

The influence of museum's brand image and satisfaction on visitors' loyalty

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Abstract:

While the emergence of museums as brands (Caldwell, 2000) has represented the integration between marketing and museum management, the impacts of museum's brand image and satisfaction on loyalty have not been deeply analysed among museum visitors. Museum managers are interested on finding out the efficient means to attract and retain visitors to heritage assets. To this respect, visitor satisfaction is the core component of museum experience and brand image is the value of the museum's brand in the minds of visitors.

Although it seems reasonable that increased levels of satisfaction are likely to lead higher levels of loyalty behaviours, past studies conducted in museum contexts have concluded opposing results. In order to assist scholar and management advancement, it is worthwhile determining the influence of these two antecedents on visitors' loyalty in museums. Visitors' loyalty has been conceptualised as a dimension that comprises revisit and recommendations intentions.

Heritage tourism is an economic activity which main aim is to attract visitors so as to ensure the sustainability of cultural assets. Therefore, the current research also explores the extent to which loyalty dimension has an impact on willingness to pay more for the entrance fee.

This research¹ empirically tests a model by using partial least squares path modelling (PLSPM) regression. The study setting has been the most visited museum in Madrid, Reina Sofia Museum. Two hundred and ninety-nine visitors were surveyed. Results will significantly produce noteworthy directions for future research.

Keywords:

Loyalty, satisfaction, brand image, museums, willingness to pay more

La influencia de la imagen del museo y la satisfacción en la lealtad de los visitantes

Si bien la aparición de los museos como marcas ha representado la integración entre el marketing y la gestión de los museos, no se han analizado en profundidad los impactos que tienen la imagen de marca del museo y la satisfacción en la lealtad de los visitantes a los museos. Los gestores de los museos están interesados en identificar los medios más eficaces para atraer visitantes a los bienes patrimoniales. En este sentido, la satisfacción del visitante es el componente principal de la experiencia en el museo y la imagen de marca es el valor de la marca en la mente de los visitantes.

Aunque parece razonable que mayores niveles de satisfacción inducen a un mayor grado de lealtad, algunos estudios realizados en museos han ofrecido resultados opuestos. Con el fin de ayudar a la gestión y al avance académico, resulta interesante determinar la influencia de estos dos antecedentes sobre la lealtad de visitantes en los museos. La lealtad del visitante ha

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sido conceptualizada como una dimensión que comprende las intenciones de volver a visitar y recomendar el recurso patrimonial.

El turismo patrimonial es una actividad económica cuyo objetivo principal es atraer y retener visitantes para garantizar la sostenibilidad de los bienes patrimoniales. Por ello, esta investigación también analiza el grado en que la dimensión lealtad tiene un impacto en la disposición de los visitantes a pagar más por el precio de la entrada.

Este estudio² analiza empíricamente un modelo mediante el uso de la regresión por mínimos cuadrados parciales (PLSPM). El ámbito del estudio ha sido el museo más visitado de Madrid, el Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía. Doscientos noventa y nueve visitantes fueron encuestados. Los resultados proporcionarán significativas futuras líneas de investigación.

Palabras clave:

Lealtad, satisfacción, imagen de marca, museos, disposición a pagar más

1. Introduction

While the emergence of museums as brands (Caldwell, 2000) has represented the integration between marketing and museum management, museum managers have modified their views of visitors, concluding that these must be treated like customers as they are the main via of reaching competitive sustainable advantages, which in turn results in the success of organizations (Harrison and Shaw, 2004; McLean, 1994). Exploring the factors that influence their loyalty is necessary in an increasingly saturated marketplace, where behavioural intentions seem to be mainly affected by visitors' perceived image of the place and their satisfaction (Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Museum managers concentrated their efforts on achieving visitors' satisfaction as post-purchase behaviours; namely, intentions to return and recommendations are dependent on a pleasing experience (Oppermann, 2000).

The importance of word of mouth advocacy has been stated as friends and family members' positive messages are trustworthy sources, which reveal visitors' honest impressions (Simpson and Siguaw, 2008). Repeated experiences are also associated to visitors' loyalty as these denote a psychological commitment of preference (Chi and Qu, 2008). To this respect, a review of tourism literature reveals plenty of research on the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and their loyalty (for instance, Radder et al., 2013; Alexandris et al., 2006; Gallarza and Gil, 2006; Harrison & Show, 2004). Specifically, Radder et al. (2013) show that visitor satisfaction affects conative loyalty positively and directly and visitor satisfaction has a mediating effect on the relationship between perceived quality and conative loyalty; and Yuksel et al. (2010) conclude that satisfaction is a major antecedent of loyalty. However other studies have proved that other drivers also have a significant effect on loyalty such as destination image, consumer experience, quality or experiences dimensions (Campón-Cerro et al., 2016; Wu, 2016; Radder et al., 2015).

Besides, there is little evidence in the tourism context that demonstrates a positive relationship between loyalty and willingness to pay for a higher price (Gursoy et al., 2014; Mathies and Gudergan, 2012; Xu and Gursoy, 2015). Therefore, it is interesting analysing if loyal visitors feel more willing of paying a higher fee in the future, which is a useful insight for museum managers.

To sum up, the aim of the current research is to compare the influence of visitors' satisfaction and perceived image on their loyalty and also to examine the effect of their loyalty on their intentions of paying a premium. The findings offer valuable managerial and academic implications, as these three relationships have not been previously assessed in the museum industry. The proposed model is analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The research setting is the Reina Sofia Museum, one of the most famous and visited museums of Madrid.

2. Literature review and research questions

2.1 Loyalty's effect on willingness to pay a premium

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Customer loyalty is understood as a beneficial relationship between organizations and clients. However, researchers have stated that visitors' after a tourism experience can generate not only positive attitudes towards loyalty intentions but also disloyalty (Tian-Cole et al., 2002; Tsai and Wang, 2016). Customer loyalty's bond becomes stronger when these organizations show their commitment to their customers across marketing strategies, by firstly gathering information of their customers' needs and preferences (Chen and Gursoy, 2001) and identifying the benefits of customer retention (Campón-Cerro et al., 2016). In tourism research, loyalty has been defined across customer loyalty concepts, which has meant that destinations have been referred as products (Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Zhang et al., 2014). Therefore, marketing strategies should be designed to gain new customers and retain those who have already visited the place.

Loyalty has been related to behavioural, attitudinal or composite intentions (Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978). Behavioural loyalty circumscribes visitors' intentions of repeating the tourism experience (Lee et al., 2007; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Attitudinal loyalty explains visitors' predisposition of recommending the visit or revisiting the site (Bigné et al., 2001; Konecnik and Gartner, 2007). Composite loyalty is the mixture of behavioural and attitudinal loyalty (Backman and Crompton, 1991; Petrick, 2004). Besides, other studies have considered other behavioural aspects to define tourism loyalty such as conative, cognitive and affective loyalty (Yuskel et al., 2010), voluntary partnerships, willingness to resolve problems, etc. (Tasci, 2016). The current study has defined loyalty comprising revisit and recommendation intentions, as previous tourism researches' frameworks (Chi and Qu, 2008; Tasci, 2011; Yoon and Uysal, 2005).

Studies related to determine the drivers for willingness to pay higher fees are limited, although it has been recognized as an important issue for services marketing (Fullerton, 2003). Monetary costs play an important role on visitors' decisions (Alegre and Juaneda, 2006) and, consequently it results interesting analysing if loyal visitors are more predisposed or not to pay higher rates for visiting the place. Several studies have concluded that loyal visitors are usually more predisposed to pay a premium (Gursoy et al., 2014; Kim and Crompton, 2002; Xu and Gursoy, 2015). In the tourism related studies, Kim and Crompton (2002) concluded that behavioural loyalty in parks has a positive effect on the willingness of paying higher prices and Xu and Gursoy (2015) evidenced that client satisfaction could rise loyalty levels, and thus increase consumers' willingness to pay more. Due to the precedent discussion it is hypothesised:

H1: Loyalty has a positive effect on the willingness of visitors to pay a premium.

2.2 *The link between satisfaction and loyalty*

Satisfaction is commonly used in the tourism paradigm as an evaluation tool for the assessment of the cognitive and affective elements of travel experiences (del Bosque and San Martín, 2008; Mason and Paggiaro, 2012; Yoon and Uysal, 2005), compared against the expectations about the visit (Agyeiwaah et al., 2016). According with this statement, visitors generate a reference framework within which they create comparative judgements (Campón-Cerro et al., 2016). It is an indispensable condition for long-term business success (Kim et al., 2012; Pappu and Quester, 2006) as it has been concluded that visitors that feel satisfied are not so predisposed to switch to something different (Grappi and Montari, 2011). Therefore, it is considered a critical ratio to measure destination competitiveness as it affects loyalty behaviours (Agyeiwaah et al., 2016; Yoon and Uysal, 2005) and repeated visitors represent a significant business opportunity for destinations (Oppermann, 2000). According to Agyewaah et al., (2016) visitors' loyalty has many indirect positive effects such as repeated visits, unlikelihood to complain, low marketing costs, reputation and market share raises, and price elasticity and transaction costs reduction.

Prior studies have stated an acceptable level in the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty across favourable revisit intentions and recommendations to others (Campón-Cerro et al., 2016; Chi and Qu, 2008; Wu, 2016). It has been argued that first time visitors are more likely to be appealed by major attractions (Polo Peña et al., 2013) and tend to spend more money (Oppermann, 1997), while repeated visitors tend to involve in niche social and cultural services (Polo Peña et al., 2013), visiting fewer places and spending more time at each of them (Oppermann, 1997). In this respect, it has been recommended that managers take into account the functional elements that the attractions offer – facilities, staff attention and convenience- for those tourists that visit the place for first time and the affective factors – emotional, social and epistemic components- for the tourists that repeat the visit (Polo Peña et al., 2013). Interestingly, it has been concluded that first time visitors are more influenced by the recommendations of family and relatives than repeated visitors (Li et al., 2008).

Many tourism studies have analysed the impact of visitor's satisfaction on loyalty, mainly identifying satisfaction as an antecedent of loyalty (e.g. Campón-Cerro et al., 2016; Chi and Qu, 2008; Gallarza and Gil, 2006; Liu et al., 2012; del Bosque and San Martín, 2008; Sun et al., 2013; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Campón-Cerro, Hernández-Mogollón and Alves (2016) concluded in their study conducted in rural destinations in Spain that overall satisfaction has a positive impact on loyalty. As well Chi and Qu (2008) found out in their research based on the major tourism destination of Arkansas – Eureka Springs- that overall satisfaction has a meaningful effect on destination loyalty. Sun, Chi and Xu (2013) also identified tourist satisfaction as an important

antecedent of loyalty in their study conducted in Hainan Island, China. Based on the precedent discussion, it seems reasonable analysing the next hypothesis:

H2: Satisfaction has a positive influence on visitors' loyalty.

2.3 The impact of image on loyalty

In the tourism context, image is often described as the combination of impressions, perceptions and feelings that influence decision-making process and future behavioural intentions (Chi and Qu, 2008; del Bosque et al., 2008; Min et al., 2013; Stylos et al., 2016; Whang et al., 2016; Wu, 2015). This concept is difficult to define as it is determined by subjectivity – pondering beliefs (cognitive aspects) and feelings (affective components) (Barroso et al., 2007; Beerli and Martin, 2004; Bigné et al., 2001;). The integration of both aspects, cognitive and affective, provides a global image of the place (Barroso et al., 2007; Beerli and Martin, 2004). There is an absence of a universal definition neither accepted scale to define image in tourism studies due to the lack of homogeneity among the attributes that define this concept (Beerli and Martin, 2004). The present study has analysed image throughout affective elements (Martínez and Pina, 2009) as it has been demonstrated that the affective component has a stronger impact on the global image (Beerli et al., 2002).

It has been stated that a favourable preconceived image of a place has a positive impact on the individuals' expectations of the future experience (Chi and Qu, 2008; del Bosque et al., 2008). Besides, it has been founded that tourism experience impacts revisit intentions through image (Kim et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2014). It is interesting to point out that tourism scholars have affirmed that general public normally form these images throughout non-commercial information, as these are considered as reliable sources, being difficult to change their viewpoints in the future (Chen et al., 2016). To this respect, it is quite probable that potential visitors are influenced by not only images of the place in advertisements but also by the recommendations of their friends and relatives.

Prior tourism studies have found a positive relationship between overall image and loyalty (Zhang et al., 2014; Whang et al., 2016). Kim, Hallab and Kim (2012) concluded that destination image contribute to revisit intentions. Also Chew and Jahari (2014) demonstrated that affective and cognitive image influence intention to revisit, finding that affective influence is stronger. Hence, it is hypothesised:

H3: Image positively impacts visitors' loyalty.

3. Method

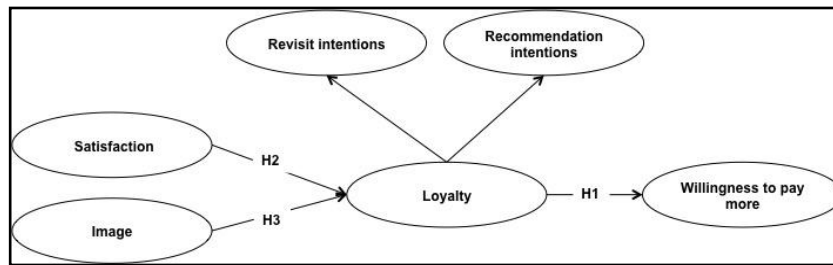
3.1 Data collection

Respondents were interviewed face to face by trained interviewers outside Reina Sofia Museum, either in English or Spanish depending on the origin of the participants. Face to face interviews was conducted as it offers a high response rate (Xu and Fox, 2014). Quota sampling was handled according to the population characteristics of Reina Sofia Museum (Table 1). The survey was conducted from the 20th of May to the 13th of June 2016, obtaining a total of 299 valid questionnaires. The model presented in this research examines the relationships shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. Sample profile

| | <i>n</i> | <i>%</i> | | <i>n</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------------------|----------|----------|
| <i>Gender</i> | | | <i>Origin</i> | | |
| Female | 147 | 49 | National | 112 | 37 |
| Male | 152 | 51 | Latin-American | 75 | 25 |
| | | | Europe | 75 | 25 |
| <i>Age</i> | | | Asia | 9 | 3 |
| From 18 to 25 years old | 60 | 20 | USA | 22 | 7 |
| From 26 to 35 years old | 66 | 22 | Africa | 1 | 0 |
| From 36 to 45 years old | 59 | 20 | Oceania | 5 | 2 |
| From 46 to 55 years old | 53 | 18 | | 112 | 37 |
| More than 56 years old | 61 | 20 | | | |

Figure 1. Proposed model



3.2 Measurement model

Table 2 presents the scale items that were employed for the current research, which were adopted from previous studies and measured on a seven-point Likert scale. Image and satisfaction were adapted from Martínez and Pina (2009) and Ramkissoon and Mavondo (2015) respectively. Revisit and recommendation intentions were adapted from Sirakaya-Turk et al. (2015), which are the two first order dimensions that operationalized loyalty. The scale items used for willingness to pay more were adapted from Xu and Gursoy (2015).

Table 2. Measurement model

| Factor | Indicator | Description |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Image | IM1 | The museum brand is nice |
| | IM2 | The museum brand has a personality that distinguishes itself from competitors |
| | IM3 | It's a brand museum that doesn't disappoint its visitors |
| Satisfaction | SA1 | I believe I did the right thing when I chose to visit this museum |
| | SA2 | Overall, I am satisfied with my decision to visit this museum |
| | SA3 | I am happy about my decision to visit this museum |
| Recommendation intentions | RCI1 | I will mention Prado Museum as a tourist attraction of Madrid to others quite frequently. |
| | RCI2 | I will tell more people about Prado Museum than I've told about most other tourist attractions I've visited during my stay in Madrid city. |
| | RCI3 | I will seldom miss an opportunity to tell others about Prado Museum. When I tell others about Prado Museum, I will talk about the city in great detail. |
| | RCI4 | I am proud to tell others that I visited Prado Museum. |
| Revisit intentions | RV11 | I am very loyal to Prado Museum as a tourist attraction of Madrid city. In the future, I plan to return to Prado Museum when I come back to Madrid city. |
| | RV12 | I am very committed to visiting Prado Museum. |
| | RV13 | I consider myself to be very loyal to Prado Museum. |
| | RV14 | I consider myself to be very loyal to Prado Museum. |
| Willingness to pay more | WP1 | I am willing to pay a premium to visit this museum |
| | WP2 | I am happy to pay more to visit this museum |
| | WP3 | Most of my friends, family or relatives would be willing to pay a premium to visit this museum |
| | WP4 | I will pay extra to visit this museum |

3.3 Reliability and validity assessment

The principal reason for assessing the proposed model using PLS-SEM is because when evaluating classical covariance based structural equation modelling that incorporates second order formative constructs implies suffering of identification problems (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001).

The second order construct willingness to pay more was estimated across the two-stage approach (Hair et al., 2014). The outer model was estimated checking the indicator reliability (standardised loadings above .70; Hulland, 1999), internal consistency reliability (Composite Reliability, CR, above .70; Bagozzi and Yi, 1988), the convergent validity (Average Variance Extracted, AVE, above .50; Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) and discriminant

validity (each construct's AVE superior than its squared correlation with any other construct; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) was also estimated to establish discriminant validity, where every indicator was beyond .85 (Clark and Watson, 1995; Henseler et al., 2015). The proposed model presents positive reliability and validity properties (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3. Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Final Measurement Model

| Factor | Indicator | Standardized Loading | t-Value (bootstrap) | CA | CR | AVE |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Image | IM1 | 0.826 | 21.800 | 0.774 | 0.868 | 0.687 |
| | IM2 | 0.794 | 14.923 | | | |
| | IM3 | 0.865 | 34.105 | | | |
| Satisfaction | SA1 | 0.935 | 75.624 | 0.930 | 0.955 | 0.877 |
| | SA2 | 0.937 | 82.846 | | | |
| | SA3 | 0.937 | 40.493 | | | |
| Recommendation intentions | RCI1 | 0.777 | 21.203 | 0.832 | 0.881 | 0.597 |
| | RCI2 | 0.748 | 16.342 | | | |
| | RCI3 | 0.811 | 25.413 | | | |
| | RCI4 | 0.764 | 19.658 | | | |
| | RCI5 | 0.763 | 19.930 | | | |
| Revisit intentions | RVI1 | 0.750 | 15.962 | 0.861 | 0.906 | 0.708 |
| | RVI2 | 0.837 | 31.785 | | | |
| | RVI3 | 0.869 | 29.258 | | | |
| | RVI4 | 0.902 | 53.349 | | | |
| Willingness to pay more | WP1 | 0.923 | 62.560 | 0.928 | 0.948 | 0.821 |
| | WP2 | 0.921 | 62.993 | | | |
| | WP3 | 0.843 | 24.307 | | | |
| | WP4 | 0.935 | 84.260 | | | |
| Loyalty | Recommendation intentions | 0.916 | | 0.767 | 0.895 | 0.810 |
| | Revisit intentions | 0.883 | | | | |

Note: All loadings are significant at $p < .01$ level. CA = Cronbach's alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

Table 4. Measurement Model Discriminant Validity for Higher-Order Constructs

| Factor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1 Image | 0.829 | 0.688 | 0.484 | 0.276 |
| 2 Loyalty | 0.540 | 0.900 | 0.607 | 0.381 |
| 3 Satisfaction | 0.421 | 0.516 | 0.936 | 0.066 |
| 4 more | 0.243 | 0.327 | 0.059 | 0.906 |

Note: Diagonal values are AVE square root, values below the diagonal are latent variable correlations values; above the diagonal are HTMT ratios.

4. Findings

Bootstrapping was implemented with individual sign changes of 5,000 samples to determine parameter significance. Results indicate that loyalty boosts visitors' willingness to pay more (H1; $\beta = 0.33$; $p < .01$). Furthermore, satisfaction enhances their loyalty (H2; $\beta = 0.35$; $p < .01$). Similarly, image has a positive effect on their loyalty (H3; $\beta = 0.4$; $p < .01$).

R^2 for brand image, destination commitment, perceived quality and satisfaction are above than the cut-off level of 10% (Falk & Miller, 1992) and the Q^2 statistics tests obtained by blindfolding (Stone, 1974; Geisser, 1975) for all the mentioned dependent variables are above of zero, revealing the predictive importance of the model (Henseler et al., 2009). However, willingness to pay more does not fulfil the recommendation levels for both indicators, which means the model does not have predictive relevance.

Table 5. Hypothesis testing

| Hypothesis | Path | Standardized Path Coefficients | t-value (bootstrap) |
|------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| H1 | Loyalty -> Willingness to pay more | 0.329 | 6.860 |
| H2 | Satisfaction -> Loyalty | 0.347 | 5.330 |
| H3 | Brand Image -> Loyalty | 0.400 | 6.399 |

Note: All loadings are significant at $p < .01$ level
 R^2 (brand image)=0.186; R^2 (destination commitment)= 0.481; R^2 (perceived quality)=0.334; R^2 (satisfaction)=0.350; R^2 (willingness to pay more)= 0.083
 Q^2 (brand image)= 0.120; Q^2 (destination commitment)= 0.359; Q^2 (perceived quality)= 0.197; Q^2 (satisfaction)= 0.307; Q^2 (willingness to pay more)=0.068

5. Discussion and implications

The results indicate that visitor's loyalty play a meaningful role in determining their willingness to pay more. Specifically, those visitors who feel more loyal - by demonstrating revisit and recommendation intentions - will be predisposed to pay a higher rate for the visit of the Reina Sofia Museum. Several scholars have concluded that when visitors become loyal, they tend to repurchase, pay more and recommend to others (Gursoy et al., 2014). As suggested in prior research, the findings confirm a positive relationship between visitor's satisfaction and their loyalty and the significant effect of visitor's loyalty on their willingness to pay a premium (e.g. Martinez and del Bosque, 2013; Xu and Gursoy, 2015). Thus, the efforts to enhance visitor's loyalty by increasing their satisfaction and their perception of the museum brand's image tend to improve their willingness to pay premium.

As expected, the findings reveal that visitor's satisfaction has a favourable effect on loyalty. This result coincides with other studies in affirming that visitors who feel more satisfied with the tourism experience will reach higher loyalty levels (Campón-Cerro et al., 2016; Chi and Qu, 2008; Wu, 2016), which is quite reasonable as if these are satisfied it is very probable they will choose to visit the same tourism product the next they visit the destination (Grappi and Montari, 2011). Hence, as heritage tourism main objective is to guarantee the sustainability of cultural non-renewable resources and satisfaction is a determinant factor for long-term business success it is suggested to control periodically the levels of visitors' satisfaction.

Museum brand's image has a positive influence on visitor's loyalty. This finding proves that museum brand's image should be considered when planning the marketing strategies to develop in the museum. As aforementioned, individuals normally have in mind a preconceived image of a tourism product or service, which directly impacts on their expectations of the upcoming experience (Chi and Qu, 2008). Although this relationship has not been widely analysed in the tourism sector, it is important to note that several researches have stated a positive effect of image on loyalty behaviours (Chew and Jahari, 2014; Kim, Hallab and Kim, 2012, Zhang et al., 2014; Whang et al., 2016).

One of the main contributions of the present study is its application to the museum industry. Findings reveal that museum's brand image and visitor's satisfaction have a positive effect on loyalty, and in turn, on their willingness to pay a premium. Besides, another major contribution is the consideration of loyalty as a construct that comprehends revisit and recommendation intentions, as other previous studies have contemplated loyalty as a dimension that includes both aspects (Chi and Qu, 2008; Tasci, 2011; Yoon and Uysal, 2005).

However, as all studies, this research presents some limitations. Firstly, this study was only conducted in the Reina Sofia Museum. Secondly, loyalty was measured as a second order construct, which has lead to an analysis that does not reveal the causal relationships of revisit and recommendation intentions.

Future researchers are prompted to extend the results by analyzing not only other museums and cultural assets, but by considering other antecedent factors that previous literature have demonstrated to influence visitor's loyalty, such as experience or quality (Campón-Cerro et al., 2016; Wu, 2016). Besides, other studies could deal with the moderating effects of nationality (Agyeiwaah et al., 2016), time spent, number of times visited or age.

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