

**Corvinus University of Budapest**  
**Doctoral School of Business and Management**

**VISITOR EXPERIENCE IN MUSEUMS**

**Analysis of the escapism experience dimension in the context of museum  
visits**

**Collection of theses of the dissertation**

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**2019, Budapest**

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## **1. Objectives of the dissertation and its antecedents**

The dissertation focuses on the field of museum visitor experience and intends to examine one section of it in detail. It approaches the central topic from multiple angles, reviewing the literature on new museology and visitor experience, and then linking them to an overview of the museum visitor experience. Museums as attractions are placed in the frame of cultural tourism, and in the segments of city tourism and heritage tourism.

The transformation in museums proceeds slowly, which is tackled by the paradigm of new museology, in the frame of which the focus is shifting from objects to people, the audience broadens, the range of topics covered by exhibitions expands and the function of institutions changes. Expanding the target audience, introducing the entertainment and leisure function, and striving to increase visitor numbers encourage museum professionals to try to meet visitors' needs as closely as possible in order to eliminate difficulties of financial sustainability. These needs can best be deduced from the development of experience economy, which results in people desiring a memorable experience during their visit to the museum. Memorable experience has an impact on visitors' behavioural intention (word of mouth, willingness to return), therefore is important from management point of view as well. Visitor experience is examined by a number of researchers, defining the various factors and dimensions that influence it during each phase of a museum visit.

The dissertation focuses primarily on the experience provided by exhibitions, which have been proven to be influenced by methods of interpretation such as interactivity, multisensory devices or co-creation. The interpretation methods appear in the literature, but overall, they are not explicitly assigned to a concrete experience dimension, which is intended to be done in the present work.

In the analysis, the author focuses on an experience model of her choice, which she intends to apply and develop for museums. The four-dimension experience model of B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, published in 1998, is still popular, and in many cases is used in researches about tourism. The dissertation analyses one of the dimensions of this model, escapism in detail, which is strongly influenced by the methods of interpretation presented in connection with new museology. The dimension and its diverse meaning are explored through narrative and systematic literature review, revealing the inherent contradictions and important interpretations in the museum context. A review of the concept of escapism and the definition

of the concept of active involvement introduced by the author will contribute to the literature on the museum visitor experience, to a better understanding of the concept of museum experience, and to its more effective measurement. By refining the fourth dimension of the chosen model, the usability of the model as a whole is advanced, a type of experience that is poorly explained in the literature and is often attributed to its general meaning thus becomes more identifiable.

The author examines the refined model first through qualitative research, via in-depth expert interviews. Interviews are conducted with museum leaders in institutions throughout the country with diverse backgrounds and characteristics. The research is exploratory and its aim is to examine the relationships established from the literature analysis from practical aspects. Important conclusions can be drawn from the interviews, which also shade the advanced model. Subsequently, the author conducts a quantitative survey at a rural exhibition site in the form of a visitor questionnaire, which tests the established hypotheses and tests the validity of the model.

The aim of this dissertation is the refinement of the 4E model of Pine and Gilmore (1998) in a museum context. A better understanding of museum visitor experiences supports the decision of museum leaders to ideally allocate resources and develop appropriate marketing and promotion strategies. This will give them a better overview of the required services and exhibitions, which will lead to memorable experiences. Proper measurement of the experience is essential to identify aspects that are important to visitors, and therefore the development of measurement tools is also a priority objective of the work.

Thus, in this work the author proposes to refine the 4E model in a museum context by considering escapism as a previous experience dimension (with central meaning of escaping from everyday problems in tourism literature) to become a comprehensive factor of the four dimensions; and the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension is renamed as “active involvement” (with the meaning of active physical/virtual immersion in the experience). Many interpretation methods appear in this dimension that stimulates to museum visitor experience. The abstract denomination of the two extremes of the vertical dimension of the model often makes it difficult to interpret parts of the model and also makes the placement of each type of experience problematic. For the sake of better understanding, the author suggests using mental immersion instead of absorption, and physical/virtual immersion instead of immersion. They accurately reflect the original thought, but instead of “absorbing the experience into the individual” and “immersing the individual in the experience”, they simplify the two extremes.

The summary of the theoretical problems and suggestions of the dissertation is shown in the info graphic in Figure 1.

In the framework of the dissertation, the following research objectives and research questions have been set.

Research objectives:

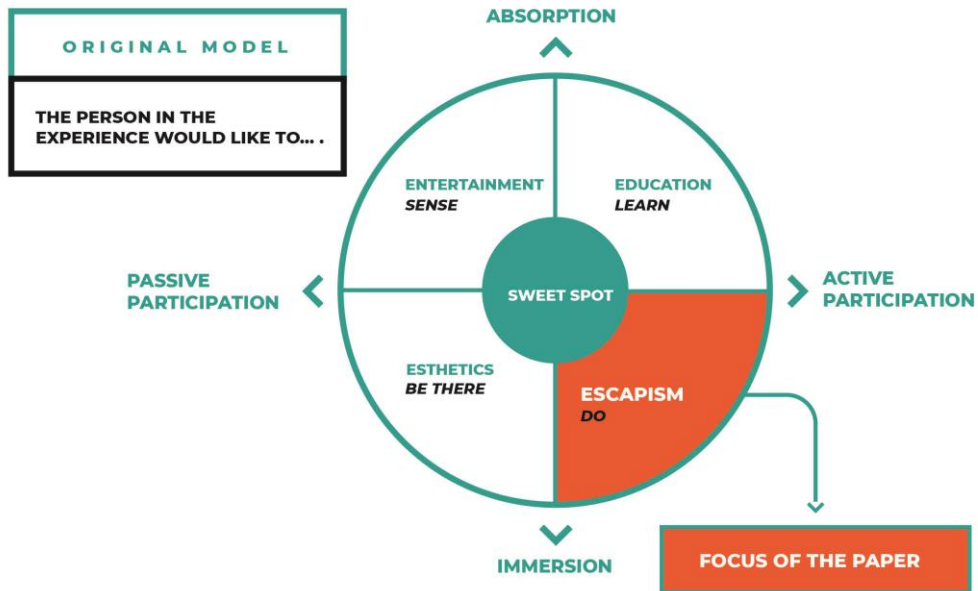
- Understanding the concepts of escapism and active involvement in the context of domestic museums
- Testing the validity of the refined 4E model

Research questions:

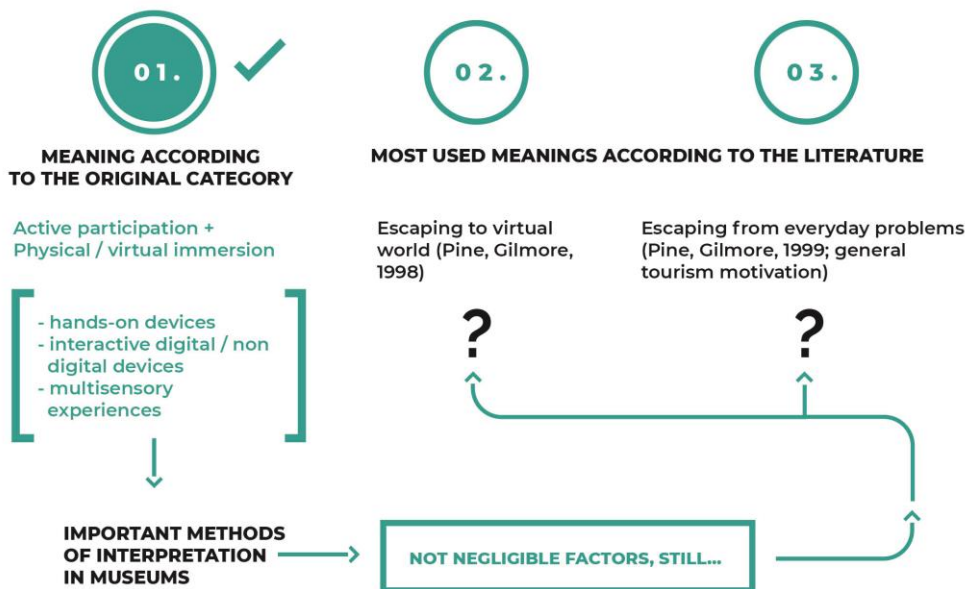
1. What does escapism mean in the context of domestic museums?
  - a. What are the components of escapism?
  - b. How is escapism related to the experience dimension of the refined 4E model?
2. What does the dimension of active involvement mean in the context of domestic museums?
  - a. What are the components of an active involvement experience?
  - b. What promotes/weakens the experience of active involvement?
  - c. How does active involvement relate to the other three experience dimensions and the visitors' behavioural intentions?
3. In what context are the four experience dimensions of the advanced 4E model interrelated, can any hierarchical relationship be found among them in the context of domestic museums?
4. How do the four experience dimensions of the advanced 4E model relate to the memorable experience and visitors' behavioural intentions in the context of domestic museums?

Figure 1. Summary of the theoretical problems and suggestions of the dissertation

## Summary of the theoretical problem

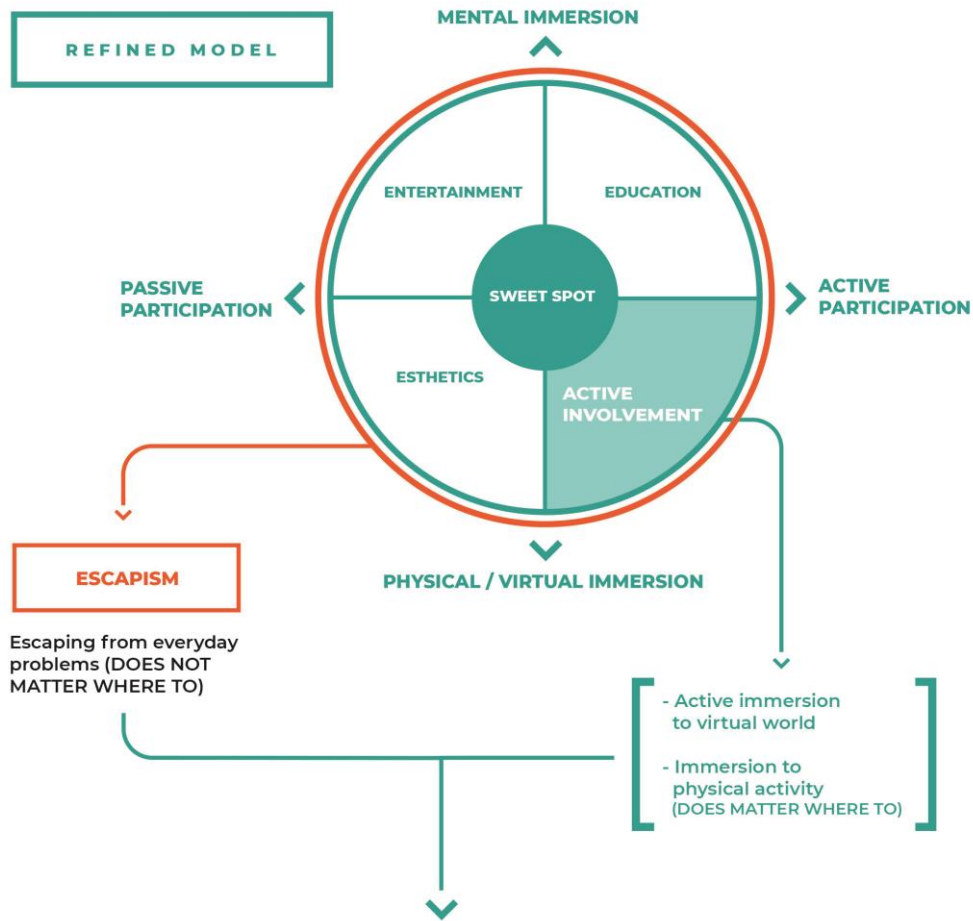


## Theoretical problem



# Suggested solution

SEPARATION OF THE DIFFERENT MEANINGS



## Testing the model in the frame of primary research

Source: Own compilation, with graphical support

## **2. Applied methods and their justification**

In the first part of the thesis, the author worked with a narrative literature analysis method, which is widespread in management research and where „the level of formality and standardisation in designing/adopting protocols is usually low” (Tranfield et al., 2003, p.213). The narrative literature review especially elaborated the fields of visitor experience, new museology, the different museum interpretation methods and escapism.

However, in the study of an important sub-area, namely the mapping of the different interpretations of escapism and its presence in the literature, the author used the method of systematic literature review. The systematic literature review is a transparent and reproducible process, as well as “a detailed technology, that aims to minimize bias through exhaustive literature searches of published and unpublished studies and by providing an audit trail of the reviewers decisions, procedures and conclusions” (Cook et al., 1997, in: Tranfield et al, 2003, p. 209.). The systematic literature review included articles published between 2008-2018 that were filtered from the EBSCO database (18/07/2018), each published in an academic journal and containing at least one of the following four terms in their full text: Experience, Escapism, Pine, Museum. During the work, as a result of the filtration 44 selected articles were reviewed and analysed.

Subsequently, in the form of an exploratory qualitative research, 8 in-depth expert interviews were conducted with the involvement of museum leaders in institutions with diverse backgrounds and characteristics in various locations in Hungary.

The interviews were conducted between January 14, 2019 and April 26, 2019. The selection of institutions was based on professional work using a visitor-centred approach, the richness of different interpretation methods in the exhibitions, availability and accessibility. The museums involved (abbreviation used in analysis):

- Skanzen, Open-Air Ethnographic Museum - SK
- Gyula Almásy Castle Visitor Centre - GYAL
- Otto Hermann Museum - HOM
- RepTár Szolnok Military Aircraft Museum - SZR
- Hungarian Museum of Trade and Tourism - MKVM
- Óbuda Museum - ÓM
- Zwack Museum and Visitor Centre - ZW



- Petőfi Literary Museum – Central Exhibition Space – PIM

Based on the experience of the first interview, the author slightly modified the questions in the preliminary interview draft. Each interview was conducted by the author herself and was recorded on a dictaphone to increase the validity of the research. Transcripts based on the audio materials formed the basis of the analysis.

Based on the results of the in-depth interviews, the concepts to be measured in quantitative research (as well as the variables that make up their components) and the relationships were compiled and verified in a professional consultation. During the consultation, experts from similar research fields were involved, such as Dr. Melinda Jászberényi (Corvinus University of Budapest), Dr. Melanie Kay Smith (Budapest Metropolitan University) and Dr. Ariel Mitev (Corvinus University of Budapest), after which their opinions and feedbacks were incorporated into the author's work.

The examination of the validity of the refined model was taken place at a selected exhibition site, the Gyula Almásy Castle Visitor Centre, in the form of a paper based research, using a questionnaire containing predetermined structured questions. The scales used in the literature, their refined versions and self-developed scales were used in the modelling. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), which is applicable for this purpose, is widely used in both international and Hungarian researches (Simon, 2016). The conclusions of the literature analysis and the researcher's assumptions were shaded by the findings of the qualitative research, which resulted in the finalization of the conceptual framework of the research as an initial theoretical model. „The SEM method can be considered as an extension of general linear models, which is suitable to test several regressions in parallel, thus it can be used to model a more complex relationship between the examined variables” (Simon, 2016, p. 57). In the present case, a model conceived on the basis of preliminary assumptions was examined, in the framework of which the verification of the outlined connection system and model's fit to the data has been controlled. Variance-based PLS-SEM was applied to test the model. Data analysis was conducted with SPSS and ADANCO software (Dijkstra–Henseler 2015).

The author chose one research site, the Almásy Castle Visitor Center in Gyula, which was justified by several considerations. The research has the nature of a case study and its primary purpose is to test the refined model, so that it does not explicitly draw conclusions about the institution or the target groups involved in the research. The research also had cost and time

constraints, which the researcher was forced to consider, and in one place it was more effective in ensuring validity and continuous monitoring.

The questionnaire was tested on July 28, 2019, prior to the research, and the first version was semantically verified by face-to-face questioning with 7 visitors to the selected exhibition site, which resulted in a slight change in the phrasing of some questions.

The sampling date (August 2-4, 2019, Friday-Sunday) was determined by researcher considerations. All visitors over the age of 18, who left the exhibition in the direction of the café, have been offered the opportunity to participate in the research, in case they have viewed the permanent exhibition independently (as well). The questionnaires were assisted by trained interviewers who volunteered for the research. The sample size of the analysis was 195 people.

Based on the above, the author approached the central theme of the doctoral thesis from several angles, and examined her researcher's assumptions, questions and hypotheses by several methods.

### **3. Main academic statements and results of the paper**

#### **Qualitative research**

In the framework of the qualitative research, 8 in-depth interviews were conducted with museum professionals. The interviewees proved to have enlightened, up-to-date views on the variety of exhibition devices, the themes that stimulate dialogue, the short and comprehensible nature of the texts, and the extension of museum functions.

Among the primary functions of the museums different tasks were mentioned, such as classical functions (collection, preservation, processing, publishing of art pieces), interpretation that awakes interest, as well as introduction towards the public. So the presentation of the collection, the exciting transfer of information, becomes as important as the collection itself (ÓM, SZR, SK). This corresponds with the views of Simpson (1996) and Hudson (1998), stating that focus moves from the objects towards people, and heads towards the idea of Smith (2003), who considers interpretation more important than the exhibited object itself. The functions also include the visitor reception, the creation of a community space, event organization and city marketing, as Chatterjee and Noble (2013) emphasize museums, having important role in promoting social well-being. Museums are not dead places, as Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (1998) and Urry (1990) state, but have to be entertaining leisure places (PIM). One of the main goals of museums is remaining authentic by any means, and reflecting to the present in the frame of their exhibitions, so that art pieces and heritage can become somehow related to the world and real environment of visitors (MKVM, PIM, HOM, SK).

Attractions that are solely focused on visitor reception are seen as competitors by many, others consider them cooperative partners. Further cultural service providers (community centres, museums with similar themes) are considered to be their competitors, just as are many tourist attractions and leisure services in the broader sense, competing for the limited leisure time of the potential visitors. Core competences of museums though remain the collection of knowledge and works of art, as Kotler and Kotler (2000) points it out, emphasizing that it's better to avoid competition with leisure service providers on the fields that represents the weaknesses of these institutes.

The interviewees describe the museum visit as a festive occasion compared to everyday life. Experts say that visiting an exhibition provides recreation that cuts away from everyday reality and provides an opportunity for a small "journey" (in time/dimensions), which can also be facilitated by the installation, or the captivating nature of design. Based on the previous views, the concept of escapism raised by the author has been confirmed.

They are aware that the visitor experience is strongly influenced by all infrastructure/service factors, both before and during the visit of the exhibition. Museum professionals confirm as well, that service providers cannot force visitors to have a special experience, but can only create an accurate environment, that provides opportunity for it (Schmitt, 1999; Hennes, 2010; Walls et al., 2011; Packer&Ballantyne, 2016).

Similarly to Thyne and Hede (2016) or Packer and Ballantyne (2016), mental experiences, such as emotions, legends, stories, personal contact during guided tours, etc., are also highlighted in connection with the visitor experience. In the context of exhibition communication, the role of dialogue is extremely important, to make it possible that visitors can give their opinions and feedback, and to become part of a story in some way, thereby achieving personal involvement. Along with the widening of the audience, the socially sensitive topics and raising of problems, so that topics promoting dialogue were considered important also by Vergo (1989), Harrison (1993), Swarbrooke (2000) and Sandell (2007), just as the "not solely stating, but also questioning" role of curators (Harrison, 1993).

The interviewees undoubtedly consider the experience dimensions of the refined 4E model and most of the methods of interpretation to be fundamental. Many people emphasize live interpretation (SK, MKVM), and they also note that a museum must be able to meet the changing needs of visitors, including those who are not open to interaction and those who are enchanted by these opportunities (HOM). When it comes to learning, many people highlight that the museum's mission is to attract visitors' attention unperceived, in many cases visitors are unaware that they are actually enriching with new information that they may be able to use elsewhere (ÓM, GYAL, PIM). Entertainment that is in the focus of many studies (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999; Jegers & Wiberg, 2003) seems to be essential for the majority, which happens to be confused with the concept of experience. Esthetics are likewise fundamental, with the fact that they can be attributed from the peculiarity of art pieces as well as to the design of the exhibition or the ordered environment. Pine and Gilmore (1998), and Crozier (2012) consider this dimension as well. Active involvement, both physical and virtual,

seems natural to interviewees. Helping clarity (investigated also by Falk et al., 2004 and Hjalager, 2010), enhancing the experience, the participation are indispensable, and mostly desired by visitors, pointing to the importance of this dimension of experience.

During the conversations, most of the methods of interpretation are mentioned by the interviewees without question. These methods and devices are nowadays considered an essential part of an exhibition, and mainly in the case of permanent exhibitions they have a fundamental role which affects the experience. Talking about devices, they attach importance to the connection to the theme so that they are not self-serving (ÓM). In the case of virtual devices they consider as important that obsolete devices can damage the experience itself, so it is worthless to use them (SZR). Edutainment, interactive edutainment and interactive environment definitely help to gain knowledge, understanding and support involvement as verified in other studies as well (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999; Crozier, 2012; Zátori, 2013). „The visitor wants to try everything, it is very simple [...] or we want the visitor to try it because it is something special” (SK). Multisensory effect shades the message, makes the experience more varied and enhances memorability, reflecting the findings of Crozier (2012), Dirsehan (2012) and Lai (2015) regarding multisensory experience. Demonstration objects are of particular importance with regard to the hands-on objects, and several museums have already created a separate collection of them (HOM, SK). Co-creation can be interpreted by the interviewees primarily in connection with the museum education programs, but many people can recall a domestic project or their own plan on this topic.

At the same time many professionals concluded (ÓM, ZW, HOM, PIM, SK), that the most memorable experience is deriving from a kind of emotion, let it be nostalgia, pride, a thrilling or other experience. Emotions can be triggered by a personal interaction (e.g. with a guide), a special work of art or an interesting device. Emotive dimension of experience is investigated by several authors, such as Harrison and Shaw (2004), Dirsehan (2012), Jarrier and Bourgeon-Renault (2012), Bradburne (2012) Packer and Ballantyne (2016), which turned out to be an important factor also in this research.

## **Quantitative research**

However the model with the suggested conceptual framework of the author has never been presented in the literature (this represents the novelty of the work), several relations among constructs were already investigated by other authors as well, some of which became part of

the hypotheses of the present quantitative research. The conceptual framework does not involve all the potential factors that might influence experience, but the most important ones regarding the focus of the dissertation are represented. The sample size of the research did not allow testing the whole model, therefore it had to be narrowed. For this reason the author separated it in two structural models, in each of them analysing the relations among 6 constructs.

Convergent validity was tested with standardized factor loadings, and those items which turned out to be invalid were excluded from the model. The Cronbach-alfa values of the constructs were also calculated, controlling the reliability of the scales. The convergent and discriminant validity connected to the two structural models fulfilled the criteria based on the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) and the Fornell and Larcker's test (1981). As a conclusion, enough statistical evidence was found to verify the existence of the constructs regarding both models, and to verify that the measured variables are appropriate indicators of the related factors and that the constructs are different. The only model fit criterion, the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) which is applied in PLS modelling fulfilled the criteria regarding both of the models.

### Descriptive statistics

Based on the analysis of the database, it can be stated, that in the sample, made of 195 people 77 male (39,5%) and 118 female (60,5%) have filled the questionnaire, 56,9% of them are married, 22,1% are in relationship. The 61,1% of the visitors arrived with family (relatives, children), and 34,4% arrived with spouse, partner or friend, and 45,2 % have secondary, 49,2 % have higher educational background. 85,1% of the sample visited the exhibition space for the first time, and 94,9% of them arrived from Hungary.

### Structural model no. 1.

The 1<sup>st</sup> structural model is focusing on the refined 4E model, especially the relationship between the experience dimensions and factors of the memorable experience and the willingness to return. According to the suggestions of the author the experience dimensions support each other. However the whole logical order was not clear based on the literature and the previous researches, but there can be found some investigations, based on which the

relations between the dimensions could have been involved in the hypotheses. According to the results of the 1<sup>st</sup> structural model, the following statements were verified.

The esthetic experience has a positive impact on entertainment experience dimension, therefore the more harmonious and well-kept the environment, the stronger entertainment can be experienced, which confirms Crozier (2012). The esthetic experience may mean the tidiness, well-kept inside and outside environment, harmonious interior design or exhibition installation as well, as the beauty and peculiarity of the exhibited works of art. Based on the examples, mentioned in the interviews, it can be perfect installation, where attention is paid on the smallest detail as well (HOM), or the approach of the experience spots, which considers the visually undisturbed environment an important factor as well (SZR).

The experience of active involvement has significant positive impact on entertainment as well, meaning that strengthening those elements which provide active physical/virtual participation, will probably result in better entertainment of the visitors.

Entertainment has a positive impact on education, the more entertaining the interpretation of a topic is, the more possibility is given to reach educational experience. It also confirms the concept of edutainment (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999; Jegers & Wiberg, 2003) and supports placing devices and using methods in an exhibition, that are entertaining, and at the same time help reaching the educative goals of the museums.

In opposition with the suggestions of the author based on the literature, active involvement does not have a direct impact on education, however through entertainment it has a significant total impact. Therefore in the frame of the research it is proved that if visitors are involved in the exhibition by the help of active physical/virtual participation, or in some activities, at the end it will lead easier to an educative experience through edutainment.

However it was suggested by the author, results show, that active involvement does not have a direct positive impact on memorable experience, although through entertainment its total impact is significant and positive. Activities and exhibition design fostering active involvement lead to entertainment – as explained above – which result in memorable experience.

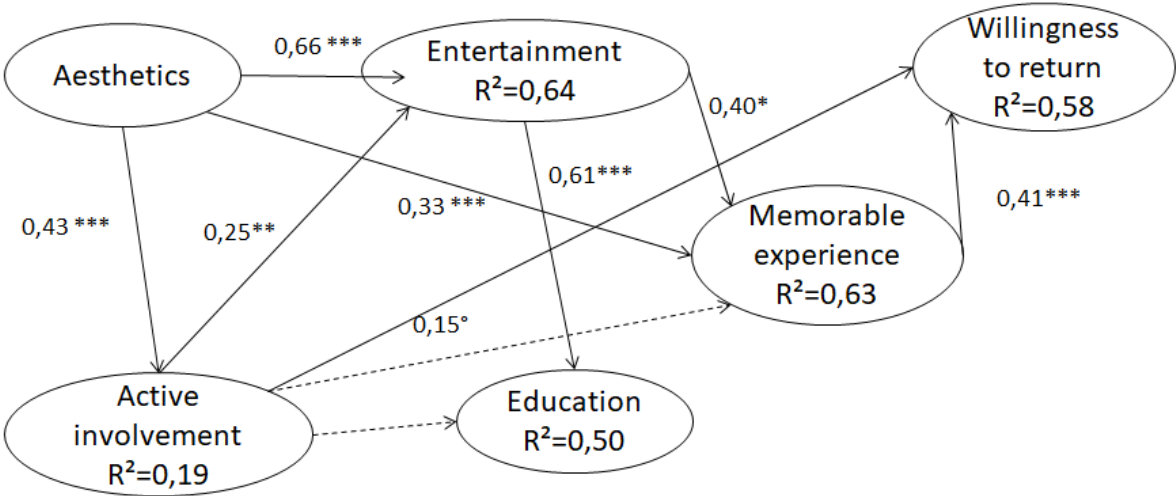
It is important to mention, that among the 4 experience dimensions esthetics and entertainment have direct positive impact on memorable experience, the other two do not. Active involvement on the other hand has an indirect impact through experience on memorable experience, education does not affect neither directly, nor indirectly.

Memorable experience has a significant positive impact on willingness to return, that confirms the researches of Tung and Ritchie (2011), and Manthiou et al. (2014). The more memorable a visit is the more chance is given, that the visitor would return to the institute in the future. Willingness to return is directly affected only by the active involvement dimension, among the 4 experience dimensions. Entertainment and esthetics have an indirect impact on willingness to return through memorable experience, but education does not have a significant impact. This also reflects to the research of Dirsehan (2012), who found that the museum learning does not have a significant impact on willingness to return.

The 1<sup>st</sup> model proves that educational experience is strengthened indirectly by active involvement and esthetic experience. It can be stated, that the other 3 dimensions have an impact on gaining knowledge, but it is not education that affects the behavioural intentions of visitors. This is confirmed by some of the in-depth interviews as well, in which experts stated that learning is an indirect objective of visitors, and people decide themselves, how much of new information they would like to collect (GYAL, PIM, SZR). Many visitors attend an exhibition only for recreational reasons, and are not aware of learning anything in the meantime. Exhibitions and curators have the challenging task of piquing unperceived interest of a topic.

The results of the model is illustrated on Figure 2.

Figure 2. Structural model no.1. (4E model) and its results<sup>1</sup>



Source: Own compilation, based on Adanco software

<sup>1</sup> Broken line represents not significant, continuous line represents significant impacts.



## Structural model no. 2.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> structural model analyses the interpretation methods influencing the dimensions of active involvement and entertainment, investigating also their relation with willingness to return. The following statements have been verified based on the results of the model.

Multisensory experience has a positive impact on interactive edutainment, which means, that the more senses one exhibition element tackles, the more a visitor perceives to have learnt something through tryout and entertainment.

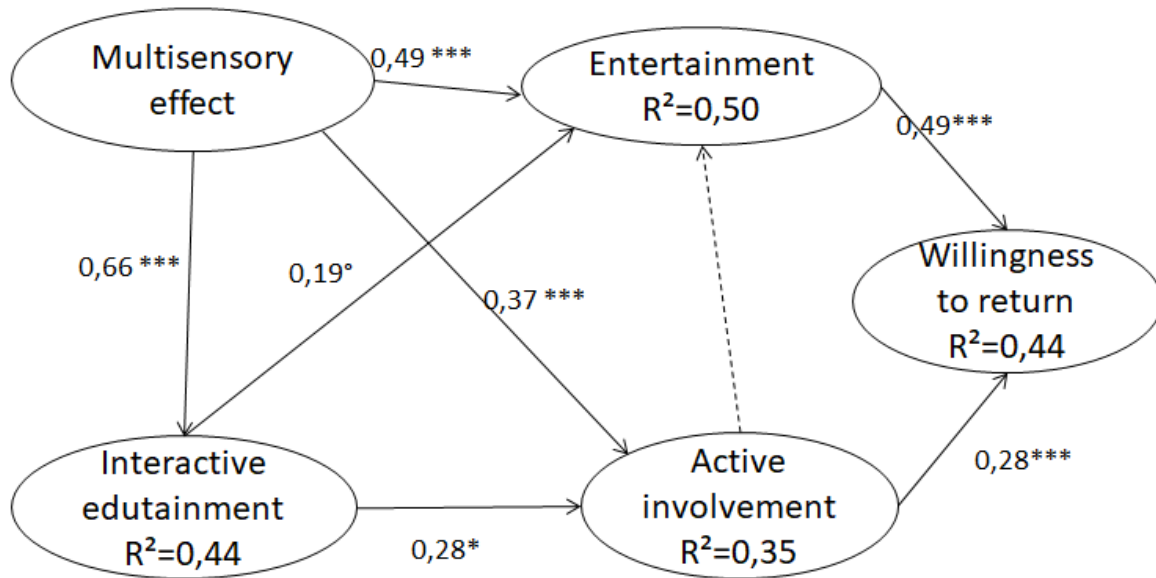
Multisensory experience has a significant impact on two experience dimensions, entertainment and active involvement, which confirms and specifies the research results of Dirsehan (2012), Crozier (2012), Lai (2015). Therefore it can be stated, that an exhibition that has more multisensory elements, has bigger chance to entertain the visitor or involve the person actively physically or virtually. In conclusion it's a fundamental question during the management and development of exhibitions to apply more and more elements, which tackles the senses of seeing, listening, smelling, touching and tasting.

Interactive edutainment affects positively active involvement, for this reason if an exhibition possesses of many devices that allow try-out, and through this the edutainment, then visitors have bigger chance to feel actively involved, the experience physical / virtual participation, which also reflects the statements of Crozier (2012) and Zátori (2013). The research of Falk and others (2004) should be recalled as well, according to which visitors mostly do not expect the use of interactives in museums, although if they eventually meet them, their perceptions of these institutes ("dusty", "old") can change in the long term.

Both entertainment and active involvement have a significant and direct influence on visitors' willingness to return, similar relations to which were investigated by Harrison-Shaw (2004), Dirsehan (2012), Lee and Chang (2012), Radder-Han (2015) and Forgas-Coll (2017). This means that devices and methods, fostering any of the two types of experience affects the visitors' intention to return to the institute in a positive way.

The detailed results are illustrated on Figure 3.

Figure 3. Structural model no. 2. (factors influencing active involvement) and its results<sup>2</sup>



Source: Own compilation, based on Adanco software

### Summary of the results based on the three research methods along the research questions

#### Escapism as a general tourist motivation

According to the author's assumptions and the literature supports, the variables used in the 4E model for the escapism dimension („helps break away from everyday life”; „so captivating that we can forget everything else”) refer to the experience as a whole, in fact to the tourism motivation, and does not refer to the active physical/virtual participatory dimension of the experience. This factor is referred to as the encompassing element of the four dimensions in the refined 4E model, denominated as escapism. Therefore, the relationship between the concept of escapism and the four dimensions of experience, moreover the perceived experience as a whole should be examined.

- The literature confirms that this is a general motivation for tourism, which can also be the result of a visit (longing for oblivion, liberation).

<sup>2</sup> Broken line represents not significant, continuous line represents significant impacts.

- Escapism appears as a motivation in in-depth interviews (ÓM - escape from everyday life), but the term „recreation” has also been used by many, some of them used it with the same meaning as entertainment, but some are supposed to mean disengagement from everyday mode. In addition to motivation, escapism also appears as a result of the visit (exhibition arrangements, lights, installations help to exclude the outside world - PIM). There are also professionals who believe that this disconnection may not be fully realized, either because the visitor brings with them everyday problems that the museum has to reflect on (SK), or because they do not have the appropriate basic knowledge to enjoy the exhibition (ÓM), so it can also be considered a potential result.
- As a result of the quantitative research, escapism as a motivation on the 7-point Likert scale proved to be the 5th most important out of 8 factors, with a mean of 5.61 and a standard deviation of 1.49. However, the scale used as a result according to Ásványi et al. (2019) was not valid, and therefore its relationship with the refined 4E dimension or the output factors that reflect behavioural intention cannot be examined in the present study.

Literature	In-depth interviews	Questionnaire
It is a general tourist motivation, which can also be the result of the visit.	Confirmed: both referred to as motivation and as a result by the interviewees. However it may not be realized.	5th most important motivation (out of 8). However, the scale is not valid and further analysis is not possible in the present study.

Components of active involvement, as the fourth experience dimension (factors affecting experience)

- The interpretation methods examined appear in the literature in connection with the visitor experience, and some dimensions of it (e.g. learning, entertainment), or occasionally with behavioural intentions (Falk et al., 2004; Dirsehan, 2012; Zátori, 2013; Lai, 2015;), but overall, they are not explicitly assigned to a concrete experience dimension. The author categorised them to the relevant experience dimensions, based on Pine and Gilmore’s model (1998).
- As a result of the in-depth interviews, replica objects (iconic authenticity) and co-creation were excluded from the originally collected interpretation methods, given that replica objects clearly belong to the multisensory experience and the interactive

edutainment category (learning-by-doing), and the co-creation was difficult for museum leaders to interpret apart from museum education classes or other specific programs. Information technology devices on their own have also been excluded, and integrated into the concept of interactivity. As a result of the modifications, three constructs were introduced into the model to be examined:

- Multisensory experiences
  - Interactivity
  - Interactive edutainment
- As a result of the questionnaire, the self-developed scale defining the concept of interactivity turned out to be invalid, so its relationship with the other concepts cannot be examined in this study. The other two concepts (multisensory experience, interactive edutainment), in the form of a self-developed scales, became elements of the structural model and showed significant relationships in several relations. Multisensory effects have a positive relationship with both active involvement and entertainment; on the other hand interactive edutainment has a positive relationship with active involvement.

Literature	In-depth interviews	Questionnaire
<p>Identification of the interpretation methods included in the study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interactive edutainment</li> <li>▪ Interactivity</li> <li>▪ Co-creation</li> <li>▪ ICT</li> <li>▪ Replica objects</li> <li>▪ Multisensory experiences</li> </ul> <p>They have appeared in various studies in connection with the behavioural intention and the perceived experience as a whole.</p>	<p>Reduce of interpretation methods to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multi-sensory experience</li> <li>▪ Interactivity</li> <li>▪ Interactive edutainment</li> </ul>	<p>Scale proved to be invalid:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interactivity</li> </ul> <p>Significant effect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Multisensory experiences have a positive impact on active involvement and entertainment dimensions.</li> <li>▪ Interactive edutainment has a positive effect on active involvement.</li> </ul>

#### Validity of the advanced 4E model

The aim is testing the validity of the refined 4E model, taking into account active involvement as a modified fourth dimension. The other goal was analysing the relationships between the dimensions and the output variables describing behavioural intentions (visitor satisfaction, memorable experience, willingness to return and word of mouth).

- The literature has supported the 4E model, which has been applied several times in different researches, compared to which the author partially modified one dimension with elements that have also been investigated in several cases.
- Throughout in-depth interviews, the dimensions of the advanced 4E model have repeatedly appeared as standalone mentions and in response to direct questions, and have proven to be supported by museum professionals.
- Although as a result of the questionnaire research all four experience dimensions appeared in a valid scale (based on Cronbach's alpha values, 2 variables out of 4 were excluded in the case of active involvement) and were included in a valid model, the correlations shaded the author's original assumptions. From the statistical point of view, the best-supported result was the model in relation to the memorable experience, which illustrates the relationship between the four experience dimensions and their effect on memorable experience and on willingness to return. The results did not show a clear hierarchy between the dimensions.

Literature	In-depth interviews	Questionnaire
The 4E model has been used in the literature in several occasions; however, the author suggested a slight change in the meaning and scale of one dimension (escapism - active involvement).	The dimensions of the advanced 4E model have been repeatedly appeared as standalone mentions and in response to direct questions.	They proved to be existent concepts with a valid scale (refined 4E, memorable experience, willingness to return), resulting in a statistically correct model. There is no clear hierarchy between the four dimensions.

## Conclusion

In the framework of the qualitative research, a significant number of experts concluded that if the exhibition succeeds in evoking some kind of emotion in the visitor (e.g. nostalgia, pride, personal connection, a thrilling or other experience,), then the most memorable experience will derive from that moment. Emotion can be fostered the most through an art piece, a device, or a personal relationship with a museum colleague. Memorable experience is the cornerstone of experience economy, the product (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Packer & Ballantyne, 2016) that subsequently influences the visitor's future behavioural intentions (e.g., sharing experiences, returning). The quantitative research has also confirmed that memorable experiences have a significant positive effect on willingness to return. These two factors are directly or indirectly influenced by the esthetics, entertainment and active involvement of the 4 experience dimensions, but education does not influence any of them.

It is therefore an important mission of curators, museum leaders and exhibition designers to evoke emotions in visitors. For this reason, they need to connect with today and their past that tell stories that touch the soul (see the heart-touching, so-called „hearts-on” exhibition design by Bradburne, 2012), employ such devices that can convey these thoughts efficiently and impress the visitors visually or evoke an „aha-experience”.

During the quantitative research it was also confirmed that multisensory devices as well as interactive edutainment methods have a positive effect on some dimensions of the visitor experience, which thus facilitates the above mentioned process with its indirect effect through other factors. The results of the questionnaire research also proved that all three other types of experiences (esthetics, entertainment, active involvement) contribute directly or indirectly to the realization of the goal of learning, knowledge transfer, but education itself is not a factor that influences visitors’ future behavioural intention.

Results from literature, qualitative and quantitative research have answered the research questions phrased by the author. The results also helped to achieve the research goals set, thus understanding the concept of escapism and active involvement in the context of domestic museums and testing the refined model.

#### **4. Utilization of the dissertation**

The results of the research can be utilized in many areas in the future, including theoretical examination of the museum visitor experience, and by practitioners working at different levels of the museum sphere, such as management level, but also in the field of marketing and publicity, and during exhibition development (by designers, curators) works as well.

##### **Academic benefits of the research**

The theoretical contribution of the museum visitor experience to the literature is manifested in a better understanding of the concepts of escapism, active involvement, and the outline of a possible measurement model moreover the clarification of the relationships analysed in the model. In the present research, identifying the experience dimension of active involvement contributes to a better understanding of visitor experiences. The clarification of the dimension of escapism of Pine and Gilmore (1998) and the exploration of the framework of its interpretation also emerged as a demand in the literature (Oh et al., 2007). The separated meanings improve the accuracy of measurements of potential future research based on the 4E model, and also allows the appropriate placement of each type of experience. The original aim of the dissertation and its achievement is to draw attention to the methods of interpretation in the dimension of active involvement. Although the effect of interpretation methods on experiences have been measured by several researchers (Falk et al., 2004; Forgas-Coll, 2017; Prebensen et al., 2015; Thyne & Hede, 2016; Leigh et al., 2006; Hjalager, 2010), these have not yet been included in a complex visitor experience model. The model tested and the scales confirmed or refuted as a result of quantitative research can provide the basis for future research, with a potential for further development.

##### **Management benefits of the research**

The contribution of the research to the sphere of museum, exhibition and other professionals is, among others, to serve better the needs of museum visitors by applying appropriate interpretation methods and providing ideal physical conditions. This can help expand the audience, improve their willingness to return, optimize the use of resources, and thus enhance the competitiveness of museums. Besides serving the purpose of learning and transferring

knowledge, the esthetic, entertainment and active involvement experience dimensions directly or indirectly affect the memorable experience and the willingness to return. The use of multisensory devices and the application of the method of interactive edutainment have a positive effect on several experience dimensions. Therefore using these types of methods and strengthening the mentioned experience dimensions influence also the management processes in a positive way. The findings of the in-depth interviews on other topics, including those related to events, visitor infrastructure, and guidelines for exhibition texts, also support the promotion of successful operation.



## 5. Publications of the author relating to the topic

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