

A STUDY OF GENERATION Z PERCEPTIONS ABOUT MUSEUMS QUALITY AND E-WOM INTENTIONS

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Introdução

Museums are educational institutions that nurture and maintain the cultural and scientific mankind heritage of humanity. New technologies, including social networks, handheld devices, personal guides, panels, animations, virtual reality, and projections, have been adopted by curators and museums managers, in order to enable visitors to gain deeper and more exciting experiences. Generation Z have been users of technologies users since their childhood, worldwide. Moreover, in museums, this generation expects not only education but fun.

Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

In fact, their satisfaction can result in recommendations. But how can technologies influence Generation Z' satisfaction and E-WOM intentions? And how much satisfaction can increase Gen Z engagement on social networks, leading them to recommend museums and to persuade others? This study aims to understand these technologies—analyzing their impact on Generation Z's satisfaction with museums' services; on their experiences and its influence on perceptions of quality and intentions to share e-WOM recommendations; and technologies' importance to museums' strategies.

Fundamentação Teórica

Museum managers around the world have realized that entertainment, leisure, and education are legitimate parts of their repertoire (Gosling, Coelho, & Resende, 2014). In a context where competition of leisure alternatives and tourist attractions is high, museums should focus intensely on visitor satisfaction, which can contribute to the return of visitors and to word of mouth recommendations. Technologies can support museums' operations in different ways. It is possible to enhance experiences and turn the visitor in an immersive and emotional service.

Metodologia

This study analyses data from 298 questionnaires from youngsters about nine different museums in the city of São Paulo. Specifically, it compares data regarding three museums (which had a high-level use of technology) against six traditional museums (which had a low-level use of technology). It analyzes students' perception of quality—doing so based on Frochot's and Hugues' (2000) HISTOQUAL scale; perceived arousal; and WOM recommendation intentions (Kim et al. 2012, Bruyn & Lilien 2008).

Análise dos Resultados

Results show a strong correlation between quality perceptions and arousal (0,68) and between arousal and E-WOM intentions (0,87) when a higher level of IT usage was presented. It is possible to see that museums with higher levels of technology usage were evaluated as being better in each of the dimensions of the HISTOQUAL scale, when we compared the means of these with those of museums with lower ones. Higher differences occurred in the presentation dimension, where technology is evaluated. Also, museums that have offered personal guides were evaluated as being better on communication.

Conclusão

Considering Generation Z as being an important part of visitors of any museum, today and in future, it is necessary adopt all kinds of technology to increase their experience at museums. That is a strategic issue for museums. Despite technology levels allowing a higher emotional charge and greater e-WOM recommendation intentions, operational issues are already important. Instead of just increasing spending on technology, it is better to spend budget on training and internal organization—to avoid any risk of conflict. Technologies can help to make content more understandable.

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