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Museum tourism in Canary Islands: assessing image perception of Directors and Visitors

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the image of museums, differentiating between perceptions of Visitors (residents and tourists) and Directors in the museums of a sun and beach tourism destination – Gran Canaria (Canary Islands, Spain). This study analyses the overall image, the cognitive image, and the affective image. The results of this study suggest that Directors tend to understand the overall image of their museums as perceived by their Visitors but fail to perceive the affective feelings aroused by the museum. Directors also have issues understanding some of the ‘intangible cognitive dimensions’ of the image, such as quality of visitation experience, price/value, and museum shop. Academic and managerial implications are discussed.

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Image; cultural marketing; demand–supply gap; cultural attraction; destination managing


Introduction

Since museums are a primary tourist attraction of many destinations (McPherson 2006; Tien 2010; Murtagh, Boland, and Shirlow 2017), achieving a positive image from their Visitors is an important issue for those responsible for their management (Lai 2015) – specifically, for their Directors and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs). However, in traditional sun and beach destinations, such as the Canary Islands (Spain), museums still play a secondary role in relation to the main natural attractions – weather, beaches.

In tourism terms museums are important, not only as another destination attraction, but as a primary agent what contributes to defining the overall tourism image of a destination (Plaza 2010; Smith, 2014) by providing a sense of a particular time and place that is often unavailable elsewhere (Stylianou-Lambert 2011), which serve to remind us of who we are and what our place in this world is (Davis 2007). Museums can generate a very intense ‘sense of place’ to tourism destinations

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because museums are also major contributors to the culture and heritage of a place (Butler, Khoo-Lattimore, and Mura 2014; Convery, Corsane, and Davis 2014). Thus, museums can help to improve overall destination competitiveness, depending on their ability to design and implement appropriate strategies and development plans (Jolliffe and Smith 2001; Deffner et al. 2009). In this way, new practices are necessary to develop new audiences and engage with different communities (Davis 2007). In this situation, destinations' managers must enhance their ability to project an effective destination image (Moreno 2003). Thus, museums, in order to contribute to change the destination image, must first understand their own image (Hu, Kandampully, and Juwaheer 2009; Dwyer, Butler, and Carter 2013).

On the other hand, the culture of a tourism destination should always be developed with the interests of the resident population primarily in mind. In turn, tourism should support the evolution of the destination's culture and heritage, and especially so when it comes to island destinations (Brown and Cave 2010). Thus, the manner in which both the local resident population and visiting tourists perceive museums must be of special concern to those responsible for their strategic management.

Museums, as a visiting attraction, are interconnected with other museums (Marty 2007) providing a strong synergistic effect, as long as they are able to achieve a positive image (De Graaff, Boter, and Rouwendal 2009). While successful museums have become increasingly Visitor-oriented (McPherson 2006; Davidson and Sibley 2011), in sun and beach destinations there is still a need for research if there is such a gap between the perceptions of those who drive demand (both residents and tourists), and those responsible for the management of the museums (Directors). There is a need to align and integrate various stakeholders' perceptions of the museums in order to develop the right strategy (Bryan, Munday, and Bevins 2012; Murtagh, Boland, and Shirlow 2017).

Aligning image perception between Directors and Visitors

In conceptual terms, museums' image can be viewed as a mental picture, including holistic perceptions and specific considerations, formed from the mass of information available about both a specific museum and museums in general (Vaughan 2001). Image summarises in small categories the Visitors' perceptions and allows them to simplify reality under some 'files' created in their minds (for instance 'exciting' is a result of many other cognitive perceptions – the guide, the interactive displays, etc.) (Phaswana-Mafuya and Haydam 2005). Image is a subjective 'reality' but this reality is influencing the behaviour of the Visitors and Directors alike. 'Perception is reality' in the sense that what is perceived by people – no matter what – is real in its consequences. This is what sociologists call 'the Thomas theorem' (Thomas and Thomas 1928, 572). Museums are what people perceive they are (positive or negative in each dimension and as an overall perception). This means admitting the risks involved in reductionism, where Directors and Visitors may have different perceptions and interpretations of the museums (Foley and McPherson 2000). Failure by ignorance is the most common public and private service failure. 'This means service users perceive a failure, while those responsible for the service do not recognise this failure or potential for failure, and therefore do not take action to improve services' (Van de Walle 2016).

Visitors' (residents and tourists) image, for instance, will affect their decisions to visit, their satisfaction, and recommendations of the visit to others. On the other

hand, Directors' perceptions about the portrait experience of their Visitors will determine their decisions on improvements. While there are other perspectives from the supply side – curators, exhibit designers, etc. that are key for designing the museum's guidelines (Lai 2015), Director's perceptions are crucial in the final decisions. For instance, Directors may think the current museum's visit provides an active experience, one that is surprising and exciting, with great visual animation and interpretational material. However, Visitors may perceive just the opposite, and the resulting experience will likely leave Visitors dissatisfied with the museum visit. With this concern in mind, the present study examines the image of the museum as perceived by both Visitors and Directors, with a view toward understanding the possible differences that might exist. Museums' image can and should be managed and measured, monitoring the curatorial-managerial values and educational-leisure focus approach (Foley and McPherson 2000), thus allowing to make strategic decisions according to the goals of the museums and the destination (Ponsignon, Durrieu, and Bouzdine-Chameeva 2017).

Museums in Gran Canaria (Canary Islands, Spain)

Canary Islands is a leading and popular European destination (Moreno 2003), receiving more than 15 million international tourists a year. The Canary Islands consist of seven islands showing an interesting, complementary relationship between them (Promotur 2016). The Canary Islands, with a local population of 2.2 million, is located in the Atlantic Ocean and is one of the 17 autonomous communities of Spain. Tourism in the Canary Islands accounts for 31.9% of GDP (13,480,000 €) and 37.6% of employment – 294,896 jobs (Exceltur 2015). This European outermost region is located two and a half hours from the capital of Spain (Madrid) and approximately four-hours flight from central Europe, and is located near the African coast.

In tourism terms, according to the last research by Promotur (2016) – the Canary Islands destination marketing organisation, the destination image is perceived mainly as 'great weather conditions' (6.35 out of 7 – 7 meaning very positive image) and 'attractive natural resources – beaches, volcanos, etc.' (5.95 out of 7). However, the study shows that the local culture (4.34) and specifically, the museums offering (4.43), are the attributes that feature in the less positive image. This scenario calls for a study to determine what the specific image perceived by the tourists about the local museums is. However, residents should never be neglected. Thus, Directors have the challenge to understand their Visitors and their perceived image.

The present study seeks to provide a research framework that will help manage the museum's image. This study analyses the three dimensions of image (cognitive, affective, and overall image of two different publics (residents and tourists)), and explains the differences between this image with that of museums' Directors.

In order to achieve the proposed objectives, specific fieldwork was carried out, which was developed as a continuation of the bibliographic review. The study to measure the perceived image of Visitors (residents and tourists) and Directors was undertaken in Gran Canaria (Canary Islands, Spain), including 252 Visitor respondents and 13 Directors at the 13 main museums of the island. The methodology uses descriptive analysis, factor analysis, and *t*-student analysis.

Literature review

Heritage tourism has appeared as a potential instrument for improving the socio-economic lives of inhabitants of a place by preserving their culture and providing jobs (Korstanje 2012). Thus, tourism based on cultural heritage has recently been emphasised by some scholars as a more sustainable alternative to more insensitive forms of mass tourism (Simmons 2000; Ryan and Huyton 2002; Dyer, Aberdeen, and Schuler 2003; Bianchi 2004a; White and White 2009; Korstanje 2012), which seems to perpetuate the notion that tourism is a form of neocolonialism (Korstanje 2012).

Mass tourism has been summarily criticised as the main culprit for the negative impacts of tourism on culture, and cultural tourism is sometimes suggested as an ostensibly more benevolent alternative (Korstanje 2012), and the museums could play a fundamental role in this regard since they give shape to the imaginary of the tourists, which have received recent attention in the literature (Tzanelli and Korstanje 2016).

Imaginaries have been conceptualised as socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people's personal imaginings and are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices (Salazar 2012). Anthropologically speaking, museums are ideological and education platforms that offer a story, a myth (Korstanje 2018). Each museum denotes a message to society and Visitors, which deserves to be decoded. In some destinations as the Canary Islands, the relationship between the economic and political élites, the local society and the tourists is key to develop a sustainable tourism model (Bian and hi 2004b).

Understanding the perceived image by the different stakeholders means understanding their realities when facing their decisions. However, this multi-stakeholder approach to image evaluation to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the destination image has been neglected in the literature (Su, Wall, and Ma 2017). The Visitor's perceived image of a museum is quite complex, a mixture of positive and negative perceptions that influence the possible decision to visit a museum, revisit the attraction, or recommend it to others (Phaswana-Mafuya and Haydam 2005; Scott 2008). Tourists view a museum visit as an overall integrated experience comprised of many components and perceptions that ultimately form their image of the potential or actual visit (McPherson 2006). Moreover, local residents will also be more likely to visit and revisit a museum when they have a positive image of it. In this respect, museums with stronger, more positive images have a greater probability of being visited (Bigné, Sánchez, and Sánchez 2001). In summary, museums seek to provide a unique customer-friendly experience achieving a positive image to increase customer satisfaction and the frequency of visits (Soren et al. 1995; McCarthy and Ciolfi 2008; Liu, Liu, and Lin 2015). However, sometimes the performances that heritage managers engage in are not necessarily the performances with which Visitors engage (Trinh and Ryan 2013; Smith, 2014), leading to Visitors' dissatisfaction (Sheng and Chen 2012).

Museum Directors can measure the satisfaction of their Visitors by using extensively employed satisfaction questionnaires in their museums. However, if they do not truly understand the measures of their Visitors' perceived image and its components, they will find it extremely difficult to manage their museums in a way that will enhance their Visitors' satisfaction (Murtagh, Boland, and Shirlow 2017). Thus, image can and should be measured in all its dimensions (Selby 2004).

Because image is of great importance to the tourism industry, the extant literature has extensively used and analysed the topic (Carballo et al. 2015), applying various methodological procedures and methods for describing and measuring image (Tasci 2007). Image is a concept that has been characterised as dynamic, relativistic, multiple, and complex (Gallarza, Saura, and Garcia 2002). Image is dynamic as it can be changed – for instance, through ongoing management and the adoption of improvements made by museum Directors, specifically with respect to the nature of the experience provided and the marketing of that experience. Image is relativistic, as each person can have a different, subjective and specific image of the same museum after the visit. Image is multiple, as different agents (Directors, residents, and tourists) can have different images of the same museum. Even when image cannot be fully controlled, the museums' pursuit is to achieve an overall positive perception for each of its dimensions (Dates and Illia 2009). Finally, image is a complex construct with many components. Vaughan (2001), and Beerli and Martin (2004) discuss three main components of this concept to be measured:

- Perceptual or cognitive image – formed by evaluating the individual's beliefs concerning the attributes (specific aspects) of the museum;
- Affective image – based on the emotional feelings the museum arouses (atmosphere); and
- Overall/holistic image – or the general evaluation of the museum, which can be positive or negative, resulting from the Visitor's logical interpretation (cognitive image) and emotional interpretation (affective image) of the museum.

Taken together, these components of perceived image provide greater insight and a better understanding of the Visitor. The cognitive component reflects knowledge of the museum's characteristics, as Visitors perceive them (Kingham and Willis 2008). The affective component measures the emotional response of the Visitor to the museum (Smith, 2014). Functional and emotional aspects of image are the two ends of a continuum along which the service experience can be evaluated and classified (Kim 2009).

The present study seeks to provide a research framework that will help manage the museum's image. Thus, it analyses the three dimensions of image (cognitive, affective, and overall image). This study also considers the perceived image of two different publics (residents and tourists). Understanding local residents' museum Visitors image has been regarded as indispensable conditions toward guaranteeing tourism development (Gursoy, Chi, and Dyer 2010; Kim, Uysal, and Sirgy 2013; Tolkach and King 2015). It is noteworthy to point out that local issues can directly affect the tourist experience of tourist Visitors, and consequently the tourist image of the destination (Okazaki 2008).'

Additionally, this image is compared with that of museums' Directors. This comparison, and making sure that Directors understand their publics' perceptions, and contribute to the experience to be more customer-oriented (Beerli, Meneses, and Gil 2007; Gofman, Moskowitz, and Mets 2011; Lai 2015). That promotes the greater possibility that the museum will succeed in adapting its experience to the Visitor's needs and desires.

Previous studies have analysed museum perceptions from both the demand side (Vaughan 2001; Phaswana-Mafuya and Haydam 2005; Marty 2007; Moreno-Gil and Ritchie 2009; Sheng and Chen 2012; Carey, Davidson, and Sahli 2013; Chiappa, Andreu, and Gallarza 2014; Brida, Nogare, and Scuderi 2015; Drotner, Knudsen, and Mortensen

2017) and the supply side (Nevra 2007; Sheng and Lo 2010; Fu, Kim, and Zhou 2015). However, they have not studied the differences in perceptions by these two sides (Sheng and Lo 2010; Murtagh, Boland, and Shirlow 2017), and specifically how Directors should manage and market their museums in order to appeal to the different Visitors based on a comprehensive understanding of their perceptions (Kotler 2004).

For instance, Vaughan (2001) tackled the study of museum image, analysing the nature of the different images that Visitors hold of a museum (affective and cognitive). In addition, Geissler, Rucks, and Edison (2006) studied the main factors influencing the museum's overall image. Phaswana-Mafuya and Haydam (2005) analysed the perceptions of international and domestic tourists of Robben Island Museum. In a different study, Moreno-Gil and Ritchie (2009) provided a better understanding of the image-formation process in a museum context, comparing tourists and residents. Murtagh, Boland, and Shirlow (2017) analysed the relationship between contested heritages and cultural tourism through the museums.

However, no research to date has studied the perceptions of different types of Visitors, comparing and contrasting them to those of museum Directors. Linking the supply and demand perspectives generates a more holistic picture of museums, enabling them to enhance their tourism potential (McPherson 2006; Sheng and Lo 2010). This preliminary assessment allows museums to play a critical role in tourism destinations, upgrading the local culture at the same time as fostering the tourist offer of the destination and improving the image of the place (Cummins 2004; Scott 2009).

Taking into account the above aspects, we will test the following hypotheses.

H1: The perceived overall image of the Visitors differs from the image perceived by the Directors

H2: The perceived cognitive image of the Visitors differs from the cognitive image perceived by the Directors.

H3: The perceived affective image of the Visitors differs from the affective image perceived by the Directors.

Methodology

The study – surveys – to measure the perceived image of Visitors (residents and tourists) and Directors was undertaken in Gran Canaria (Canary Islands, Spain), at the main museums of the island: Colombus House, Elder, Museo Canario, Casa Museo León y Castillo, Casa Museo Tomás Morales, Casa Museo Pérez Galdós, Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, Casa Museo Antonio Padrón, Museo Néstor, El Molino, Museo de Piedra y Artesanía, Museo Municipal de Arucas and Museo del Ron. These museums under study receive approximately 800,000 Visitors per year (60% residents and 40% tourists). Thus, both segments are important in terms of visits. These figures show, from a comparative perspective, that a small population of tourists are visiting the museums while on holidays.

Therefore, the actual population studied was composed of both tourists and residents over 18 years old who visited at least one of the 13 main museums of the island, and the Directors of those museums. The selection of the 252 Visitor respondents occurred at the exit gate of each of the museums. Every third Visitor was interviewed immediately after the visit under a systematic random sampling. However, and in order to gain

representativeness, we also applied quotas per museum related to the historic number of Visitors, the resident-tourist ratio, and respondent age. Thus, the sample is a representative copy per museum of the universe in terms of a number of visitors, segment (tourist or resident) and age. On the other hand, the Director of the 13 museums were surveyed (13 surveys and interviews).

Based on previous literature on how to measure image (O'Leary and Deegan 2005; Almeida-Santana and Gil 2017) the questionnaire was designed, including questions to measure very positive–very negative (see Table 3) cognitive image, affective image, and overall image. For Visitors, the questionnaire was developed in Spanish, and then translated (back translation) into German and English, as these were the main languages of the tourists. The Visitor questionnaire was first pretested on 25 Visitors, then supplemented by 5 interviews with Directors to further develop and improve it. The questionnaire for Directors used the same scales as the one for Visitors. Directors were selected, as they exert the major role in the final decisions concerning the management of the museums.

Following the previous literature (see the previous section), three different scales were used to measure the image of museums – one for each of its components/dimensions (cognitive, affective, and overall/holistic). To measure a museum's cognitive image, a 20-item, 7-point Likert scale (1 = very negative image, 7 = very positive image) was used (see Table 3). To measure the affective dimension of museum image, a 7-item, 7-point bipolar semantic differential scale was used, showing a series of contrasting adjectives (Unpleasant–Pleasant; Boring–Stimulating; Gloomy–Exciting; Distressing–Relaxing; Passive–Active; Indifferent–Surprising; Disappointing–Gratifying) and the degree to which the Visitor's opinion coincided with the description on the left or on the right. Finally, a single-item (very positive–very negative image), 7-point semantic differential scale was included to assess the overall image of the museum.

Sample

Table 1 summarises the characteristics of the Visitors, including an analysis of the sample distribution based on socio-demographic information on gender, age, civil status, country of origin, and study level. There was a similar distribution of women and men; the age of the Visitors showed a normal (Gaussian) distribution; and a higher proportion of people possessed university degrees. Finally, there were 249 valid questionnaires (149 residents and 100 tourists) in the sample. In general terms, the characteristics of the sample, due to the application of quotas, coincided with those of the population of the study area.

The characteristics of the museums in the research are presented in Table 2. This Table shows that the majority of museums were public, free of charge, with less than 10 employees, possessing a medium–low operational budget, with less than 50,000 Visitors per year. The 13 museums included in this study are the major museums of the destination, including different typologies: science, nature, and art. The cultural-related Columbus House Museum was the most visited museum in the destination. This museum explains Columbus' travels to America from Gran Canaria, the last known port of call. These museums are oriented towards both tourists and residents, as the local population accounts for approximately 60% of total visits.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the visitors.

Characteristics	Dimensions	Universe (%)	Sample frequency	Sample (%)
Gender	Male	48	124	49.40
	Female	52	127	50.60
Age	16–24	18	52	20.63
	25–34	36	88	34.92
	35–44	23	60	23.81
	45–54	7	14	5.56
	55–64	10	24	9.52
	>64	6	14	5.56
Education	No studies	N/A	4	1.63
	Primary studies		33	13.47
	High school, vocational studies		69	28.16
	Lower University degree		63	25.71
	Higher University degree		76	31.02
Country of origin	Resident	60	149	59.84
	Spain	40	58	23.29
	UK		15	6.02
	Germany		19	7.63
	Other		8	3.21
Total			252	100

Table 2. Characteristics of the museums.

Characteristics	Dimensions	Frequency	Percentage
Ownership	Public	9	69.2
	Private	4	30.8
Admission	Free	9	69.2
	Paid	4	30.8
Annual budget (€)	<500,000	6	46.2
	500,000–1,000,000	3	23.1
	>1,000,000	4	30.8
Employees	<10	8	61.5
	10–20	3	23.1
	>20	2	15.4
Attendance	<10,000	6	46.2
	10,000–50,000	5	38.5
	>50,000	2	15.4
Total		13	100

Results

In order to attain the main goals of the study, a preliminary descriptive analysis was undertaken. [Table 3](#) summarises the perceived-image measures (cognitive, affective, and overall), first by total Visitors, then differentiating between tourists and residents, and finally comparing these measures with those of the museum Directors. It was observed that, in general terms, the image measures of Directors tended to score higher than those of the Visitors' for almost every item analysed. With respect to the cognitive image, museum Directors tended to rate some aspects more highly than their Visitors did. However, the overall image as perceived by Directors scored only slightly higher than Visitors scoring. Regarding affective image (atmosphere), the items where there was a greater gap between the perceptions of Directors and of Visitors were those rating the visitation experience as active, stimulating, and exciting.

For Visitors, the overall image is relatively high (5.53 out of 7), and the most positive perceptions regarding museums in Gran Canaria are for 'pleasant visit', staff's attention,

Table 3. Comparative of cognitive, affective and overall image differences between directors and visitors.

	Directors		Residents		Tourists		Total Visitors	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Cognitive image								
Position or location of the museum	5.52	1.18	5.37	1.43	5.48	1.45	5.42	1.43
Reception / Entrance of the museum	5.16	1.56	4.90	1.52	5.34	1.35	5.08	1.47
Availability of parking	3.22	1.41	2.81	1.91	2.94	1.89	2.86	1.90
Souvenir shop	4.52	1.32	3.19	1.78	3.47	1.86	3.30	1.81
Visual animation inside the museum	4.86	1.28	4.03	1.78	3.54	1.90	3.83	1.84
Areas to rest	5.12	1.72	4.10	1.81	4.51	1.68	4.26	1.77
Signage or directions inside the museum	5.22	1.61	4.70	1.62	4.30	1.70	4.54	1.66
Staff's kindness	6.06	1.42	5.46	1.50	5.55	1.32	5.50	1.43
Entrance fee	6.22	2.08	5.19	2.01	5.35	1.91	5.25	1.97
Museums decoration	5.83	1.24	5.34	1.36	5.44	1.25	5.38	1.32
External architecture of the museum	5.62	1.18	5.50	1.45	5.38	1.28	5.46	1.39
Maintenance of the museum	5.31	1.41	5.07	1.66	5.43	1.27	5.21	1.52
Coherence or connection between the different expositions	5.32	1.53	4.60	1.69	4.63	1.47	4.61	1.60
Objects, collections or expositions	5.86	1.32	5.18	1.48	5.08	1.43	5.14	1.46
Interpretational material	5.48	1.39	4.48	1.52	4.31	1.66	4.41	1.58
Offers and prices adapted to special groups	5.62	1.61	5.30	1.84	4.71	1.93	5.11	1.88
Technology used in the museum	4.96	1.82	4.14	1.81	3.82	1.91	4.02	1.85
Signaling or indications outside	4.45	1.45	4.21	1.80	4.02	1.55	4.14	1.70
The museum's opening hours	5.54	1.24	5.32	1.41	5.31	1.29	5.31	1.36
Other (Specify:)	5.11	2.12	4.88	2.47	4.00	2.83	4.54	2.54
	Directors		Residents		Tourists		Total Visitors	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Affective Image								
Unpleasant- Pleasant	6.02	1.12	5.86	1.15	5.92	1.14	5.89	1.15
Boring- Stimulating	5.89	1.26	5.02	1.44	5.42	1.39	5.18	1.43
Gloomy- Exciting	5.31	1.34	4.84	1.42	4.68	1.47	4.78	1.44
Distressing- Relaxing	5.32	1.31	5.35	1.25	5.22	1.49	5.30	1.35
Passive-Active	4.83	1.11	4.21	1.81	3.86	1.79	4.07	1.80
Indifferent- Surprising	5.34	1.52	4.88	1.41	5.18	1.46	5.00	1.43
Disappointing- Gratifying	5.51	1.21	4.94	1.31	5.13	1.35	5.01	1.33
	Directors		Residents		Tourists		Total Visitors	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Overall Image								
Overall image of the museum	5.65	1.06	5.46	1.30	5.64	1.13	5.53	1.23

external architecture, the location, and general decoration. On the other hand, the more negative perceptions are assigned to a passive and gloomy experience (from the affective perspective) and the availability of parking, souvenir shop, and visual animation in the museums.

Finally, when analysing the differences between Directors and Visitors with differentiation between tourists and residents, it was observed that for the overall image, tourists had a more positive image of the visit (5.64 out of 7) than residents (5.46). Residents perceived the affective image as more active and exciting, but less stimulating and surprising. Regarding the cognitive image, on one hand, the largest gap between Directors and residents was related to the attributes of the souvenir shop, entrance fee, rest areas, interpretational material, visual animation inside the museum, and technology. On the other hand, the greatest gap between Directors and tourists occurred in the attributes of visual animation inside the museum, interpretational material, technology, souvenir shop, signage (or directions within the museum), coherence (or connection between the different expositions), entrance fee, and offers adapted to special groups. These trends have already

been addressed by previous research in different geographical contexts (Bradburne 2000; McCarthy and Ciolfi 2008). In any case, the perception of other key staff members may be closer to the visitors' image, as they get a first-hand contact with Visitors.

To facilitate analysis, interpretation, and arrival at general conclusions, it was necessary to go further than a descriptive preliminary analysis to identify the underlying dimensions or factors that determined the cognitive image and the affective image of the museums. Given the high number of items used, it was necessary to reduce or refine the scale in order to select the most relevant ones that determined the construct. These analyses provided a better understanding of the various dimensions forming the museum image. Specifically, a factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed to refine the scale relative to the cognitive and affective image of the museums as perceived by Visitors. Then, this image was compared with the Directors' perception. These analyses allow us to better understand the main categories under which the museum image is perceived.

Regarding the cognitive image of the museum, five clearly-defined dimensions were extracted from the factor analysis, labelled (see Table 4) as follows: 'quality of visitation experience' (ICOG1), 'convenience and functionality' (ICOG2), 'price/value' (ICOG3), 'general appearance' (ICOG4), and 'museum shop' (ICOG5). These extracted factors were already mentioned by previous studies (Kotler and Kotler 2001). It seems that museums' image can be summarised into these '5 drawers' that compose the mental picture of the museums in Gran Canaria, where 'quality of visitation experience' and 'convenience and functionality' play the major role on that picture (higher percentage of variance explained). From the original scale, the following items were eliminated: 'availability of parking', 'areas to rest', and 'staff's kindness', as they show loadings clearly less than 0.5 and did not help to provide a better explanation of the dimensions (Hair et al. 1987). It is interesting that many studies identify the importance of museum shops as a key

Table 4. Factor analysis of Cognitive image.

Variables	ICOG1	ICOG2	ICOG3	ICOG4	ICOG5
Signage or directions inside the museum	0.761	0.325	−0.135	0.069	−0.062
Interpretational material	0.759	0.003	0.167	0.103	0.039
Coherence or connection between the different halls/expositions	0.739	0.202	0.058	0.140	0.084
Technology used in the museum	0.719	0.254	0.071	0.064	0.219
Visual animation inside the museum	0.622	0.030	−0.211	0.075	0.407
Museums decoration	0.559	0.097	0.255	0.365	−0.230
Objects, collections or expositions	0.493	0.034	0.267	0.359	0.007
Position or location of the museum	0.148	0.739	−0.198	−0.052	−0.093
The museum's opening hours	−0.051	0.732	0.180	0.340	0.081
Signage or directions outside the museum	0.313	0.665	0.105	0.102	0.014
Reception / Entrance of the museum	0.233	0.569	0.019	0.021	0.350
Entrance fee	0.158	0.047	0.890	−0.048	−0.088
Discounts for special groups (children, senior citizens)	0.003	−0.016	0.883	0.149	0.116
External architecture of the museum	0.106	0.247	−0.048	0.845	−0.025
Maintenance of the museum	0.258	−0.010	0.096	0.795	0.049
Souvenir shop	0.102	0.078	0.053	−0.009	0.921
% Partial Variance Explained:	21.561	13.382	11.909	11.292	8.056
% Total Variance Explained:	66.201				
Cronbach's Alpha of the total scale	0.8173				
KMO:	0.740				
Bartlett:	673.832				
Significance:	0.000				

Notes: 'ICOG1: Quality of visitation experience', 'ICOG2: Convenience and functionality', 'ICOG3: Price/value', 'ICOG4: General appearance', and 'ICOG5: Museum shop'.

Table 5. Factor analysis of affective image.

Variables	IAFFEC
Unpleasant-Pleasant	0.842
Boring-Stimulating	0.841
Gloomy-Exciting	0.765
Distressing-Relaxing	0.698
Passive-Active	0.674
Indifferent-Surprising	0.633
Disappointing-Gratifying	0.524
% Total Variance Explained:	51.69
Cronbach's Alpha of the total scale	0.8293
KMO:	0.824
Bartlett:	620.582
Significance:	0.000

dimension of Visitor perceptions (Kotler and Kotler 2001; Mottner and Ford 2005). The results of the factor analysis can be considered satisfactory, given the variance explained, the eigenvalues obtained, and the correlations between the factors and the various items (Hair et al. 1987).

Similarly, a factor analysis was performed on the variables that determined the affective component of the perceived image (Table 5), with only one single factor being obtained, confirming its one-dimensional structure (Vaughan 2001). Thus, the emotional perception of the museum's image can be condensed under one single dimension that reflects the atmosphere of the museums.

Differences in perceived image between Visitors and Directors

Several association tests were run using the t-test of equality of means, in order to measure the significance of differences in perceived image (cognitive, affective, and overall) between Visitors (residents and tourists) and Directors of the museums.

To first analyse the difference in the cognitive image of the museums, the *t*-statistic for independent samples was used. Visitors' perceptions (differentiating between residents and tourists) were compared to those of the Directors of the museums (Table 6). The results indicated significant differences, for both residents and tourists, between the cognitive image perceived by Visitors and by Directors. In the case of residents, significant differences were found for the dimensions of quality of visitation experience ($t = 0.8714$; $p = .0305$), price/value ($t = 2.9784$; $p = .0421$), and museum shop ($t = 0.5945$; $p = .0405$). With respect to the tourists, the results show differences in the same previous dimensions: quality of visitation experience ($t = 0.6978$; $p = .0239$), price/value ($t = 2.8121$; $p = .0333$), and museum shop ($t = 0.4527$; $p = .0291$). Directors had a better image on these dimensions, as they perceived the visitation experience (e.g., interpretational material, visual animation), the price/value (entrance fee and discounts for special groups) and the museum shop to be better than Visitors did. However, there were no significant differences for the dimensions of convenience and functionality (e.g., location, timetable) and general appearance (e.g., external architecture, maintenance of the museum). Thus, Directors can identify in a simplified manner where they are failing to understand their publics' perceptions.

Thus, the following research hypothesis is fulfilled.

Table 6. Differences in cognitive image between Visitors and Directors of the museums.

Cognitive image factors	Mean (<i>p</i>)	S.D.	<i>t</i> -student	(*)
Factor 1: Quality of visitation experience (ICOG1)				
Residents	−0.002	0.94	0.8714	YES
Directors	0.043	1.25	(0.0305)	
Tourists	−0.008	0.81	0.6978	YES
Directors	0.043	1.25	(0.0239)	
Factor 2: Convenience and functionality (ICOG2)				
Residents	−0.005	1.08	0.1982	NO
Directors	0.031	1.12	(0.5988)	
Tourists	−0.001	1.27	0.1202	
Directors	0.031	1.12	(0.5246)	NO
Factor 3: Price/value (ICOG3)				
Residents	−0.028	1.17	2.9784	YES
Directors	0.080	0.89	(0.0421)	
Tourists	−0.035	1.14	2.8121	
Directors	0.080	0.89	(0.0333)	YES
Factor 4: General appearance (ICOG4)				
Residents	−0.074	1.32	2.4252	NO
Directors	0.012	0.73	(0.2971)	
Tourists	−0.063	1.30	2.4105	NO
Directors	0.012	0.73	(0.2642)	
Factor 5: Museum shop (ICOG5)				
Residents	− 0.084	1.19	0.5945	YES
Directors	0.010	1.01	(0.0405)	
Tourists	−0.098	1.21	0.4527	YES
Directors	0.010	1.01	(0.0291)	

Note: (*) SD: Significant Difference in the cognitive image perceived by Visitors and Directors of the museums.

H1: The perceived cognitive image of the Visitors differs from the cognitive image perceived by the Directors.

To analyse the differences between Visitors and Directors regarding affective image and overall image, a *t*-test for independent samples was also used (Table 7). The results indicate (showing significant differences) that Directors have a better affective image of the museums than Visitors (both residents ($t = 6.3552$; $p = .0039$) and tourists ($t = 6.6414$; $p = .0043$)) do. However, for the overall image, there were no significant differences between Visitors (neither residents nor tourists) and Directors. Both groups share a common overall perception of the museums. Thus, Directors need to better understand the affective image of their Visitors to better design the museums' atmosphere.

We can conclude that the following hypotheses are fulfilled

Table 7. Differences in affective image and overall image between Visitors and Directors of the museums.

Overall and affective image		Mean S.D. <i>t</i> -student (*) (<i>p</i>)		
<i>Overall image (IOVER)</i>				
<i>Residents</i>	0.001	1.11	0.0034	NO
<i>Directors</i>	0.004	0.99	(0.8991)	
<i>Tourists</i>	0.001	0.95	0.0021	NO
<i>Directors</i>	0.004	0.99	(0.9281)	
<i>Affective image (IAFFEC)</i>				
<i>Residents</i>	−0.009	1.28	6.3552	YES
<i>Directors</i>	0.065	0.97	(0.0039)	
<i>Tourists</i>	−0.008	0.98	6.6414	YES
<i>Directors</i>	0.065	0.97	(0.0043)	

Note: (*) Significant Difference in the cognitive image perceived by Visitors and Directors of the museums.

H2: The perceived affective image of the Visitors differs from the affective image perceived by the Directors.'

H3: The perceived overall image of the Visitors differs from the image perceived by the Directors

These results demonstrated some differences between the image as perceived by Directors and by Visitors. Directors tended to fully understand the overall image perceived by their Visitors, both tourists and residents. This can perhaps be explained by the satisfaction questionnaires they have used previously to help them to understand their Visitors' overall satisfaction, perception, and image of the museum. However, museum Directors failed to understand the nature of the image and its dimensions (cognitive and affective), and how Visitors perceived these dimensions. This gap implies major difficulties in trying to improve the image of the museums within the various target markets.

Figure 1 shows graphically the differences between Directors and Visitors with respect to museums' perceived images. There were important gaps in the perception of the cognitive image. While Directors were able to accurately perceive the Visitor image of some tangible and functional dimensions (convenience and functionality of the museum, and its general appearance), Directors tended to fail to understand or appreciate the important role played by other less tangible dimensions such as the museum shop, the price/value perception of the customer, and especially the quality of the visitation experience. This is especially important considering that after all, all heritage is intangible (Domic and Boukas 2017). Finally, there were important significant differences between the affective images perceived by Directors and Visitors, as Directors overvalued their museum's image and failed to understand the emotions and feelings their museums produce in Visitors. Interestingly, we found the same image gap between Directors and tourists as there was between Directors and residents, a finding which appeared to reflect the difficulties Directors face when trying to understand the more complex aspects of their Visitors' image – specifically, the emotional dimension, the perception of price, and even the overall

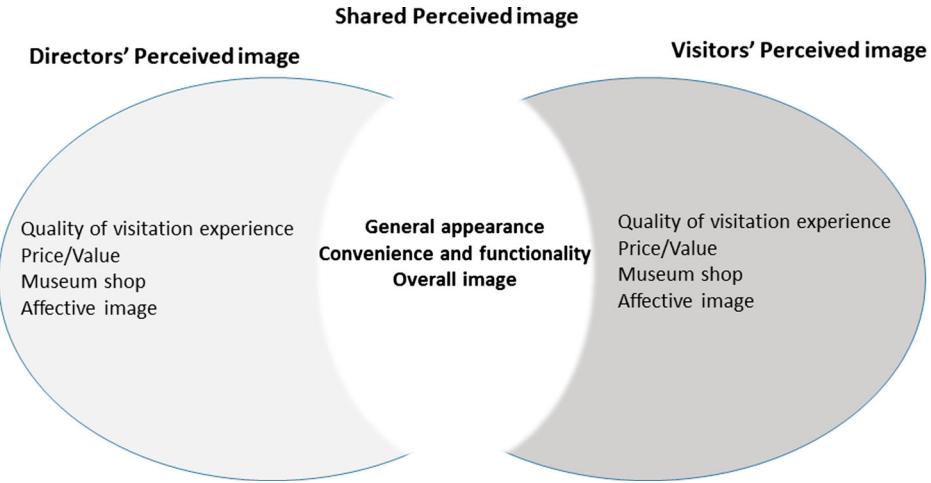


Figure 1. Museums' perceived images. Differences between Directors and Visitors to museums' perceived images.

visitation experience. Thus, museums' Directors in Gran Canaria, and probably in many other sun and beach destinations, are still facing a long challenge to properly understand their publics' image. This is a basic requirement, not only for improving the image of the museums but to contribute to enhance the cultural image of the whole destination.

Discussion and conclusions

In order to keep improving the performance of the museums, both as institutions and as real places, it is required the flexibility to respond to the needs of a wide variety of users (Bradburne 2007). Thus, Directors should try to understand the perceptions of their Visitors in order to structure the experience they offer, to improve the image of the destinations, generate a cultural impact, and to promote the right messages to their Visitors. Even more, while it may be a general practice in other locations, sun and beach destinations may struggle to understand the perceptions of their publics at the museums, since culture normally plays a secondary role in these destinations.

This study focused on Gran Canaria, a sun and beach destination, analysed the image of the museums in a detailed, in-depth manner, taking into account its major dimensions (cognitive, affective, and overall image); and examining the differences in perceptions between the supply side (museum Directors) and demand side (Visitors), while differentiating between the main target markets (tourists and residents). One initial and important conclusion is that a small percentage of both tourists and residents visit the museums of the island. It can be concluded that the museums in the destination might need to develop a further visitor centre-orientation in order to attract more visitors, and this means understanding their perceived image.

From a theoretical point of view, given the limited empirical evidence to date on this topic, this work attempts to contribute to a conceptual framework that we hope will facilitate continued progress in developing a better understanding of the image of museums, considering both perspectives (i.e., Visitors and Directors of the museums). The findings imply that a separate analysis of the image (affective, cognitive, and overall image) can be applied to museums, especially since the image of the museum, as seen by the Director and by the Visitor, is determined by both the logical and the emotional dimensions of image. Moreover, understanding the image gaps between supply and demand helps to develop conceptual and theoretical models to better manage museums' image and, more importantly, the experiences they deliver to their publics (Selby 2004).

In the case of Canary Islands, while the museum Directors' overall image coincided with that of their Visitors, the Directors failed to understand the affective image and some dimensions of the cognitive image (museum shop, price/value, and quality of visitation experience). However, understanding the Visitor's overall image, without tackling the specific cognitive and affective image, will be insufficient to manage and improve the museum experience for their publics, and the associated marketing activities affecting the museums (see table 8).

The results of the study provided evidence of the need for an overall image-management programme for destination museums in the Canary Islands, given their two primary segments (tourists and residents), because a positive image within each segment will help to improve Visitor satisfaction. Furthermore, the results help to enhance DMOs and museums Directors' understanding of Visitor image, and its

Table 8. Summary of the results and the hypotheses tested.

H1: The perceived cognitive image of the Visitors differs from the cognitive image perceived by the Directors.	Is fulfilled
H2: The perceived affective image of the Visitors differs from the affective image perceived by the Directors.	Is fulfilled
H3: The overall image of the Visitors differs from the overall image perceived by the Directors.	Is fulfilled

components and will assist them to better manage their decisions and to democratise the museum experience (Coghlan 2017). Thus, fostering the role of museums as key assets to also change the image of the destination and upgrade the cultural perception of the destination (Chen and Della Chang 2016). In this regard, the authors believe that museums in the destination should be more concerned with the affective image, as it is in this area that an important gap exists between the perceptions of Visitor and Director. Considering the importance of affective image in the future behaviour of the Visitor (e.g., repeat visits, word of mouth), Directors should try to understand their Visitors’ perception using questionnaires and other research methods (both qualitative and quantitative – interviews, focus groups, etc.). This will allow them to better design the exhibitions according to their goals and their publics’ perceptions. Nevertheless, museums play an important role within tourism destinations as cultural embassies, projecting a sense of place, and providing an entertainment experience.

With the foregoing in mind, the authors recommend changes in the questionnaires the museums use in Gran Canaria to evaluate their customers’ perceptions, in order to integrate affective image and to focus on some specific aspects (not fully understood at the present) such as the museum shop, price management, and the quality of the experience. It seems that museum Directors do not have difficulties understanding the image of their Visitors with respect to the tangible items that compose the cognitive image (e.g., architecture, maintenance), nor with functional and convenience items (e.g., location, timetable, outdoor signage, entrance). However, Directors tend to overvalue the perceived image of their customer regarding the museum shop. Taking into account the effect of the museum shop in creating appealing memories and emotional feelings (Foley and McPherson 2000; McPherson 2006), correctly understanding the image of this item should be a priority. Directors also fail to understand their Visitors’ image concerning price and discounts; in some cases, they consider that Visitors will be highly satisfied with a low price or free entrance. However, even under these circumstances, Visitor image is not as positive as expected. They could be convinced to pay more by generating a greater ‘value for money’ concept (Casas-Mendez, Fragnelli, and Garcia-Jurado 2014). However, managers could ‘avoid the responsibility’ on this issue under a free entrance policy.

Directors at this destination should consider that even when the visit is an educational experience, the ‘entertainment’ part (active involvement, excitement) should also be encouraged (Smith 2014). Additionally, this paper also aims to shed some light on the debate regarding museum performance from a tourism perspective, where the traditional measures such as the number of Visitors, entertainment value, and educational learning experience should expand to include some more global destination goals related to the projection of the destination image. Canary Islands’ image could be impregnated with a higher cultural perception by strategically managing the image of the museums. Additionally, niche tourist’s segments (cultural tourists in this case) play an important role in upgrading the destination image (Adie and Hall 2017).

Finally, a limitation of this research is that the supply side was assessed considering only the Directors' image and no other staff's perceptions (curators, exhibit designer, museum shop manager, architects, and project managers who formulate the content and delivery of exhibits and public and school programmes), (Carter 2013). Future research should be carried out to validate the findings of this study in different destinations and across museum types to assess their external validity. Future research could also integrate a set of factors that influence the process of image formation. In this regard, sources of information and Visitor motivations are key elements that may be considered in that process (Wu and Wall 2017). Additionally, future research might expand our understanding of museum image by including the variables noted above, paying particular attention to the environmental issues in the museums (Camuffo et al. 2001) and the interaction with mass tourism, as the visitor's perception of the museum environment features are key (Ferilli et al. 2017), and integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Finally, to properly identify the differences between tourists and residents, ad-hoc studies are required considering their different behaviour and needs. Thus, both museums and DMOs would be able to develop policies considering the importance of the museums to tourism destinations. Tourism and museums should work together, especially in island destinations, to develop the heritage tourism (Jolliffe and Smith 2001) in a synergic relationship, where it can be stated that museums are tourism, and tourism is a living lab museum.

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