire survey and collected 615 valid questionnaires at the South Tainan Railway Station in Taiwan. The results showed significantly positive relationships between culinary attraction and cultural inheritance and nostalgia, as well as a correlation between nostalgia and memorable tourism experiences. Structural equation modelling analysis verified that nostalgia mediated the effect of personal emotion on memorable tourism experiences. This paper provides suggestions for enhancing memorable experiences and guidance regarding reused buildings at heritage sites.

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### Introduction

In the current 'experience economy' era, business providers stage experiences to create memorable events for customers (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Stage experiences are not a new tourism phenomenon. The category of authentic experience has been discussed since Boorstin (1964) first criticised mass tourism attractions as pseudoevents, and MacCannell (1973) described them as staged authenticity. Pine and Gilmore (1998) indicated that enterprises must provide original, sincere, and authentic services or products to customers. Previous eras have passed; however, customers can have authentic experiences of events from these eras.

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Reusing and restoring existing heritage sites for continued use have become a creative challenge in the architecture discipline (Powell, 1999; Schittich, 2003). This strategy for preserving historic sites has become a relevant topic in recent years (Bhati, Pryce, & Chaiechi, 2014; Bullen & Love, 2011; Ferretti, Bottero, & Mondini, 2014; Yung & Chan, 2012). Tainan was the political and military centre of Taiwan from 1624 to 1885. It was a gateway to Taiwan in the Dutch colonial period and flourished through the Zheng regime and Qing Dynasty (Tourism Bureau of Tainan City Government, 2014). Numerous old buildings have been reconstructed as restaurants or exhibition spaces in Tainan. Pleasant memories of the past are combined with a sense of loss associated with the realisation that the past cannot be recreated. The combination of art, old amenities, and service products as well as memorable experiences and old stories of reconstructed buildings elicit customer nostalgia (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Nostalgia comprises not only emotions but also cognitive responses (Holak & Havlena, 1998). Sedikides, Wildschut, and Baden (2004) stated that nostalgia is a disproportionately positive emotion with bittersweet elements and a yearning for aspects of the past, including events, people, and sights. Some researchers have indicated a positive relationship between motivation and nostalgia (Poria, Bulter, & Airey, 2003; Timothy, 1997). Tourist motivation can be a positive effector for eliciting nostalgia at historic attractions (Poria et al., 2003). An old photograph, a book, or a song can evoke memories of a previous period, as reflected in the consumer market, in which numerous dining and exhibition spaces have been reconstructed from old buildings in the past decade. Such spaces create a nostalgic atmosphere and evoke precious memories for tourists (Tu, 2012).

Pine and Gilmore (1998) argued that experiences are memorable. They regarded experiences as economic goods that can provide unforgettable memories through supporting services and scenarios provided in surroundings during the consumption process. The more senses that an experience involves, the more effective and memorable it is (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Winter, 2004). 'Peak experiences' are the experiences of attractions that constitute the major motivations for tourism (Quan & Wang, 2004), and whether food consumption in tourism can become a part of peak experiences depends substantially on its memorability in the overall tourist experience. Memories influence destination choices, because people often nostalgically revisit places associated with positive memories of an earlier journey (Marschall, 2014). Although several researchers have elucidated the importance of memorable experiences in tourist activities, few relevant empirical studies have been conducted (Hung, Lee, & Huang, 2014; Ali, Ryu, & Hussain, 2015). Therefore, this study aimed to determine how to create a memorable tourism experience at reused buildings at heritage sites; verified the relationships amongst motivation, nostalgia, and memorable tourism experiences; and modelled the variables at a train station reused as a restaurant heritage site.

## Literature review and hypotheses

### *Reuse heritage*

The reuse of buildings for new purposes is not new. Throughout history, people have constantly changed the uses of buildings as the buildings age and become inappropriate for the uses for which they were built (Amayu, 2014). The conversions of the Athena Temple in Syracuse into a church by about 800 and Roman theatres into apartments in the Middle Ages are testaments of how ancient the practice of building reuse is (de Vries, 1990 cited in Velthuis & Spennemann, 2007). Adaptive reuse can be defined as any work or intervention for changing the capacity, function, or performance of a building to suit new conditions or requirements (Yung & Chan, 2012).

Reusing heritage sites involves a gentrification process that is an integral part of heritage preservation and promotion at many tourist destinations. Repurposing vacant or run-down heritage sites has a positive impact on the local community. Tourists may have excellence experiences at repurposed historic properties (Lee & Chhabra, 2015). Protecting old buildings by providing them with new functions whilst retaining their original characteristics facilitates saving historic buildings and benefits local economies (Dinçer & Ertugral, 2003). Several facilities were associated with the colonial tea industry in Ceylon, including clubs for planters and the houses and bungalows of managers and

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