

## The Effect of the Fulfillment of Hedonic and Aesthetic Information Needs of a Travel Magazine on Tourist Decision Making

Woojin Lee

*Schol of Community Resources and Development, Arizona State University*

Kathleen Andereck

*School of Community Resources and Development, Arizona State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttra>

---

Lee, Woojin and Andereck, Kathleen, "The Effect of the Fulfillment of Hedonic and Aesthetic Information Needs of a Travel Magazine on Tourist Decision Making" (2016). *Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally*. 70.  
<https://scholarworks.umass.edu/ttra/2011/Oral/70>

This is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Travel and Tourism Research Association: Advancing Tourism Research Globally by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@library.umass.edu](mailto:scholarworks@library.umass.edu).

# **The Effect of the Fulfillment of Hedonic and Aesthetic Information Needs of a Travel Magazine on Tourist Decision Making**

Authors:

Woojin Lee  
School of Community Resources and Development  
Arizona State University  
411 N. Central Ave., Suite, 550  
Phoenix, AZ, 85004-0690  
Phone: 602-496-1228  
Fax: 602-496-0953  
Email: [Woojin.lee.1@asu.edu](mailto:Woojin.lee.1@asu.edu)

Kathleen Andereck  
School of Community Resources and Development  
Arizona State University  
411 N. Central Ave., Suite, 550  
Phoenix, AZ, 85004-0690  
Phone: 602-496-1056  
Fax: 602-496-0953  
Email: [kandereck@asu.edu](mailto:kandereck@asu.edu)

TTRA 2011

Theme: Market and marketing research

## **The Effect of the Fulfillment of Hedonic and Aesthetic Information Needs of a Travel Magazine on Tourist Decision Making**

### **Introduction**

Research has documented that some individuals tend to plan various aspects of a vacation in advance (Petrick et al, 2007; Walter and Tong, 1977) and all travel information is to help travelers make informed decisions. Andereck and Caldwell (1993), Capella and Greco (1987) and Henshall, Roberts and Leighton (1985) all found magazines rated as an “important” information source. However, even though it is often assumed that travel oriented publications such as travel magazines have substantial effects on people’s travel decisions, it has not been investigated to any great extent what kind of information needs from the magazine are important to the search process and how they affect travel decisions. The purpose of this research was to investigate how the fulfillment of aesthetic and hedonic information needs, as an ongoing source of information within a travel magazine, have an impact on travel decisions.

Vogt and Fesenmaier (1998) developed the most comprehensive framework and measurement instrument looking at affective dimensions and found evidence that ongoing information search occurs because consumers have information needs that go beyond the functional, or simply to gain needed knowledge. One of these, hedonic, is the perspective which suggests information search can be a pleasurable leisure experience itself. It was also found that information search is not only used to find useful information, people also search for fun, entertainment, social status and symbolic reasons (Li et al, 2009). A hedonic perspective is not intended to replace the functional decision-making perspective, but to capture the pleasurable aspect of information search. The hedonic perspective views consumers as pleasure seekers engaged in activities which elicit enjoyment, amusement, arousal, fun, and sensory stimulation.

Another information need is the need for aesthetics. The nature of aesthetic experiences and objects differs from functional needs in that it is abstract and subjective. Aesthetic value can be verbal and visual, real and imaginary. Information is viewed as a stimulus to visual thinking, imagery, and envisioning of a place that is real and obtainable. Fantasizing, the act of producing multisensory images not drawn directly from personal experience, is yet another form of mental phenomena. Thus, aesthetic information need appears to describe two dimensions: stimuli for imagery and for fantasizing (Lee et al, 2010; Vogt and Fesenmaier, 1998:561). Interestingly, the aesthetic information can have a great impact on the hedonic information search behavior. For example, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) claimed that as individuals are getting engaged in multiple sensory modalities such as texts, photos, and visual information, it can stimulate multisensory mental images, and then the evoked mental imagery has a positive influence on the consumer’s hedonic experience. Similarly, Goossens (2003) noted that the enactive imagery as ongoing information processing stimulated by verbal and visual information can have great potential to eliciting a hedonic and emotional experience. Supportively, Fiore and Kimle (1997) also contended that pleasure can be derived from the creative cognitive processes such as the mental imagery process, which is activated during fantasizing and the content of fantasy. Consequently, it can be claimed that if aesthetic information can stimulate the customers’ ongoing information processing, then it is most likely to satisfy their hedonic information needs. Furthermore, it was found by Lee et al (2010) that experiencing mental imagery elicited by the sensory information or photos (i.e., aesthetic information) leads to a stronger attitude toward a destination; in other words, it suggests that having run a simulation-like scenario in one’s mind is important in the process of travel decision making (Lee et al, 2010).

## Methods

The data collection was done in summer 2010 and involved a mail survey administered to a sample of 1,072 out-of-state *Arizona Highways Magazine* subscribers, stratified according to self (n=508) versus gift (n=564) subscriptions. A technique devised by Dillman (2000) was modified and used for survey distribution. An initial mailing provided a questionnaire, a cover letter, and a postage-paid reply envelope sent to the sample. This was followed by a reminder post card. The response rate was 36% for a final sample size of 396. Several questions in the questionnaire were posed to respondents regarding use of the magazine and how it influenced their travel decisions and behavior. All variables in this study are measured with multiple items since a set of measures tend to be more reliable and valid than any other individual measure (Churchill, 1979). All items are adapted and modified from previous studies and the variables of four dimensions include: 1) the extent to which the magazine meet the hedonic needs of the travel information (1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree)(Vogt and Fesenmaier, 1998); the extent to which the magazine met the aesthetic needs of the travel information (1=strongly disagree 5=strongly agree) (Vogt and Fesenmaier, 1998); 3) evaluation of the magazine with respect to increased interest in traveling in Arizona (1=not increased to 4=greatly increased) and helpfulness as a source of travel information (1=not helpful to 4=very helpful); and 4) the extent to which the magazine influenced decisions about specific aspects of the trip such as attractions and travel routes (1=not influential to 4=very influential) in Arizona. Data were analyzed by performing confirmatory factor analyses, descriptive analysis and structural equation modeling to investigate the hypothesized relationship.

## Results

The hypothesized relationships were tested by means of structural equation modeling (SEM) using Amos 17.0 (Arbuckle, 2007). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used for the measurement model, which included seven variables for hedonic information needs, five variables for aesthetic information needs, two variables for attitude toward the magazine, and seven variables for decision making to visit Arizona. As the result of the CFA, all pattern coefficients of the measured variables were significant, and all loadings were above or close to the recommended .60 threshold (Chin, 1998), indicating that all latent variables were adequately measured by their respective indicators. Furthermore, average variance extracted (AVE) were .50 above as shown in Table 1, thus it was confirmed that the convergent validity of the scale was established.

Table 1. Reliability, Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity of Constructs

	Aesthetic needs	Hedonic needs	Attitude toward to AHM magazine	C.R	A.V.E.
Aesthetic needs	<b>.75</b>			.87	.57
Hedonic needs	.75**	<b>.74</b>		.90	.55
Attitude toward to magazine	.49**	.53**	<b>.77</b>	.74	.59
Decision making to visit AZ	.33**	.43**	.38**	.90	.57

*Note: C.R. is Composite Reliability, A.V.E. is Average Variance Extracted, \*\*  $p < .01$ . Square root of average variance extracted (AVE) is shown on the diagonal of the matrix*

In addition, the internal consistency reliability (ICR) of each construct was confirmed by computing the composite reliability coefficients. As shown Table 1, the internal consistency reliability values ranged from .74 (Attitude toward to magazine) to .90 (Decision making to visit Arizona), which indicated that all composite reliabilities are above the .70 cut-off value (Fornell

and Larcker, 1981), then it can be concluded the scale was reliable. Furthermore, after performing a CFA, the measurement model showed clearly satisfactory goodness of fit indices ( $\chi^2/df=2.01$ , CFI=.96, NFI=.92, GFI=.90, RMSEA=.058). The discriminant validity of factors was also evaluated by the average variance extracted (AVE). According to Fornell & Larcker (1981), it was claimed that the square root of AVE of each construct should exceed the inter-construct and the other constructs in the model for a satisfactory degree of discriminant validity (Gefen & Straub, 2005). As shown Table 1, it was found that the measurement scale met the requirement of discriminant validity for the current study. The structural model was conducted to validate the hypothesized relationships (Figure 1), which assumes that the fulfillment of aesthetic and hedonic information needs have an influence on enhancing attitudes toward to *AHM* magazine during ongoing information search, which can lead to influence on travel decisions and evaluation of the magazine as a source of travel information. The structural model for this study provided an excellent fit to the data, with scaled  $\chi^2/df=2.18$ , CFI=.95, NFI=.91, GFI=.89, RMSEA=.061. Moreover, the regression coefficient of each proposed path coefficient was positive and significant as shown in Figure 1, which indicated that all hypothesized relationships between constructs were supported in this study. Specifically, the fulfillment of aesthetic information needs by the magazine had a strong relationship with satisfaction of the hedonic information needs ( $\beta=.88$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and these satisfied aesthetic and hedonic information needs had a significant effect on attitude toward to *AHM* magazine ( $\beta=.35$ ,  $p<.05$ ,  $\beta=.34$ ,  $p<.05$ ) with the positive attitude fostering the travel decisions of visiting Arizona ( $\beta=.34$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

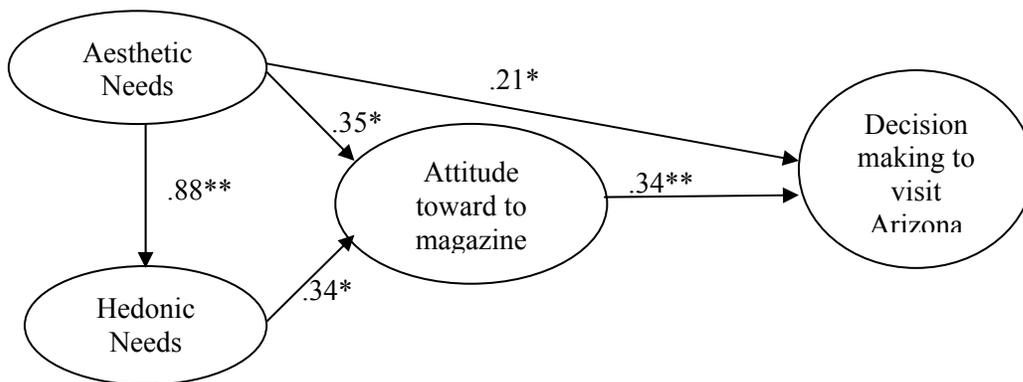


Figure 1. Estimates of the Structural Model (\*\*  $p<.01$ , \*  $p<.05$ )

### Application and Conclusions

The results of the study strongly indicated that the aesthetic information in the travel magazine leads to enhancement of the pleasurable aspect of information search and has a positive influence on the customers' attitude toward magazine as well as a great effect on travel decision making. These findings confirmed that potential travelers seek information not only to acquire and broaden knowledge about the destination, but also to have fun and enjoy the experience of seeking the information. Tourism marketing organizations need to focus on understanding what type of information needs can satisfy the customers' information search behavior and what the mixture of information types can be more attractive for tourism decision making. Given the experiential nature of tourism and the enjoyment many travelers derive from planning their trips, tourism organization and marketers need to identify information sources which can both address the generation of hedonic experience and the formation of attitude.

## References

- Arbuckle, J.L., (2007). *Amos 16.0 User's Guide*, Amos Development Corporation USA.
- Andereck, K.L. and Caldwell L.L. (1993). The influence of tourists' characteristics on ratings of information sources for an attraction. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 2: 171-190.
- Capella, L.M. and Greco, A.J. (1987). Information sources of elderly for vacation decisions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 14: 104-117.
- Chin, W. W. (1998). Commentary: Issues and opinions on structural equation modeling. *MIS Quarterly*, 22(1): 7-16
- Churchill, G.A. (1979). A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 16(February):64-73
- Fiore, A.M. and P.A., Kimle (1997). *Understanding Aesthetics for the Merchandising and Design Professional*, Fairfield, New York, NY.
- Fornell, C.R. & Larcker, D.F. (1981). Structural Equation Models with Unobserved Variables and Measurement Error. *Journal of Marketing Research*. 18, 39-50
- Gefen, D. & Straub, D. (2005). A Practical Guide to Factorial Validity Using PLS-Graph: Tutorial and Annotated Example. *Communications of AIS*. 16(1): 182-217.
- Goossens, C. (2003). "Visual Persuasion: Mental Imagery Processing and Emotional Experiences," In: Scott, L. M and Batra, R (Ed.), *Persuasive Imagery: A Consumer Response Perspective*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 129-138.
- Henshall, B.D., R. Roberts and A, Leighton (1985). Fly-drive tourists: Motivation and destination choice factors. *Journal of Travel Research*, 23: 23-27
- Hirschman, E.C., and M.B., Holbrook (1982). Hedonic consumption: emerging concepts, *Journal of Marketing*, 46(Summer), 92-101
- Lee, W., Gretzel, U., and Law, R. (2010). Quasi-trial experiences through sensory information on destination web sites. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49: 310-322.
- Li, Xiang, Pan, B., Zhang, L. and Smith, W.W. (2009). The effect of online information search on image development. *Journal of Travel Research*, 48: 45-57.
- Petrick, J., Li., X. and Park, S. (2007). Cruise passengers decision-making processes. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 23: 1-14.
- Walter, C.K. and Tong, H.M. (1977). A local study of consumer vacation travel decisions. *Journal of Travel Research*, 15(4): 30-34.
- Vogt, C.A. and Fesenmaier, D.R. (1998). Expanding the functional information search model. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 25: 55-578.