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Designing an Experience-Based Tourism Model for Creative Cultural Attractions (Case Study: Tehran City)

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Article Info	Abstract
	This study aimed to create an experience-based tourism model for creative cultural attractions. This research is mixed in terms of methodology. In the qualitative part, the qualitative content analysis method was used. The statistical population for this part was experts who were selected by the snowball sampling method. The structural equation method was used in the quantitative part. The second statistical population included visitors to Tehran's creative cultural attractions; 384 samples were selected by random sampling. The model was designed based on the research results. The desired model consists of three parts before the visit, during the visit, and after the visit. Before the visit, the individual characteristics, image, motivation, and visitors' expectations directly impacted the creative experience. During the visit, the creative experience directly impacted the experiencescape and the memorable experience process, and the experiencescape affected visitors' memorable experience process directly. After the visit, the visitor's memorable experiences directly influenced satisfaction and lasting memories. This study's findings lead to creating creative experiences for visitors and developing creative cultural attractions. The tourism industry policymakers can rank creative cultural attractions by setting up a registration system for them, awarding creative certificates to prominent attractions, and providing them with the basis of progress.

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Introduction

The travel pattern has changed from visiting attractions and buying products to something to do or gaining experience (Farhadi Uonaki et al., 2022). Recent literature indicates that tourists are willing to acquire new experiences to learn and engage in a tourist attraction or participate in the experience acquisition process (Zhang et al., 2018). Hence, understanding tourists' experiences are essential in tourism research and destination positioning (Brochado et al., 2021). Many researchers tried to measure this construct, but according to different research fields, the dimensions of the tourism experience suggested by researchers are different. Furthermore, the studies conducted in this field are superficial and have looked at the tourist experience with a general view. This is while the tourism trend moves towards experiences. Therefore, due to the complexity of the nature of the tourist experience, there needs to be a consensus on the design dimensions of the tourism experience model in the academic community and researchers. At the same time, there is an agreement in understanding its importance. This means that a memorable experience is considered a predictor of positive tourist behaviors (Ali et al., 2016; Zare, 2019; Hosseini et al., 2021; Farhadi Uonaki et al., 2022; Shahabi et al., 2022). It can be said that tourism is taking a new path, and a new approach is forming in it, and this concept can be called experience-based tourism. Experience-based tourism is a new concept of tourism that expresses tourists' new tendencies and attitudes toward the concept of travel and tourism (Hoarau-Heemstra & Eide, 2019; Wang et al., 2020). According to the literature, experience-based tourism is a dynamic process of tourists' involvement in activities; the words used to describe the experience include exploring, finding, and being surprised. In tourism, experience is originally about finding surprises or less experienced worlds, pursuing adventure, and participating in events; it includes feelings and observations and conveys meaningfully to the mind (Rokneddin Eftekari et al., 2021; Farhadi Uonaki et al., 2022). Thus, tourist destinations, especially attractions, are looking for strategies and policies based on experience-based tourism that can provide good products for tourists and respond to the demands and needs of today's tourists (SETIAWAN et al., 2021). Attractions need a plan based on which they can move toward creativity and, as a creative attraction, can create memorable experiences for tourists (Li & Kovacs, 2022). Studying the background of the research indicates a lack of background in the field of experience design in creative attractions. Such a gap and weakness in designing a model for creativity, and as it should be, the research background has not been able to design this plan for tourist attractions and lead them towards creativity. Accordingly, this study aims to respond to this gap and change the current situation to the desired situation by achieving the following goals:

• Identifying experience-based tourism criteria for creative cultural attractions.

• Investigating relationships between experience-based tourism criteria in creative cultural attractions.

• Modelling experience-based tourism for creative cultural attractions.

To design the research model, Tehran city, Iran's capital, was selected as a case study. Although Tehran has various cultural attractions, it does not have its share of the Iranian tourism market and does not profit from a good situation in the Iranian tourism market. Tehran has various cultural attractions that are close to the concepts of experience-based tourism. Attractions that have the required potential to be optimized in line with experience-based features that identify them as creative cultural attractions. It can also alter the current tourism situation in Tehran to a promising one. In the present study, experience-based tourism is considered a new approach in the literature and tourism industry by presenting the model of experience-based tourism in Tehran's creative cultural attractions, which is supposed to lead the attractions toward creativity. This study develops not only the concept of experience-based tourism in tourism literature but also the concept of creative cultural attractions.

Literature review

Experience-based tourism

Tourism experience, first defined by Boorstin (1961), is a widespread consumer behavior that is non-spontaneous, pre-made, and considered a travel result. What is perceived from the first studies and research of the tourist experience in the seventies is that the tourist experience was considered either as something superficial, a search for authenticity, or an attempt to escape from an alien world (Cohen, 1979). Advancements were made in the concept of tourism experience, and different researchers have mentioned different types of tourist experience: high-quality experience, excellent experience, extraordinary experience; and recently, the concept of creative experience and memorable experiences have received the attention of tourism researchers (Shahabi et al., 2022). Studies of memorable experiences in tourism have a wide range from a more logical perspective of travel experience to psychological and emotional aspects (Bender et al., 2021). A tourism experience, which is memorable is a personal event associated with a past trip that is strong enough to get into people's long-term memory (Stavrianea & Kamenidou, 2021). Other scholars define a memorable experience for tourists when they recall and reconstruct a totally noteworthy moment in describing their experience (Rokneddin Eftekari et al., 2021). However, others point out that a tourism experience is a unique journey that develops into a memorable experience based on the tourist's individual interpretation according to their culture, beliefs, values, and behaviors (Chen & Rahman, 2018). Sharpley (2021) suggests that tourism experiences are made to be memorable and should be considered unusual events

that create strong emotional responses and provide a sense of complete harmony with the world. Primary models in the field of tourist experience looked at the tourist experience only from an economic point of view; in this case, we can refer to the research of Pine et al. (1999), who introduced the term experience economy and argued that customer experience itself would be the only real competitive advantage and become the existence of the product. They categorized the experience based on the individual's involvement and participation level. The findings divided the tourist experience into four areas: entertainment, education, beauty, and a sense of escape. This study, which was the basis of many subsequent models in the field of tourist experience, does not include all areas involved in the tourist experience and addresses how to involve the tourist's emotions in the environment to create added value. In the following research, Ritchie and Crouch (2003) also consider the experience to have four sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions; such results can be found in previous research such as Ali et al. (2016), Zatori et al. (2018), Suhartanto et al. (2020), Dean and Sharonton (2019) who have addressed different dimensions of the tourist experience. In the above studies, the researchers did not consider all the aspects involved in the tourist experience; they did not mention the environment and space, ignoring the culture and its dimensions, and only addressed the sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of the experience. Later models, such as Smit and Melissen (2018), considered the dimension of time and memory in designing the experience. They placed different types of experiences in two spectrums based on their position. The first spectrum refers to the duration of the experience, from short-term events to events that can last for days, weeks, or even months. The other spectrum is related to the result and output of the experience, from a positive or negative memory to a durable change in the person. The dimension of the source of experiences is an overlooked dimension in Smit and Melissen's (2018) model in that some types of experiences result from external events and the physical contexts in which they occur. At the same time, other experiences can be cognitive or result from unconscious processes. However, in the mentioned model, these aspects are not addressed. In another study, Zare (2019) considers the role of general themes (for example, pleasure, knowledge, relieving fatigue, local culture, guides' impact, and involvement in activities) and specific cultural themes (togetherness, independence, and control, spontaneity, and distinctiveness) in creating memorable tourist experiences in the pattern of tourist's memorable experiences. Although this study describes the various factors involved in making a tourist's experience memorable, it does not design the experience for an attraction. This is because it has not addressed the dimensions of space and its role in forming experience. It only investigates why the tourist experience is memorable from the dimensions of general and specific cultural themes. Therefore, the mentioned study is unsuitable for designing tourist attractions experiences. In the proposed model, Chen et al. (2020) discussed the nature of experiences space and its role in creating

tourism experiences. This study has only focused on the space of experiences and has ignored the role of other influential factors such as cultural factors, individual characteristics, and the tourists themselves. In line with the critical discussion and analysis of the previous approaches and models, in the mentioned models, the researchers have each addressed a part of the dimensions of the tourist experience, and they have not considered the concept of experience-based tourism in a systematic manner as a general approach to the tourism industry. Previous researchers did not consider the concept of tourist experience as experience-based tourism, a new approach in the tourism industry. Various factors involved in the tourist experience have not been comprehensively considered, and each research has shortcomings, each of which has been mentioned separately. In terms of nature, the presented models were unsuitable for creative cultural attractions.

Creative cultural attraction

The concept of creative cultural attractions is novel, and only a few studies exist in this field. A creative cultural attraction allows tourists to engage in the attraction, enjoy the experience and process of their visit, and gain new understanding from the complete experience (Lu et al., 2021). According to recent progress in tourism, tourists are inclined to creative attractions, especially those that provide them with distinctive experiences and demand high levels their participation and involvement (Richards, 2020; Dean & Suhartanto, 2019). In such attractions, tourist involvement is high, and tourists interact personally with service providers (Chang et al., 2014). Since cultural tourism attractions often include the demonstration or implementation of culture-related skills (Farhadi Uonaki & Hassanzadeh, 2021), creative cultural attraction inspires tourists to embrace cultural tradition together, individually, and collectively. As an example of how it works, there is a highly favored traditional dance in Bali where tourists can learn this dance and join local people to perform it on stage (Suhartanto et al., 2022).

Methodology

The qualitative-quantitative (mixed) research method was used as the nature of the study was exploratory, and the amount of available scholarly literature on experience design in creative cultural attractions was limited. In the qualitative part, the statistical population consists of two groups; The first sample: they are knowledgeable experts about the study subject and who have the following characteristics: they have a history of executive activity in the study area for at least ten years and are also familiar with the subject and concepts of research (experience-based tourism), creative tourism, Tehran's cultural attractions, and creative attraction. The second group consists of experts and Tehran scholars who were mainly tourist guides in Tehran and have been working as official cultural guides in

Tehran for ten years. In the quantitative part, the studied population was the visitors of selected creative cultural attractions in Tehran. According to Cochran's formula for an unlimited sample, the sample size is at least 384 people. In the following, the process of data collection is discussed.

Data Collection

For the qualitative section, the statistical population includes experts aware of the studied subject. The sample was identified based on the snowball sampling approach. Snowball sampling: In this method, the future members of the sample are selected through the former members of the sample, and the sample becomes bigger and bigger like a snowball. The interviewed members were asked to introduce the following people. In this research, the data collection tool was a semi-structured interview. At the end of each interview, the interviewees were asked to introduce experts knowledgeable about the subject to be used in the subsequent interviews. In the conducted interviews, different tools were used to take notes. In this way, every interview was recorded entirely with the device.

It should be noted that the first two interviews were conducted in an unstructured and exploratory manner, and the rest were conducted in a semi-structured manner. This means that the questions are specified in advance, but the order of the questions is changed, and new questions are added according to the type of interviewee's answers. In qualitative research, theoretical saturation is a criterion for determining the research sample. In the present study, no new data were obtained regarding the research criteria and categories after the 15th interview. Therefore, to increase the certainty about the extracted data and concepts, the interviews continued until the 20th sample. After identifying the criteria of experience-based tourism for creative cultural attractions, a questionnaire was prepared based on them. It was given to 15 experts of Tehran who have been official tour guides; they were asked to select and rate attractions in Tehran based on the mentioned criteria. Thus, eleven attractions were identified in Tehran. In the quantitative section, the statistical population consists of the visitors to 11 creative cultural attractions in Tehran who have visited at least five of the selected attractions. According to Cochran's formula, the sample size was 384 people. In the quantitative section, random sampling was used. Based on the qualitative part, a researcher-made questionnaire was designed. It has 55 questions, which consist of 5 demographic questions and 50 scientific questions. The questionnaire was designed electronically and shared on different social networks. Likewise, several questionnaires were physically provided to the visitors at the attractions.

Data Analysis

For the qualitative section, the approach of inductive qualitative content analysis was used due to the exploratory nature of the research. Qualitative content analysis can be considered an approach of

research for the mental interpretation and analysis of information and textual data using the processes of systematic classification, coding, and thematization or design of a recognized pattern (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Generally, qualitative content analysis does not begin with an extensive review of sources; the researcher commences his work through interviews and reviews the previous sources after the analysis. For data analysis in the qualitative section, MaxQDA 21 software was used for data analysis, and the following steps were taken into account in the qualitative content analysis method (Krippendorff, 2004).

• Defining the unit of analysis: in this study, the sentence is the unit of analysis.

• Using the categorization system: It is necessary to mention that the researcher develops his categorization system using two inductive or deductive methods. In this study, the researcher seeks to understand a new field and develop a model and theory, so inductive content analysis was used. The qualitative content analysis proceeds with an inductive approach from qualitative data and information; by extracting hidden themes in them, it gradually reaches abstract levels of text and data, acquiring a model and theoretical framework that displays hidden orders and frequent patterns in data and text.

• Modifying the categorization system based on the data: In the present study, after identifying the criteria based on the research data, the researcher modified and revised the categorization system.

• Reporting qualitative data.

Based on the above process, experience-based tourism criteria for creative cultural attractions were identified (see Table 2). The research model was drawn and tested for evaluation and confirmation in the quantitative section. The quantitative section used the structural equation approach (partial squares) using SMART PLS version 3 software to investigate the relationship between experience-based tourism criteria in creative cultural attraction and designing a model. Structural equation modeling with Smart PLS is accomplished in two steps. In the first stage, the reliability and validity of the model are discussed. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used. For validity, the structural validity of the model has been examined and confirmed by confirmatory factor analysis. In the next phase, the model is examined by path coefficients, model fit, and T-statistics.

Study area

The study area is Tehran's creative cultural attractions, the capital of Iran. Tehran is located on the southern slope of the Alborz Mountain range, between the mountains and the desert, with an area of about 730 km. Geographically, Tehran is located at 35° 34' to 35° 51' north latitude and 51° 6' to 51° 38' east longitude. There are various cultural tourism attractions in Tehran. Most of these attractions

are contemporary, which can be improved by changing their current state to the desired state. In this research, 15 attractions in Tehran were identified by interviewing Tehran scholars and experts based on research criteria, including visitors' involvement, experience meaningfulness, new experience, engagement of visitors' emotions, knowledge and awareness, culture, hospitality, accessibility, and the physical design of the attraction. The selected attractions are as follows:

1. The Garden of the Holy Defense Museum (a memorable complex in the north of Tehran that evokes the memories of the 8-year Iran-Iraq war, has various halls that tangibly depict war events and involve the visitor).

2. Debir al-Molk mansion (a beautiful 140-year-old building designed with European decorations in Tehran's Odlajan neighborhood) has gorgeous architecture and numerous rooms that serve as a place of leisure, bringing local native games to life and spending the citizens' free time).

3. Vaziri Museum Cave (in this complex, each artist's works represent the stories of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh and the narratives of the Iranian people's culture. Visitors can easily and freely take photos in this museum garden. The handicraft section has a shop for pottery, ceramics, stands out, etc.).

4. Tehran Book Garden (the most extensive collection of books and scientific entertainment in Iran, which has an appealing environment for reading and entertainment)

5. Music Museum (this complex has a lovely courtyard and attracts visitors with its beautiful coffee shop; this museum has three floors, which include a hall for instruments exhibition, a hall for music performances, a music recording studio, a specialized library, a storehouse for keeping the instruments, manuscripts storehouse, and an audio-visual section. Furthermore, all kinds of instruments are played for the visitors).

6. Contemporary Art Museum (Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art is one of the modern art treasures from World War II to 1980 outside North America and Europe. It contains important works of minimalism, conceptual and photorealism, pop art, and abstract movements; this collection updates its works from time to time).

7. Ebrat Museum (this museum is one of the black tourism destinations that narrates the suffering of prisoners under torture and, in this respect, is different from other museums in Tehran. In this place, the visitor's five senses are tangibly involved).

8. Persian Cat Cafe/Museum (a cafe in an old building with a courtyard and a beautiful view with different decorations and designs. Persian cats are everywhere in this museum cafe, and there are poems in Persian literature describing cats).

9. Roya Park, Tehran (this complex is the newest type of Optical Illusion collection, in which it has tried to present the phenomena and works of Optical Illusion with Iranian culture to the visitors according to the taste of the Iranian audience).

10. A collection of events, tourism workshops, arts and crafts

11. Qasr Museum Garden (it used to be a prison, which has now become a museum garden. The mentioned collection provides visitors with a nostalgic feeling and plunges them into the depths of history).

Results

The sample number of visitors to creative cultural attractions was 381 people (as seen in Table 1), consisting of 57% men and 43% women. Regarding age, the most extensive age range of visitors is 25 to 35, 46.7% of the sample. Finally, in terms of education, most of them have a master's degree, which constitutes 55% of the sample.

Table 1. Profile of research samples

Sample of Visitors (N = 381)			
Characteristics	Description	Frequency 20	(%) 100
Gender	Female	164	43
	Male	217	57
Age (in years)	18–25	31	8.1
	25–35	178	46.7
	35–45	103	27
	45–55	52	13.6
	>55	17	4.5
Education	Diploma	9	2.4
	Associate degree	8	2.1
	Undergraduate degree	72	18.9
	Master's degree	210	55.1
	Ph.D.	82	21.5
Total		381	100

Qualitative content analysis results

The findings of the current research in the qualitative part are the output of twenty interviews using the inductive qualitative content analysis method (as it moves from extracting codes to identifying indicators, subcategories, and then main categories). Each interview was coded after completion, and the following interview was conducted. In this regard, MaxQDA 21 software was used. The interviews lasted for 1134 minutes, which resulted in identifying 600 codes or key phrases from which 54

indicators were extracted. The mentioned codes were placed in the form of 9 main criteria, including mental image (3 indicators), individual characteristics (2 indicators), motivation and expectations (5 indicators), creative experience (20 indicators), experiences came (14 indicators), the memorable experience process (3 indicators), satisfaction (3 indicators), loyalty (3 indicators) and lasting memories (2 indicators), which can be seen in Table No. 2. Accordingly, thirteen hypotheses were formulated. The research model was designed (can be seen in Figure 1).

H1: Visitors' characteristics have a direct impact on the image.

H2: Visitors' individual characteristics directly impact the creative experience.

H3: Visitors' image directly impacts visitors' motivation and expectations.

H4: Visitors' image has a direct impact on the creative experience.

H5: Visitors' motivation and expectations directly impact the creative experience.

H6: Creative experience has a direct impact on the experience scale.

H7: Creative experience directly impacts the process of the memorable experience.

H8: Experiencescape directly impacts the process of the memorable experience.

H9: Memorable experiences process has a direct impact on satisfaction.

H10: Memorable experiences process has a direct impact on loyalty.

H11: Memorable experiences process has a direct impact on lasting memories.

H12: Satisfaction has a direct impact on loyalty.

H13: Loyalty has a direct impact on lasting memories.

Structural equation results

The structural equation modeling method using Smart PLS 3 software was employed to reach the goals and test the research model hypothesis. In the first step, the measurement model fit was done. The composite reliability coefficient, divergent validity, convergent validity, and construct validity with confirmatory factor analysis were used to measure the research model. As seen in Table 2, the Cronbach's alpha of the research constructs is above 0.7, which indicates the reliability of the research, and the combined reliability value of all constructs is also above 7.0, which indicates the high internal consistency of the research constructs (Hair et al., 2012). The average variance extracted is above 0.5, which indicates convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and the factor loading of all constructs is above 0.6, which indicates construct validity (Hair et al., 2011). Therefore, the research model is favorable for continuing the research analysis and hypothesis testing.
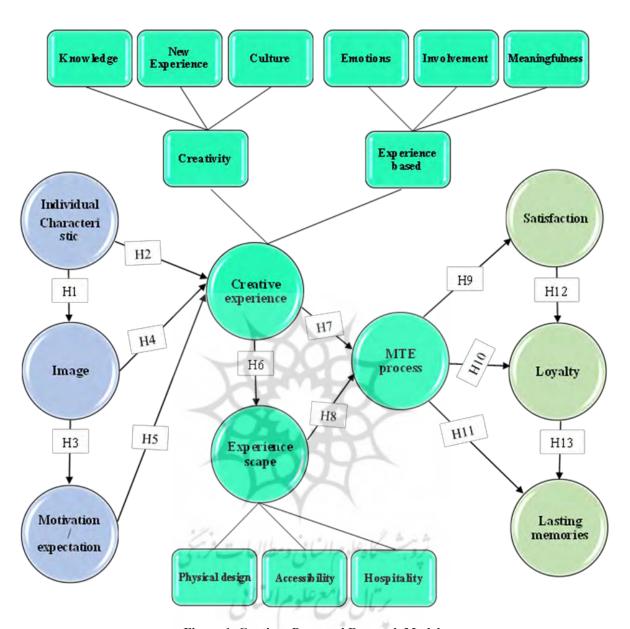
Figure 1. Caption: Proposed Research Model

Table 2. The results of the measurement indicators of the research model (n = 381).

Constructs	Items	Cross loadings	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE	R2
Image			0.769	0.866	0.684	0.357
	I visited Tehran's creative attractions with prior knowledge.	0.783				
	Before the visit, I positively viewed Tehran's creative attractions.	0.833				
	Before the visit, Tehran's creative attractions were attractive to me (I was eager to visit).	0.864				
Individual characteristic			0.783	0.902	0.821	-
	I tend to be in the crowd and do group work and cooperative activities.	0.912				
	I tend to do exciting things and visit new and creative places.	0.901				
Motivation and expectations			0.793	0.859	0.55	0.384
	My motivation and expectation from visiting Tehran's creative attractions were pleasure, entertainment, and excitement.	0.708				
	My motivation and expectation from visiting Tehran's creative attractions were to learn and increase my awareness.	0.775				
	My motivation and expectation from visiting Tehran's creative attractions were to relieve fatigue and rejuvenate.	0.677				
	My motivation and expectation from visiting Tehran's creative attractions were to experience and visit new activities.	0.824				
	My motivation and expectation from visiting Tehran's creative attractions were to participate in collaborative activities inside the attraction.	0.713				
Creative experience			0.923	0.933	0.513	0.426
Experience-based			0.856	0.886	0.541	0.86
Meaningfulness			0.751	0.858	0.667	0.702
	From a spiritual point of view, my visit to Tehran's creative attractions was valuable.	0.797				
	While visiting Tehran's creative attractions, I learned another personality dimension.	0.831				
	Visiting Tehran's creative attractions was more than a simple visit for me.	0.822				
Involvement			0.742	0.853	0.66	0.601
	I contributed to my experience by visiting creative attractions.	0.789				
	My five senses, such as smell, hearing, touch, taste, and sight, were involved in creative attraction.	0.847				
	In participating in the collaborative activities of creative attractions, I could choose and control my activities.	0.8				
Emotions			0.795	0.868	0.625	0.727
	Visiting Tehran's creative attractions was enjoyable and exciting for me.	0.808				
	I forgot my daily responsibilities while visiting Tehran's creative attractions.	0.612				

I felt liberty and peace of mind while visiting Tehran's creative attractions.	0.853			
Visiting Tehran's creative attractions rejuvenated me and relieved my fatigue.	0.863			
Creativity		0.888	0.909	0.501	0.893
Culture		0.791	0.865	0.617	0.692
I participated in cultural and artistic workshops at Tehran's creative attractions.	0.675			
I enjoyed visual arts in Tehran's creative attractions.	0.803			
I enjoyed visual arts in Tehran's creative attractions.	0.851			
I learned valuable information about Iranian society and culture through Tehran's creative attractions.	0.802			
New Experience		0.857	0.913	0.778	0.672
The architecture and interior design of Tehran's creative attractions were new to me.	0.854			
My visit to Tehran's creative attractions was new to me compared to other attractions.	0.918			
The events, activities, and programs performed in Tehran's creative attractions were new to me.	0.872			
Knowledge		0.85	0.909	0.769	0.757
During my visit to Tehran's creative attractions, I learned various skills and activities inside the attraction.	0.876			
Visiting Tehran's creative attractions was informative for me.	0.891			
While visiting Tehran's creative attractions, I was stimulated to learn new things.	0.864			
Experiencescape		0.907	0.923	0.522	0.378
Hospitality		0.918	0.942	0.803	0.736
The employees of Tehran's creative attractions are friendly.	0.867			
Tehran's creative attractions employees are knowledgeable and correctly answer the tourists' questions.	0.913			
The employees of Tehran's creative attractions provide convenient services to tourists.	0.907			
The employees of Tehran's creative attractions care for and respect tourists.	0.896			
Accessibility		0.752	0.844	0.577	0.467
The purchasing tickets for Tehran's creative attractions are well accessed.	0.704			
The information on Tehran's creative attractions is well-accessed.	0.853			
The facilities for vulnerable groups in Tehran's creative attractions are well-accessed.	0.792			
I did not feel crowded in Tehran's creative attractions and could easily enjoy my visit.	0.677			
Physical design		0.869	0.902	0.606	0.827
The architecture of Tehran's creative attractions is attractive and creative.	0.758			
In the interior design and environmental arrangement of Tehran's creative attractions, the relaxation of the environment and the comfort of tourists have been considered.	0.834			

The environment of creative attractions has been designed in such a way that it increases the interaction of tourists with each other.	0.744			
Generally, the environmental quality of Tehran's creative attractions is favorable.	0.733			
In Tehran's creative attractions, technology has been used appropriately for the attractiveness and creativity of the environment.	0.763			
Tehran's creative attractions' decoration, arrangement, and interior design are beautiful and creative.	0.833			
Memorable Tourist Experience Process	0.804	0.884	0.718	0.477
My visit to Tehran's creative attractions was unique to me until then.	0.845			
Visiting Tehran's creative attractions expanded my thinking of culture and society, so it is valuable and essential to me.	0.856			
During my visit to Tehran's creative attractions, I put myself in the characters' shoes in the story.	0.841			
Satisfaction	0.816	0.891	0.731	0.489
The desirability of provided services in Tehran's creative attractions was better than I thought.	0.85			
Visiting Tehran's creative attractions is one of my most enjoyable visits.	0.875			
In visiting Tehran's creative attractions, my expectations about the creative attractions of Tehran were fulfilled.	0.84			
Loyalty	0.755	0.891	0.803	0.349
I recommend visiting Tehran's creative attractions to others.	0.885			
I will revisit Tehran's creative attractions.	0.907			
Lasting Memories	0.81	0.913	0.84	0.456
I have lasting memories of visiting Tehran's creative attractions.	0.931			
I bring a tangible gift or souvenir of creative cultural attractions with me.	0.901			

Notes: CR = Composite Reliability, AVE = Average variance extracted.

To explain the divergent validity of Fornell and Larcker's criteria, in this validity, the correlation between the questions of a construct (variable) must be higher than the correlation between the questions of that construct (variable) with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For divergent validity analysis, the factor load of each variable on its respective construct must be at least 0.1 more than the factor load of the same variable on other constructs (Geffen et al., 2000). As can be noticed from the table results, this test confirms divergent validity.

Table 3. Comparison of the variables' correlation coefficients with the extracted variance's root mean values (Discriminant validity).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Emotions	0.8															
2. Motivation/ Expectation	0.4	0.7														
3. New Experience	0.6	0.3	0.9													
4. MTE process	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.8												
5. Image	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.8											
6. Lasting memories	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.9										
7. Accessibility	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.8									
8. Satisfaction	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.6	0.5	0.9								
9. Individual characteristic	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.9							
10. Culture	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.8						
11. Physical design	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.3	0.8					
12. Involvement	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.4	0.8				
13. Meaningfulness	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.8			
14. Hospitality	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.9		
15. Loyalty	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.9	
16. Knowledge	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.9

Notes: MTE process = Memorable Tourist Experience Process.

After performing the measurement model evaluation steps, various criteria are used to fit the structural research model. The R^2 coefficients associated with the model-dependent variables are one of the criteria for structural model fit. To evaluate the R^2 coefficient, three values of 0.19 weak, 0.33 moderate, and 0.67 vigorous are considered (Chin, 1998). As can be seen from the results of Table No. 2, the amount of R^2 for each mentioned structure is more than 0.33 and indicates the appropriateness and fit of the model. The next indicator is the overall fit of the GOF model, which is applied based on the formula GOF = √average (AVE) × average (R^2). Wetzles et al. (2009) have presented three values of 0.01 (as weak), 0.25 (as medium), and 0.36 (as vital) for the mentioned criterion. Based on the calculations, the value of R^2 is equal to 0.576, and the average variance extracted (AVE) is equal to 0.497. As a result, according to the formula (GOF = √average (AVE) × average), the value of GOF is

equal to 0.614. Thus, since the value obtained for GOF is more significant than 0.36, it shows the firm fit of the research model.

Hypothesis testing

After fitting the structural research model, the researcher can examine the empirical hypotheses of the research model and evaluate the relationships drawn within the research model. Thus, using the bootstrapping technique, both path coefficients and T statistics were calculated (the results can be seen in Table No. 4). The T-values indicate the level of significance in the relationships between the variables and research hypotheses, so that if the amount of T is outside the range (+2.327 to -2.327), then the relationships between the variables are significant at the confidence level of 0.99. As can be seen from the results of Figure 2, the results of significant T at the level of the relationships of the variables indicate meaningful and positive relationships.
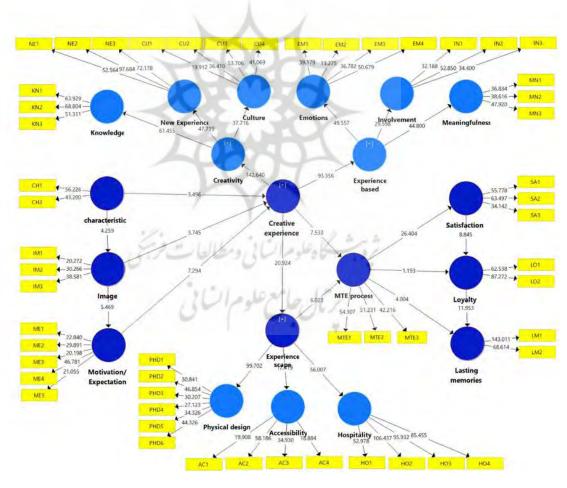

Figure 2. PLS-path analysis of t-values (n = 381)

Table 4. Summary of structural equation modeling results (path coefficient and t-statistic value).

Hypothesis	Path (hypotheses of the research model)	β	SE	T value	p-value	Result
H_1	Visitors' characteristics have a direct impact on the image.	0.239	0.055	4.259***	0.000	Yes
H_2	Visitors' characteristics have a direct impact on the creative experience.	0.162	0.045	3.496***	0.000	Yes
H_3	A visitor's image directly impacts visitors' motivation and expectations.	0.290	0.053	5.469***	0.000	Yes
H_4	Visitors' image has a direct impact on the creative experience.	0.172	0.051	3.745***	0.000	Yes
H_5	Visitors' motivation and expectations have a direct impact on the creative experience.	0.398	0.054	7.294***	0.000	Yes
H_6	Creative experience has a direct impact on the experiencescape.	0.615	0.028	20.924***	0.000	Yes
H_7	Creative experience has a direct impact on the process of the memorable experience.	0.436	0.061	7.533***	0.000	Yes
H_8	Experiencescape has a direct impact on the process of the memorable experience.	0.331	0.056	6.023***	0.000	Yes
H_9	The memorable experiences process has a direct impact on satisfaction.	0.699	0.025	26.404***	0.000	Yes
H_{10}	The memorable experiences process has a direct impact on loyalty.	0.083	0.071	1.193	0.121	No
H_{11}	The memorable experiences process has a direct impact on lasting memories.	0.213	0.055	4.004***	0.000	Yes
H_{12}	Satisfaction has a direct impact on loyalty.	0.530	0.063	8.845***	0.000	Yes
H_{13}	Loyalty has a direct impact on lasting memories.	0.551	0.043	11.953***	0.000	Yes

Notes: $*p < 0.05$, t-value > 1.645, $**p < 0.01$, t-value > 2.327, $***p < 0.001$, t-value > 3.09 (one tailed); SE = Standard Error, β = Beta value.

According to Table 4, the results of the hypothesis test of the research model are as follows: the visitor's individual characteristics on the image (H1; $\beta = 0.239$, t = 4.259, p < 0.001) and on the creative experience (H2; $\beta = 0.001$) 162, t = 3.496, p < 0.001) has a positive direct impact. The image has a direct impact on the visitor's motivation and expectations (H3; $\beta = 0.290$, t = 5.469, p < 0.001) and the creative experience (H4; $\beta = 0.172$, t = 3.745, p < 0.001). The visitor's motivation and expectations positively impact the creative experience (H5; $\beta = 0.398$, t = 7.294, p < 0.001). Creative experience has a direct positive impact on the experiencescape (H6; $\beta = 0.615$, t = 20.924, p < 0.001) and the process of the memorable experience (H7; $\beta = 0.436$, t = 7.533, p < 0.001). The experiencescape has a direct positive impact on the memorable experiences of visitors (H8; $\beta = 0.331$, t = 6.023, p < 0.001). The visitor's memorable experiences process on satisfaction (H9; $\beta = 0.699$, t =

26.404, p < 0.001) and on the visitor's lasting memories (H11; β = 0.213, t = 4.004, p < 0.001) has a direct positive impact. Satisfaction positively impacts loyalty (H12; β = 0.530, t = 8.845, p < 0.001). Loyalty positively impacts lasting memories (H13; β = 0.551, t = 11.953, p < 0.001). Meanwhile, hypothesis 10, that is, the direct effect of memorable experiences on loyalty (H10; β = 0.083, t = 1.193, p > 0.05), is rejected.

Discussion and conclusion

According to recent progress in tourism, tourists are inclined to creative attractions, especially those that provide distinctive experiences and demand high participation and involvement (Farhadi Uonaki et al., 2022). However, the background study shows that the design of an experience-based tourism model for creative cultural attractions has not been conducted. Therefore, to fill this gap, the present study identified the criteria of experience-based tourism in creative cultural attractions, examined their relationships, and designed an experience-based tourism model for creative cultural attractions. The research model consists of three stages: before the visit (input), the stage of the visit (process), and after the visit (consequences), based on which the relations and experimental hypotheses of the research were drawn and confirmed. In addition, the extent of their influence on each other was determined. In the stage before the visit, the following hypotheses are established: (the first and second hypotheses) individual characteristics directly affect the image and creative experience. Thus, people with different personal characteristics (age, education, personality style) have different views on creative cultural attractions, and the quality of their experience in the same attraction is different too. In line with this finding, Zare (2019) found in his research that general themes (such as knowledge, local culture, the influence of guides, and involvement in activities) and specific cultural themes (togetherness, independence, and control, spontaneity, and distinctiveness) are effective in creating memorable tourism experiences. Chen et al. (2020) found psychological and individual factors and their effect on the tourist experience. The image (the third and fourth hypothesis) directly impacts visitors' motivation and expectations, and creative experience. Accordingly, the visitor's view towards the attraction in his mind is effective in his motivation and expectation from the visit and in the quality of his experience. The mentioned relationship aligns with Sitvan et al. (2021) research, which acknowledges the influence of the tourist's mental image on the tourist's experience and the motivation to visit. Most researchers have examined the mentioned relationship in the form of the impact of the visitor's experience on the image. In this regard, we can refer to the research of Shahabi et al. (2022). Visitors' motivation and expectations (the fifth hypothesis) directly impact the creative experience. Chang et al.'s research (2014) also identifies the influence of motivation in forming creative experiences. In the visiting process, the following relations are established: (sixth and seventh

hypothesis) creative experience directly impacts the experiencescape and memorable experiences process. In the interpretation of the mentioned relationship, the experiencescape to create a memorable experience for the visitor should be optimized and built in line with the concept of creative experience. This concept means that a creative experience is meaningful, collaborative, and interactive, involves emotions, is derived from culture, is accompanied by education and learning, and is new for the tourist. It should be noted that to the extent that the visitor's experience is close to the concept of creative experience, it becomes memorable. In line with that, Seyfi et al. (2020) found six main factors, which are previous experience, authenticity, interaction, cultural exchange, the attractiveness of cooking, and service quality, to be effective in creating a memorable visitor experience. (Eighth hypothesis) the experiencescape directly impacts the process of the memorable experience. Similarly, Zatori (2018) reveals in his research that the space's design makes the experience memorable. In the results stage of the research model, the following relationships are established: (ninth hypothesis) the process of the memorable experience directly impacts satisfaction. In this way, tourist satisfaction increases to the extent that the experience is memorable. This result aligns with the research of Suhartanto et al. (2020) and Li & Liu (2020) in the field of the tourist experience. The hypothesis (tenth hypothesis) of the process of the memorable experience having a direct impact on loyalty was rejected, which aligns with the research results of Ali et al. (2016), Dean & Suhartanto (2019) and contradicts those of Zhang et al. (2019), Stavrianea & Kamenidou (2021), Chang et al. (2014). The memorable experiences process (eleventh hypothesis) directly impacts lasting memories. Wang et al. (2020) also acknowledge in their research that the more favorable an experience is, the more lasting it will be. Satisfaction (the twelfth hypothesis) has a direct effect on loyalty. Many researchers considered the effect of satisfaction on loyalty, among which we can mention the research of Suhartanto et al. (2022). Loyalty (the thirteenth hypothesis) has a direct impact on lasting memories. This means revisiting and sharing the visiting experience with others will make the experience more lasting.

Theoretical implications

Our research has contributed significantly to the concept of experience-based tourism and creative cultural attractions. It can be said that this research is the first research in the field of designing an experience-based tourism model for creative cultural attractions. The designed model is comprehensive, including the factors affecting the tourist's experience before the visit, the factors affecting the creation of memorable experiences during the visit, and the consequences of the tourist's experience after the visit. This is while in the previous models, the researchers each addressed a part of the dimensions of the tourist experience and did not address the concept of experience-based tourism

in creative cultural attractions systematically and comprehensively. Furthermore, in previous research, not all the dimensions involved in making the tourist experience memorable were considered. In the present study, all the dimensions effective in creating memorable experiences for tourist experience in creative cultural attractions were explored and investigated comprehensively. In the current study, the variable of creative experience was expanded with eight sub-variables: central experience, creativity, meaningfulness, participation and interaction, feelings, culture, the novelty of the experience, and awareness. Furthermore, in the previous research, they did not include all the dimensions involved in the tourist experience, while in this research, we tried to contain all of these dimensions. In the current research, the variable of creative experience was expanded with eight sub-variables: experience-based, creativity, meaningfulness, involvement, emotions, culture, new experience, and knowledge. In this study, we expanded the concept of the experience-escape with three sub-variables: furniture and physical design, hospitality, and accessibility, while in previous research, the concept of creative experience has not been comprehensively considered. Finally, this research developed not only the concept of experience-based tourism in the tourism literature but also the concept of creative cultural attractions. In contrast, in previous research, the concept of experiencescape has been considered from a physical design perspective.

Managerial implications

In the current research, nine criteria, which are experience meaningfulness, new experience, involvement, emotions, knowledge, culture, hospitality, accessibility, and physical attraction design, were extracted to identify creative cultural attractions. Therefore, managers of cultural attractions can use the mentioned criteria to develop their attractions toward creativity. The tourism industry policymakers can rank creative cultural attractions by setting up a registration system for them, awarding creative certificates to prominent attractions, and providing them with the basis of progress. Another important managerial implication of this study is that well-known attractions rarely focus on tourists' needs and experiences and are primarily concerned with providing product-based marketing and management methods. Thus, understanding the tourism experience and the factors affecting the creation of memorable experiences in creative cultural attractions is helpful for the managers of mentioned attractions since it gives them approaches for providing service to frequent and experienced visitors. This is especially significant for attractions that depend on repeat markets (repeat visitors). It is arguable that for encouraging tourists to revisit an attraction, creating memorable experiences on each visit is essential.

Research limitations and future studies

The statistical population of the current research is domestic visitors of creative cultural attractions. Consequently, the results may differ slightly from the statistical population of international visitors to Tehran's creative cultural attractions. Therefore, assessing this research model with the statistical population of international visitors is recommended. In addition, the study area of the research was only the city of Tehran due to existing limitations. Hence, this research model can be investigated in other parts of the world. Finally, in the present study, the content analysis method was used in the qualitative part, and future researchers can also use other methods, such as grounded theory.

Disclosure statement

The authors reported no potential conflict of interest.

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