Brand personality in cultural tourism through social media

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BRAND PERSONALITY IN CULTURAL TOURISM THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to analyze the effect of the use of social media on the perception of brand personality and to identify its effect on customer brand engagement.

Design/methodology/approach: The study adopted an exploratory approach, adapting Aaker's Brand Personality Scale (1997) to the context of cultural tourism before carrying out a quantitative study resorting to a structural equation modeling (SEM) in order to obtain empirical evidence to identify these relationships.

Findings: The findings reveal that the use of social media has a positive effect on the perception of brand personality and that brand personality, likewise, has a positive effect on customer brand engagement.

Research implications: This study indicates that transmission of an attractive brand personality according to the desires of the public, combined with dissemination through social media, is a valid strategy to improve customer brand engagement.

Originality/value: This study represents an advance in the specialized literature on the value that consumers place on information transmitted through social media. Specifically, it sheds light on how the transmission of brand personality through social media affects customer brand engagement.

Keywords: brand personality, social media, customer brand engagement, cultural tourism, Alhambra

Paper type: Research paper.

Introduction

The surge of digital media has altered the way customers relate to brands (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Social media represents the best example of the change in customer-brand relationship as it allows direct interaction with brands (Kiráľová and Pavlíčeka, 2015). It is for this reason that social media is currently considered the most relevant tool among branding strategies (Andéhn, et al., 2014; Hanna and Rowley, 2015). In short, social media lends a hand in building a competitive advantage for brands (Yan, 2011). Among the different branding strategies stands out that of brand personality, a concept that emerges from the tendency of consumers to transfer human personality traits to brands (Aaker, 1997). Along these lines, many researchers have highlighted the necessity of examining the antecedents of brand personality in the field of social media (Mutsikiwa, 2018; Ong et al., 2017) as they play a vital role in transmitting human traits to a brand (e.g. Kim et al., 2018; Walsh et al, 2013; Xu et al., 2016; Zhang, 2017).

Customer brand engagement is the concept that best reflects the particular nature of the interactive relations between consumers and brands through social media (Hollebeek et al., 2014). This term, in fact, englobes client motivation, involvement and commitment when interacting with a brand (Hollebeek, 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Among the marketing actions that stand out to boost customer brand engagement is brand strategy (So et al., 2016b), concretely transmission of brand personality. This leads to a greater emotional connection with the brand which, in turn, leads to a higher level of engagement (Goldsmith and Goldsmith, 2012). Previous studies on this question have stressed the need of examining the effect of brand personality on customer brand engagement (Leckie et al., 2016). The analyses carried out by Andonova (2016), Banahene (2017), Cruz and Lee (2014), Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2012), Lee et al. (2018b) and Tamhankar and Pandit (2018) have in fact established its influence on customer engagement.

No previous research has directly related the brand personality and customer brand engagement constructs by resorting to the most common conceptualization and scales serving in brand personality literature, notably Aaker's (1997) *Brand Personality Scale* and the Customer Brand Engagement stemming from cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions (Dessart et al., 2016; Kuvykaitė and Tarute, 2015). Nor has any earlier study analyzed the use of social media by clients as a precedent of this relationship, nor has any incorporated the online and offline fields. Thus, the aim of this study is to fill this research gap by delving into the notion of how

the transmission of brand personality influences customer brand engagement and how the use of social media contributes to its transmission.

Cultural tourism is a specific field that is devoid of direct analyses of the relationships between social media, brand personality and customer brand engagement. Cultural tourism has in recent times boosted tourist demand as it raises the attractiveness and offer of destinations (Croes and Semrad, 2015). This is because it increases the influx of tourists (Fernández, 2013), deseasonalizes and geographically expands tourist demand (Croes and Semrad, 2015) and generates employment and revenue (Chong and Balasingam, 2019).

Cultural tourism resources constitute the foundation of the development of cultural tourism, and play a major role in tourist destination choice (Covarrubias, 2014). Due to their particular characteristics, these resources require strategies to actively enhance the public's appreciation of their worth, so as to attract more visitors and bolster customer commitment. Such strategies should also respond to the need to raise brand engagement among visitors. In this sense, the transmission of brand personality through social media can be a positive strategy since it can serve as a means to interact with travelers interested in cultural tourism (Liasidou, 2018). The Alhambra (Granada), the most-visited monument in Spain, stands out among the greatest international cultural tourism resources and brands (Patronato de La Alhambra y Generalife, 2016). This monument is also-widely present in social media and in constant interaction with the public (Comunidad IEBS, 2013). It therefore serves as a suitable example of a cultural tourism resource for the present study.

Hence this study's main objective is to probe the question of how the transmission of brand personality affects customer brand engagement, as well as how social media contributes to transmitting brand personality in the framework of cultural tourism resources. The concrete objectives are (a) to analyze the effect of the use of social media on the perception of brand personality and (b) to identify its effect on customer brand engagement.

Literature review

Brand personality of cultural tourism resources

Brand personality can be defined as "… the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker 1997, p. 347) a notion suggesting that individuals project human traits to brands (Aaker, 1997). Both tend to be durable and differentiating (Gómez, 2010) leading brand

personality to increase brand preference and use, as well as foster trust and loyalty (Aaker, 1997). Hence its importance as a marketing tool.

Aaker (1997) developed the *Brand Personality Scale,* a means to measure brand personality which has been widely accepted and applied by many authors from different sectors (e.g. Aaker, et al., 2001; Kim et al., 2001; Kim et al., 2011; Lee and Kim, 2018; Lee and Oh, 2006; Roy et al., 2016; Rojas-Méndez et al., 2004). It comprises five dimensions: Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication and Ruggedness. Although this scale, as noted above, is the most widespread means to measure brand personality (Kumar, 2018), certain authors suggest that its characteristics and dimensions vary from sector to sector (Davies et al., 2018; Ferrandi et al., 2000; Geuens et al., 2009; Gómez, 2010; Lara-Rodríguez et al., 2019; Supphellen and Grønhaug, 2003). Of these, Sincerity, Competence, Excitement and Sophistication are the dimensions most widely identified when brand personality is applied in different sectors (Davies et al., 2018).

As cultural tourism resources are characterized by specific intrinsic elements, their study requires an adaptation of the Aaker scale. Due to the intense competition between tourist destinations, these resources must offer their visitors unique experiences (Croes and Semrad, 2015). Accordingly, cultural tourism now represents 40% of international arrivals (Richards, 2019; UNWTO, 2018), reinforcing the notion that the cultural resource offer forms the backbone of the development of cultural tourism. Furthermore, depending on its level of appeal and singularity, a cultural tourism resource can have a significant impact on destination choice (Covarrubias, 2014), as cultural experiences play a vital role in visitor decision-making (Yoo et al., 2018). It is for this reason that, in recent years, a number of tourist destinations have begun taking active steps to promote knowledge and appreciation of their value (Martos and Pulido, 2013).

Cultural tourism-resource marketing strategies must therefore contribute to raising their market value. Among the potential marketing options, cultural tourism-resource strategies must attempt to attain a high level of visitor commitment meaning that they must development of a positive attitude and a desire of interaction beyond the visit itself. A means to carry this out within tourist branding is to enhance cultural tourism-resource brand personality. Hence brand personality is a viable means to build brands in the field of tourism and develop unique identities among tourist destinations (Ekinci and Hosany, 2006).

Most of the empirical research on this subject has focused on measuring brand personality from the perspective of Aaker's (1997) *Brand Personality Scale* (e.g. Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou, 2015; Bekk et al., 2016; Ekinci and Hosany, 2006; Gómez, 2010; Guiry and Vequist, 2015; Hosany et al., 2006; Huang et al., 2017; Kim and Lehto, 2013; Kim et al., 2017; Lee and Suh, 2011, Murphy et al., 2007; Seljeseth and Korneliussen, 2015; Souiden et al., 2017; Xie and Lie, 2013) (Table 1). The findings of these studies indicate that not all of Aaker's dimensions and traits are applicable to tourism (Pan et al., 2017), and that the scale must be adapted to each particular context.

[Table 1 near here]

Hence the specific features of cultural tourism resources that are taken into account in adapting a brand personality scale are the following:

-Cultural tourism resources are, by definition, original and genuine (Urosevic, 2010), these features coinciding with Aaker's (1997) *Sincerity* dimension.

-Visitors to cultural tourism resources seek to experience emotions (Urosevic, 2010), characteristics that coincide with Aaker's *Excitement* dimension.

-Cultural tourism resources must offer high-quality experiences and benefits to visitors while contributing to sustainable development (Istoc, 2010). Such aspects are clearly linked to Aaker's *Competence* dimension.

-Cultural tourism resources consumers seek to project a social image of sophistication (Moragues Cortada, 2006), a notion clearly in line with Aaker's *Sophistication* dimension.

-Visitors to cultural tourism resources seek to satisfy their interest in art, architecture, and history, and to participate in cultural and artistic events as a way to satisfy their desire for self-realization and self-discovery (Niemczyk, 2014). These characteristics are in line with the dimension of the human personality called *Openness to experience*. This dimension forms part of Goldberg's (1993) "Big Five" of human personality, and includes aspects linked to imagination, creativity, intellectual curiosity and appreciation of aesthetic experiences (Kochanska and Aksan, 2004). All of these aspects make a novel addition to Aaker's scale (Davies et al., 2018; Slaughter et al., 2004).

Effect of the use of social media on the perception of brand personality

Customer-brand relations have changed profoundly in recent years (Hollebeek et al., 2014) largely due to the irruption of digital media (Matloka and Buhalis, 2010). Social media platforms, for example, can have a profound effect on consumer attitude and behavioral intention (Leung et al., 2019). Consequently, managers are now convinced that social media must form an integral part of marketing campaigns (Kiráľová and Pavlíčeka, 2015; Tiago et al., 2018).

Brand personality can be communicated through different sources (Boga and Weiermair, 2011). In this sense, online media, and social media in particular, can play a vital role in transmitting brand personality as they offer the option of setting in motion an interaction and dialogue with an audience as they yield information as to a brand's desired personality traits (Walsh et al., 2013). Recent research has highlighted that social media favors unidirectional communication leading to actions that boost the transmission of brand personality (George and Anandkumar, 2014; Xu et al., 2016). Social Media also supports bidirectional communication which serves to build brand personality (Chung and Ahn, 2013; Kim and Lehto, 2013; Kim et al., 2018; Walsh et al., 2013). Hence, many authors consider the construction and transmission of brand personality through social media as central to a company's marketing strategy (De Moya and Jain, 2013; Vinyals-Mirabent et al., 2019; Witzig, 2009).

A review of the specialized literature reveals the cases and the evolution of brand personality research in the online environment (Appendix 1). These include the following:

1) Studies that carry out web content or social media analyses to identify brand personality projected through online media (Okazaki, 2006; Opoku and Hinson, 2006; Opoku et al., 2006; Pitt et al., 2007; Opoku et al.,2008; Haarhoff and Kleyn, 2012; De Moya and Jain, 2013; Chung, 2015; Huertas and Marine-Roig, 2016; Rojas-Mendez and Hine, 2017; Shin et al., 2017; Rutter et al., 2018; Vinyals-Mirabent and Mohammadi, 2018; Vinyals-Mirabent et al., 2019).
2) Studies that compare brand personality communicated through online media with that perceived by consumers (Kim and Lehto, 2013; George and Anandkumar, 2014; Dickinger and Lalicic, 2015).
3) Studies that analyze the effects of brand personality in web pages, web services and social media on the different variables of consumer behavior (Poddar et al., 2009;

Chung and Ahn, 2013; Habibi et al., 2014; Christou. 2015: Ham and Lee, 2015; Ong et al., 2017; Setiawan and Aryanto; 2017; Mutsikiwa, 2018; Tan et al., 2018; Garanti and Kissi, 2019).

4) Studies that offer empirical proof of the relationship between the use of social media by customers or by brands and brand personality perception (Müller and Chandon, 2003; Walsh et al.; 2013; Xu et al., 2016; Zhang, 2017; Kim et al., 2018).

None of the studies cited above linking the use of social media with the perception of brand personality has assumed a global approach to Aaker's dimensions as a tool to measure brand personality. Moreover, authors such as Ong et al. (2017) and Mutsikiwa (2018) advance the need of future research to explore the question of which variables serve to influence the perception of brand personality in the online sphere.

Therefore, the first research hypothesis proposal of this study is as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Use of social media has a significant and positive effect on the perception of brand personality among visitors to cultural tourism resources.

Effect of brand personality on customer brand engagement

A variable that explains consumer behavior is customer brand engagement which lines up with the degree of motivation, involvement and commitment of the client during brand interaction giving rise to certain cognitive, emotional and behavioral attitudes toward the brand (Hollebeek, 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Customer brand engagement is formed by three dimensions: cognitive processing, affection and activation (Hollebeek et al., 2014). According to Hollebeek et al. (2014), cognitive processing reflects the level of thought afforded to a brand. Affection, the emotional dimension of customer brand engagement, reflects the degree of positive sentiment toward the brand. Activation, in turn, is the behavioral dimension that corresponds to the level of energy, effort and time invested in a brand by a consumer.

The specialized literature has highlighted the crucial role played by customer brand engagement in business. Several authors consider that the its increase leads to better organizational performance which is reflected by an increase of sales and positive co-creation experiences, a reduction of costs, and ultimately, higher profitability (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Recent research underscores that the positive effects of customer brand engagement on consumer behavior include satisfaction (Fernandes and Moreira, 2019; Rasoolimanesh et al.,

2019; Solem and Pedersen, 2016;), loyalty (Alrawadieh et al., 2019; Fernandes and Moreira, 2019; France et al., 2016; Harrigan et al., 2017; Molinillo et al., 2019; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019; Rather and Sharma, 2017; Rather et al., 2018; Rather et al., 2019; So et al., 2016a and 2016b; Solem and Pedersen, 2016), trust (Dessart, 2017; Rather and Sharma, 2017; Rather et al., 2019; So et al., 2016b), behavioral attitudes and intentions (Ahn and Back, 2018; Huang and Choi, 2019; Islam et al., 2017 and 2019), brand equity (Algharabat et al.,2019; Harrigan et al., 2018; Hepola et al., 2017), customer co-creation (Rather et al., 2019), service brand evaluation and brand relationship quality (Rather et al., 2017; So et al., 2016a and 2016b), brand value (France et al., 2016; Marbach et al., 2019), willingness to pay a price premium (Dwivedi et al., 2016; Rather et al.,2017), the self-brand connection (Harrigan et al., 2018), eWOM (Loureiro et al., 2017), brand commitment (Dessart, 2017) and customer participation and customer generated advertising (Hinson et al., 2019). Thus, customer brand engagement can serve as a vehicle to create, build and improve relations with the client, as well as a major predictor of future business performance (Brodie et al., 2013).

The standing of customer brand engagement as a variable of consumer behavior is particularly relevant to environments characterized by advanced online media. New media tools such as forums, chats, social networks, etc. offer new and improved forms of interactive experiences that can lead to greater customer brand engagement (Brodie et al., 2013).

It is therefore necessary that companies develop strategies that ensure the greatest interaction with users through social media so as to prompt greater customer brand engagement, that is, create an environment where the user develops a desire to approach and get involved with a brand leading ultimately to a greater degree of commitment. In this sense, Brodie et al. (2013) indicate that the consumer engagement process in virtual branding communities is initiated for the most part by the need of information. Hollebeek et al. (2014), in turn, concluded that consumer brand involvement in social media is a key antecedent of customer brand engagement, a conclusion shared by Algharabat et al. (2019), Dessart (2017), Gómez et al. (2019), Harrigan et al. (2017 and 2018), Loureiro et al. (2017) and Solem and Pedersen (2016). Research to date also highlights other antecedents of customer brand engagement in the field of social media such as self-brand image congruency (Loureiro et al., 2017), company identification (Romero, 2018), consumer personality traits (Islam et al., 2017; Marbach et al., 2019), self-expressive brand (Algharabat et al.,2019), and socialization interaction (Luo et al.,2019) that reinforce the notion that congruence between an individual's own image and brand personality is key to

understanding customer brand engagement (De Vries et al., 2014). It is therefore essential to study brand personality as an antecedent to customer brand engagement (Leckie et al., 2016).

Several studies relating brand personality and customer brand engagement (Appendix 2) demonstrate that when a brand conveys a strong, positive brand personality, it will increase the customer's enthusiasm to converse about it, learn about it and display its use to others. This will lead to a greater willingness to visit the brand's website, buy its other products, follow its news and declare positive things about it, all factors leading to a personal link with the brand that will increase customer engagement (Bairrada et al., 2019; Bouhlel et al., 2011; Goldsmith and Goldsmith, 2012).

None of the previous work examining the direct relationship between brand personality and customer brand engagement has considered customer brand engagement as a construct with cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions, which is the most widely-used operationalization of customer brand engagement (Dessart et al., 2016; Kuvykaité and Taruté, 2015). Nor has prior research taken into account the use of social media by individuals as an antecedent of this relationship. It is for this reason that Leckie et al. (2016) highlighted the need to enquire further into the relationship between brand personality and customer brand engagement.

From the above notions one would expect brand personality to influence customer brand engagement. This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Cultural tourism-resource brand personality exerts a significant and positive effect on customer brand engagement.

The model advanced in this study is depicted in Figure 1.

[Figure 1 near here]

Methodology

A specific method recommended by the specialized literature for this type of study consists of applying a homogeneous population sampling (e.g. Cosenza et al., 2015). In this case, it is necessary to focus on a cultural tourism resource that possesses a solid social media strategy. The Alhambra, a celebrated monumental complex declared a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO in 1984, meets this requirement. The Alhambra is in fact an internationally

recognized brand since it is in recent years the most visited monument in Spain with 70% of its visitors coming from outside Spain (Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, 2016). Hence, the Alhambra plays a significant role in differentiating and positioning the city of Granada, as well as Andalusia and Spain as a whole, from other competing tourist destinations (Bernad et al., 2013). In addition, the monument has adopted a clear social media strategy evidenced by active profiles on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+ and Instagram and a constant interaction with the public through a call for user participation and the care of community managers who are charged with responding (Comunidad IEBS, 2013). All of the above renders the Alhambra an ideal subject to explore the use of social media to transmit brand personality and how it influences the perception of potential visitors.

The methodology applied to the current study consists, first of all, of adapting the most widely-used scale, notably that of Aaker (1997), to the cultural tourism-resource framework. This was carried out, as recommended by Pan et al. (2017), by including intangible aspects offered by tourist experiences.

This process began with a review of the specialized literature of both brand personality and tourism from different geographical environments (Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou, 2015; Bekk et al., 2016; Ekinci and Hosany, 2006; Gómez, 2010; Guiry and Vequist, 2014; Huang, 2017; Kim et al., 2017; Murphy et al., 2007; Seljeseth and Korneliussen, 2015; Souiden et al., 2017; Usakli and Baloglu, 2011; Xie and Lee, 2013) and by analyzing how these studies adapted Aaker's items and recommended which to retain and which to discard. Thus, ten were rejected leaving a total of 32 linked to the dimensions of *Sincerity*, *Excitement*, *Competence*, *Sophistication* and *Ruggedness* (Table 2).

Secondly, in order to identify the personality traits attributed by visitors to cultural tourism resources, and following notions put forward by authors such as Pan et al. (2017) and Tsiotsou (2012), a social media search was carried out to identify the features and dimensions that refer to cultural tourism resources but do not form part of the Aaker scale . In this sense, the social media chosen were Facebook and Twitter as they boast the largest following in Spain (Rivera Martín, 2018), are most commonly used by European tourist destinations (Lalicic et al., 2018) and have the most followers and publications of the Alhambra. The Facebook and Twitter profiles of the Alhambra were then analyzed by means of QSR NVivo 10 software so as to identify the terms most often repeated by users when referring to the monument. This led to selecting 13 traits linked to the *Openness to experience* dimension of the human personality

(Table 2) which refers to the tendency to demonstrate intellectual curiosity, active imagination and aesthetic sensibility (Kochanska and Aksan, 2004).

[Table 2 near here]

Lastly, four independent researchers with experience in the field of tourism marketing were contacted and asked to value the list of items selected to measure cultural tourism-resource brand personality along the lines of the methodology outlined by Ouellet (2007). This led to retaining 13 items (Table 3), including the dimensions *Sincerity*, *Excitement*, *Competence* and *Sophistication* from Aaker (1997), in addition to *Openness to experience*, a dimension of personality identified by Goldberg (1993).

[Table 3 near here]

The quantitative study

Likert multi-item scales ranging from 1 to 7 were chosen to determine both brand personality and customer brand engagement. Brand personality was measured by an Aaker scale (1997) adapted to the needs of the current study (Table 3), whereas the scale validated by Hollebeek et al. (2014) served to measure customer brand engagement. The level of use by visitors of the Alhambra's official social media was identified by consulting the participants of the study.

The sample consisted originally of 273 individuals, which was reduced to 258 after discarding 15 who had never visited the monument (±6.1% error). Moreover, the sample's sociodemographic profile (sex, age and level of education) is very similar to that attained by other studies on brand personality in the field of tourism (Gómez, 2010; Papadimitriou et al., 2015).

Figure 1 illustrates that "Use of Social Media" is a variable that can be observed directly, and that the "Brand Personality" and "Customer Brand Engagement" variables are constructs of second order. The procedure consisted initially of confirming the suitability of the scales used for each of the variables by means of an SEM analysis (AMOS V.18 software) and subsequently testing, by means of the same type of analysis, the relations between the use of social media, brand personality and customer brand engagement.

Results

Since the multivariate normality test of the variables included in the proposed model proved significant, it was necessary to carry out an estimation of the model by means of the principle of maximum likelihood combined with the bootstrap method (Yuan and Hayashi, 2003). In this case, a valid reference derived from a normed chi-square test yielded a value of 2.36, well within the limits recommended by the specialized literature. The model's overall (GFI: 0.90) and incremental (CFI:0.92, IFI:0.92 and TLI: 0.90) fit values also fall within an acceptable range. All the values of composite reliability and variance extracted are greater than the reference values (respectively 0.50 and 0.70) put forward by the literature. This indicates that the items all are adequate measurements of their respective constructs. The exception is the *Sincerity* dimension of the brand personality scale with values that are very close to those defined by the reference standard (Hair et al., 2018). Moreover, the dimensions espoused in the model attained discriminant validity as none of their correlations exceeded 0.90 (Kline, 2011, p. 72) and their confidence interval did not include '1' (Steenkamp and van Trijp, 1991).

In general, the values of the standardized coefficients, composite reliability, extracted variance and correlation between dimensions indicate that the dimensions proposed to measure the constructs are well founded with convergent and discriminant validity.

As outlined in the model (Figure 1), the analysis then turned to the relationships between social media usage, brand personality and customer brand engagement. The results highlight the following aspects summarized in Table 4:

H1 proposes that use of social media has a positive influence on brand personality. The results reveal a statistically important relationship marked by a significance level of <0.10 (p=0.06). Furthermore, the standard coefficient value is 0.18, with a confidence interval between 0.07 and 0.28, values that offer empirical support to this hypothesis. It can thus be concluded that social media usage has a positive effect on brand personality. These findings are in line with those of Kim et al. (2018), Müller and Chandon (2003), Okazaki (2006), Walsh et al. (2013), Xu et al. (2016) and Zhang (2017).

H2 also proposes that brand personality has a positive effect on customer brand engagement. The results reveal a statistically significant relationship of p<0.01 with a marked effect (0.74) and a confidence interval ranging between 0.67 and 0.80. Therefore, the statistics support the hypothesis that brand personality has a positive effect on customer brand engagement. This

concords with the general findings of Andonova (2016), Banahene (2014), Cruz and Lee (2014), Golsmith and Goldsmith (2012), Jain and Yadav (2019), Lee et al. (2018b) and Tamhankar and Pandit (2018).

Finally, the current findings suggest that the use of social media has an indirect effect on customer brand engagement mediated by brand personality. This effect is valued at 0.13 indicative of a statistically significant relationship (p<0.05) with a confidence interval ranging between 0.05 and 0.21. The results clearly indicate that both social media use and brand personality are appropriate for cultural tourism resources, given that the strategies of each has a positive effect on customer brand engagement.

[Table 4 near here]

Theoretical contributions

The main objective of the present study was to determine if social media constitutes a valid means to transmit brand personality to the market, as well as to identify the effects of brand personality on customer brand engagement. The different findings thus contribute to both brand personality and customer brand engagement research, as they apply these variables to the new context of cultural tourism resources.

This study offers evidence, in the first place, that resorting to social media to transmit information to the market has a positive influence on the perception of brand personality among clients. Furthermore, the results contribute to filling the research gap identified by Zeng and Gerritsen (2012) on the importance of social media in marketing strategies of organizations This study simultaneously fills the gap pointed out by Mutsikiwa (2018) and Ong et al. (2017) of the need to delve deeper into the antecedents of online brand personality by indicating the effect of the use of social media in brand personality from the viewpoint of the Aaker scale.

Secondly, this study offers evidence that brand personality has a positive effect on customer brand engagement. This is particularly compelling as several studies consider that customer brand engagement has a positive effect on loyalty owing to a lasting psychological connection with the brand accompanied by interactive experiences that go beyond the simple purchase (Brodie et al., 2011; So et al., 2016). This finding serves to fill the gap identified by Leckie et al. (2016) as it globally links, instead of dimension to dimension, the customer brand engagement construct most often used in the specialized literature (cognitive, affective and

behavioral dimension; Dessart et al., 2016; Kuvykaitė and Tarute, 2015) with the brand personality construct gleaned from Aaker's scale (1997). It also responds to an area of future research proposed by Radler et al. (2018), who recommended more in-depth investigation of the effects of brand personality on customers.

Thirdly, the use of social media exerts an indirect effect (through brand personality) on customer brand engagement. This finding reinforces the notion that the use of social media to transmit brand personality information generates positive effects on customer brand engagement. In this sense, the present study reveals the mediating role that brand personality plays in the relationship between the use of social media and customer brand engagement.

Finally, brand personality's adaptation to the characteristics of cultural tourism resources is noteworthy as it includes elements specific to these types of resources that differ in part from Aaker's (1997) original scale to measure brand personality. This is in line with the findings of authors such as Murphy et al. (2007) and Pan et al. (2017) that the Aaker scale cannot be applied directly to the sphere of tourism and it responds to an area of future research proposed by Radler (2018), who called for more in-depth investigation of brand personality in the tourism context.

Specifically, the cultural tourism-resource brand personality scale is configured by the dimensions *Sincerity*, *Excitement*, *Competence*, *Sophistication* and *Openness to experience*. The current findings indicate, however, that Aaker's dimension of *Ruggedness* does not form part of cultural tourism-resource brand personality. In addition, the *Openness to experience* dimension, although not part of the original Aaker scale, was included as it is essential when taking into account the framework of cultural tourism-resource brand personality. These findings are consistent with the literature on brand personality, which, in the majority of cases, identifies the dimensions *Sincerity, Excitement, Competence and Sophistication* (Davies et al., 2018), and they also demonstrate a novel dimension to be added to Aaker's scale (Davies et al., 2018; Slaughter et al. 2004).

Implications for the professional sector

The findings of the current study can serve marketing managers, particularly those of cultural tourism resources, as they validate the notion that social media can serve to transmit brand personality. They will therefore serve to develop their strategies of communication as they can profit from platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram to effectively transmit brand personality traits to the market.

Secondly, the confirmation that brand personality has a positive effect on customer brand engagement can lead managers to increase their efforts among their clients as this increase will lead to even more positive attitudes toward the brand at cognitive, affective and behavioral levels. This clientele will therefore develop a greater affection toward a brand and simultaneously will aspire to maintain the relationship. The findings also specifically point to the need to transmit an adequate brand personality if the long-term intention is to heighten visitors' appreciation of cultural tourism resources. This will not only lead to visitor loyalty, repeat visits, and recommendations via different online or offline media, but generates a higher degree of commitment by taking actions that go beyond mere visits or recommendations, all of which contribute to further raising the value of the cultural tourism resource in question. This is reflected in the acquisition of products related to cultural tourism resources and actions that bolster and promote the resource.

In sum, given the importance of achieving greater customer brand engagement, marketing managers need to adopt enhancement strategies. This study therefore identifies that the transmission of an attractive brand personality in line with the desires of the public, combined with dissemination through social media, is a valid strategy to improve customer brand engagement. In the case of cultural tourism resources, adapting the brand personality measurement scale can serve managers to identify the brand personality traits expected by the public, that will lead to enhancing these traits to render their cultural tourism resources more attractive to the market.

Limitations and future lines of research

Like all empirical research, the current study suffers from a series of limitations that must be taken into account when interpreting and making use of its findings. Its first limitation is the use of a cultural tourism resource that is recognized by the market and is actively applying social media strategies. Future research should test this model on other cultural tourism resources and in other contexts.

Other variables should also be taken into account in future research, such as brand self-congruence. A final potential line of research is that of the effects of social media on perceived brand personality and consumer behavior.

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TABLE 1

Main dimensions collected in studies on brand personality in tourism (from the Aaker scale, 1997)

Author and year	Location	Informers	Confirmed brand personality dimensions	Number of confirmed personality traits advanced by Aaker (1997)
Ekinci and Hosany (2006)	Different European cities	British tourists who visited popular European cities (n=250)	Sincerity, excitement and conviviality	19
Hosany, Ekinci, and Uysal (2006)	Different European cities	British tourists who visited tourism destinations outside the UK (n=250)	Sincerity, excitement and conviviality	27
Murphy et al. (2007)	Whitsundays (Australia)	Visitors to the Australian city of Whitsundays (n=277)	Upper-class, honest, exciting and tough	18
Murphy et al. (2007)	Cairs (Australia)	Visitors to the Australian city of Cairs (n=277)	Sincere, sophisticated and outdoorsy	17
Gómez (2010)	Granada and Torremolinos (Spain)	British tourists who visited both Granada and Torremolinos (n=329)	Sincerity, excitement, competition, sophistication and ruggedness	26
Lee and Suh (2011)	Cities outside of South Korea visited by Koreans	Korean visitors of different cities outside of South Korea (n=500)	Sincerity, Excitement, technology, high class and femininity.	36
Chen and Phou (2013)	Angkor (Cambodia)	Foreign tourists who were visiting Angkor temple Area (n=428)	Excitement, sincerity, sophistication, ruggedness and contemporary	37
Kim and Lehto (2013)	South Korea	U.S. travellers in South Korea (n=480)	Excitement, competence, sincerity, sophistication, ruggedness, uniqueness and family	39
Xie and Lie (2013)	Beijing	Foreign tourists who were visiting Beijing (n=497)	Competence, excitement, sophistication and ruggedness	13
Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2015)	Greek cities	Visitors to Greek cities (n=568)	Excitement and sincerity	16
Guiry and Vequist (2015)	South Korea	US travelers who visited South Korea for health tourism (n=1558)	Sincerity, competence and ruggedness	11

Seljeseth and Korneliussen (2015)	Nordland (Norway)	Visitors to Nordland (n=234)	Ruggedness, sophistication, naturalness and activeness	20
Bekk et al. (2016)	Fuerteventura (Spain)	Visitors to Fuerteventura (n=308)	Sincerity, excitation and sophistication	15
Huang et al. (2017)	Yangshuo (China)	Chinese independent tourists (n=337)	Excitement, competence, charming and outdoorsy	22
Kim et al. (2017)	Gagman (South Korea)	Foreign visitors to Gangnam (n=316)	Excitement, sincerity, comforts and activeness	15
Souiden et al. (2017)	Dubai	Canadians who visited Dubai (n=173)	Sentimental and competence	9

Source: by authors from the specialized literature.

TABLE 2

List of brand personality traits obtained

Dimension	Facets	Traits	Dimension included in Aaker (1997)	Sources
Sincerity		Real, Honest, Sincere, Genuine, Wholesome, Original, Cheerful, Friendly	Yes	Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2015); Beek et al. (2016); Ekinci and Hosany (2006); Guiry and Vequist (2014); Gómez (2010); Murphy et al. (2007); Huang (2017); Kim et al. (2017); Seljeseth and Korneliussen (2015); Souiden et al. (2017); Usakli and Baloglu (2011); Xie and Lee (2013)
Excitement		Daring, Modern, Exciting, Spirited, Cool, Imaginative, Unique, Up to date	Yes	
Competence		Reliable, Secure, Intelligent, Technical, Corporate, Successful, Leader	Yes	
Sophistication		Upper class, Glamorous, Good-looking, Charming, Feminine, Smooth	Yes	
Ruggedness		Masculine, Rugged, Tough	Yes	
Openness to experience	Cultural	Historical, Artistic, Cultural	No	Facebook and Twitter profiles of the Alhambra
	Discovery	Interesting, Different, Memorable, Curious, Surprising, Dreamy, Magical, Admirable		
	Aesthetic	Pretty, Impressive		

TABLE 3

Items of the scale of brand personality of the Alhambra

Dimension	Item
	If the Alhambra were a person, he/she would be ...
SINCERITY	…original
	…cheerful
EXCITEMENT	…exciting
	... lively
	…cool
	…imaginative
COMPETENCE	... successful
	…a leader
SOPHISTICATION	... good-looking
	… charming
OPENNESS TO EXPERIENCE	…artistic
	...dreamy
	…impressive

TABLE 4

Results from the proposed research model

Relationships	Standard coefficient	Confidence interval	p-value
Social media use --> Brand personality	0.18	(0.07; 0.28)	0.06
Brand personality --> Customer brand engagement	0.74	(0.67; 0.80)	0.01
Social media use --> Brand personality (indirect effect)	0.13	(0.05; 0.21)	0.01

FIGURE 1

Research Model
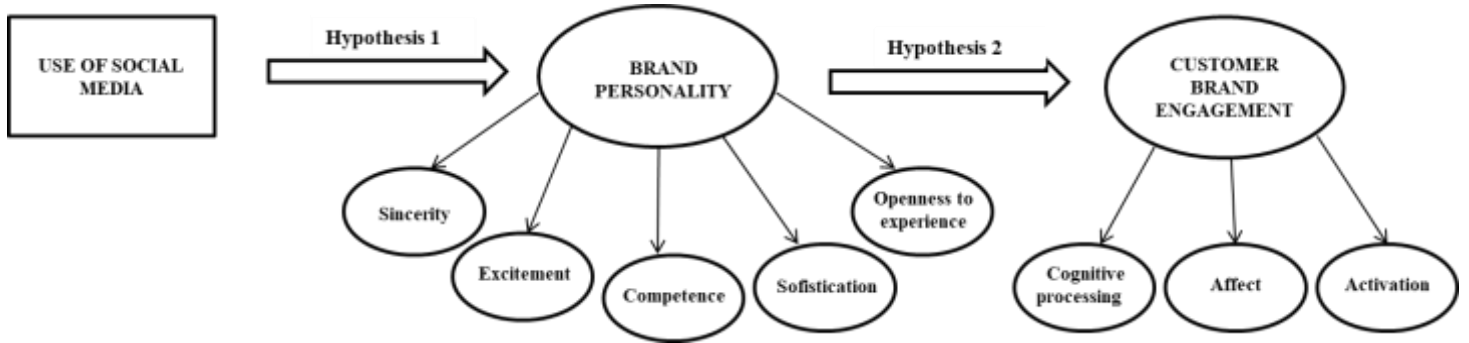
APPENDIX 1

Online media studies on brand personality

Content block	Author and year	Geographical area	Sector	Main contribution
Content analysis	Okazaki (2006)	USA	Multinational companies	This study concludes that the online communication of companies is related to the dimensions of brand personality.
	Opoku and Hinson (2006)	Africa	Tourism (destinations)	Analyzes the communications of websites of African nations through Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions.
	Opoku et al. (2006)	South Africa	Business schools	Analyzes brand personality of South African business schools through their web pages by means of the Aaker (1997) framework.
	Pitt et al. (2007)	Africa	Tourism (destinations)	Analyze the communications of the websites of African nations through Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions.
	Opoku et al. (2008)	Sweden	Universities	Analyzes brand personality of universities through an analysis of the content of their websites (in the Aaker, 1997 framework).
	Haarhoff and Kleyn (2012)	International	Open source brands (Facebook, Mozzila…)	Analyzes brand personality of open source brands by means of a content analysis generated by both the brand and the user.
	De Moya and Jain (2013)	Mexico and Brazil	Tourism (destinations)	Compares the personality traits of popular tourist destinations in Mexico and Brazil (according to the Aaker model, 1997) on Facebook stemming from official sources with those projected by individuals.
	Chung (2015)	International	Technological brands	Analyzes the brand personality of different technology brands through Twitter through the Aaker (1997) framework.
	Huertas and Marine-Roig (2016)	Spain	Tourism (destinations)	Reveals that the communication of emotional values of brands (brand personality) generates reactions in users in spite of the fact that they are not usually communicated by brands.
	Guiry (2017)	Malaysia	Tourism (destinations)	Delves into the communication of Aaker's (1997) brand personality dimensions based on online examples provided by health tourists.
	Kim and Stepchenkova, (2017).	Jeju Island (South Korea)	Tourism (destinations)	Analyzes the personality of destinations through international tourist blogs based mainly on the dimensions of brand personality advanced by Aaker (1997).

	Rojas-Mendez and Hine (2017)	South America	Tourism (destinations)	Analyzes the communications of the websites of South American nations through the brand personality dimensions advanced by Aaker (1997) and distinguishes four clusters of profiles of brand personality.
	Shin et al. (2017)	Australia and China	Tourism (emblematic monuments)	Analyzes the traditional brand personality traits (based on Aaker, 1997) found in TripAdvisor reviews about the Sydney Opera House and the Great Wall of China and compares them with items gleaned from studies of brand personality in the field of tourism.
	Rutter et al. (2018)	England	Political	Compares brand personality of political parties through their websites from the viewpoint of the Aaker framework (1997).
	Vinyals-Mirabent and Mohammadi (2018)	Spain (Barcelona)	Tourism (destinations)	Offers a means to evaluate the personality projected by a destination on the web, an extension of the Pitt et al. (2007) methodology and tests it looking for congruence in the brand personality of Barcelona through two websites.
	Vinyals-Mirabent et al. (2019)	European cities	Tourism (destinations)	Analyzes the brand personality of tourist destinations through their websites and reveals that there are different elements of the destination that help project brand personality, such as attractions. This can lead to more consistency between their personality and image.
Comparison of projected and perceived brand personality	Kim and Lehto (2013)	South Korea	Tourism (destinations)	Identifies the similarities and differences when comparing the brand personality projected by the official South Korean website compared to the brand personality of South Korea perceived by US tourists.
	George and Anandkumar (2014)	Tropical destinations	Tourism (destinations)	Distinguishes between the portrayal of brand personality through the web and that perceived by individuals (through the Aaker 1997 scale) and compares and distinguishes their differences for the case of tropical destinations.
	Dickinger and Lalicic (2015)	Vienna	Tourism (destinations)	Compares the brand personality projected by Vienna through TripAdvisor reviews on different services of the city with tourist surveys on the personality of Vienna brand through open questions.

Effects of brand personality on consumer behavior	Poddar et al. (2009)	USA	Different brands	Indicates that the customer orientation of the web has a positive effect on the brand personality of the web and that the web personality influences the intentions to purchase through the quality of the web.
	Chung and Ahn (2013)	USA	Fictitious Web	Reveals that the individual and brand personality have an important interactive effect on behavioral attitudes and intentions.
	Habibi et al. (2014)	Malasia	E-Commerce website	Reveals that brand personality mediates the relationship between web quality and web trust.
	Christou (2015)	Greece	Tourism (tourism social media brands)	Reveals that there is a correlation between the similarity between the concept of the individual and the personality of the brand with confidence in the social media brand.
	Ham and Lee (2015)	USA	The most popular web sites of the world	Develops a scale to measure the personality of the Internet media and reveals the influence of different pairs of media personality dimensions and of advertising brands on the attitude toward the advertising brands.
	Ong et al. (2017)	Malaysia	Banking	Develops the customer-based virtual brand personality construct and reveals that satisfaction mediates the relationship between brand personality and loyalty.
	Setiawan and Aryanto (2017)	Indonesia	Smartphones	Reveals the positive effect of online brand personality on perceived quality and purchase intention.
	Mutsikiwa (2018)	South Africa	Social media	Relates the brand personality of Facebook, YouTube and Linkedin with the attitude, motivations, behavioral intention and behavior toward these sites.
	Tan et al. (2018)	Taiwan	Smartphone applications	Develops a scale to measure the personality of smartphone applications and concludes that this personality is influenced by social applications, and user social capital and personality.
	Garanti y Kissi (2019)	Latvia	Banking	Reveals that certain dimensions of brand personality for followers of banks in social media influence brand equity, which mediates the relationship between brand personality and loyalty.
Use of social media as an antecedent of	Muller and Chandon (2003)	France		Reveals that there are differences in the perceived brand personality between users exposed to the websites of the brands and those who are not.

brand personality	Witzig (2009)	USA	NGOs	Reveals that the perception of NGO brand personality differs for individuals who have visited these types of websites with online branding techniques compared to that of those visiting NGO websites devoid of branding techniques.
	Walsh et al. (2013)	USA	Sports event	Identifies the differences in the brand personality of a sporting event perceived by users depending on whether their contact was through traditional media or social media. The study indicates that those following social media display a greater valuation of brand personality.
	Xu et al. (2016)	USA	Multinational companies	Reveals that the content of a brand created through social media by a company, by users or by employees constitutes 67% of the perception of the brand personality.
	Zhang (2017)	USA	Fictional brands	Reveals that the communication styles of brands in social media (assertive or sensitive) influence the perception of the brand personality.
	Kim et al. (2018)	South Korea	Brands of different sectors (some in social media and others not)	Reveals that individuals who follow brands in social media distinguish different brand personality dimensions that those who do not.

Source: by authors from the specialized literature.

APPENDIX 2

Studies that relate brand personality and engagement

Field	Author and year	Geographic area/Sector	Type of study	Main contribution
Offline	Goldsmith and Goldsmith (2012)	USA/ Sportsware brand	Empirical quantitative (regression analysis)	Concludes that perceived brand personality increases customer brand engagement with a brand.
	Leckie et al. (2016)	Australia/mobile service provider brands	Empirical quantitative (SEM analysis)	Reveals that customer involvement, participation and self-expressive brand are antecedents of customer brand engagement, which, in turn, influences brand loyalty.
	Banahene, (2017)	Ghana/ Private university	Empirical quantitative (SEM analysis)	Concludes that brand personality has a positive effect on customer brand engagement through self-concept.
	Tamhankar and Pandit (2018)	India/Amusement park	Empirical quantitative (correlation analysis)	Reveals that brand personality generates customer brand engagement with the brand.
	Bairrada et al. (2019)	Portugal/Clothes brands	Empirical quantitative (SEM analysis)	It fails to demonstrate the relationship between brand personality and active customer brand engagement.
Online	Lin (2009)	International/Online games	Empirical quantitative (hierarchical regression)	Demonstrates that brand personality of online games influences the satisfaction of individuals with the moderation of their engagement with the game.
	Pentina et al. (2013)	USA and Ukraine/social media brands (Twitter)	Empirical quantitative (SEM analysis)	This study confirms the role of similarity of personality traits between Twitter users and the Twitter brand to build trust on Twitter and that customer brand engagement with the brands followed on Twitter positively affect user sponsorship intentions toward these brands (intention to continue visiting the profiles and websites of those brands in the future).
	Cruz and Lee (2014)	USA/Different types of brands	Empirical quantitative (regression analysis)	Reveals that there is a relationship between online brand personality and online engagement.
	Andonova (2016)	USA/Different types of brands	Experimental and empirical quantitative (multiple regression)	Demonstrates that brand personality influences customer brand engagement

	Lee et al. (2018a)	USA/Different types of brands	Content analysis	Determines that the inclusion of widely used content related to brand personality (such as humor and emotion), is associated with higher levels of consumer engagement (likes, comments and shares).
	Lee et al. (2018b)	USA/Brands present in Facebook	Empirical quantitative (SEM analysis)	Demonstrates that the self-congruence of brand personality has a positive effect on the customer brand engagement of a brand for those who follow a certain brand on Facebook.
	Zhang et al. (2018)	Tourism (destination)	Theoretical	Builds a theoretical framework to interpret the process of co-creation of brand personality of a destination in the framework of social media. Among the factors of the model are consumer engagement behaviors
	Jain and Yadav (2019)	India/ E-Commerce website	Empirical quantitative (regression analysis)	Indicates the relationship between certain dimensions of brand personality and user customer brand engagement with the web.
	Machado et al. (2019)	Portugal/Different types of brands	Empirical quantitative (SEM analysis)	Demonstrates that the gender of the brand (male or female) has an impact on brand equity through customer brand engagement with its Facebook page.

Source: by authors from the specialized literature.