

Staging the Visitor Experience at Culloden Battlefield using the Key Design Principles of the Experience Economy Model and Technology

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Abstract

To become a successful tourism enterprise, understanding the visitor experience at heritage (and battle) sites is crucial to facilitate better strategic and managerial practices and avoid the potential differences between visitor and management perceptions. Implementing the key design principles devised by Pine and Gilmore (1998, 1999) includes a compelling and memorable theme. This paper broadly applies the key design principles at Culloden Battlefield, near Inverness in Scotland, and the consequential experiential outcomes for visitors at the site and the heritage (and battlefield) tourism sector. This research adds to the body of dark tourism knowledge by reinforcing seminal work from the 1990s, showcasing Culloden Battlefield as a successful case study of the Experience Economy Model and technology, and adding another aspect of story-telling later.

Keywords: *Culloden battlefield, Experience economy, Visitor experience, Key design principles, Dark tourism, Storytelling, Technology*

1. Introduction

Situated on Drumossie Moor near the regional center of Inverness in the Scottish Highlands, the Battle of Culloden, fought on April 16, 1746, was the high-water mark of the conflict and the conclusion of the Jacobite Uprising of 1745–46 [1]. Culloden was the last full-scale battle fought on British soil, culminating all previous uprisings dating back to the late seventeenth century. Although the outcome of the fight was determined in less than an hour, the consequences and aftermath, particularly for the Scottish Highlands, resonate to this day [2][3][4]. This is important from a visitor's perspective as Quinlan-Cutler and Carmichael [5] believe the experience of place, or "self-in-place," is what an individual seeks when visiting sites associated with historical events. The name and history related to the place can awaken visitor imagination and, in doing so, help to develop both an interest and understanding of the event/s and their consequences. Heritage (and battle) sites that fit in the realm of dark tourism no longer conserve artifacts but focus on interpreting and explaining these artifacts, broadening the visitor experience [6]. Visitors seek a deeper understanding of both the time and space context as well as the memories and personal stories of those irrevocably associated with a site. Hence, the narrative holds importance rather than the transfer of historical knowledge [7].

Heritage (and battle) sites that are planned and designed help create a "sense-of-place" via its narrative with the (tourism) infrastructure collaboratively supporting the visitor experience [8]. The concept of the Experience Economy devised by Pine and Gilmore [9][10] advocates

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that carefully staged experiences are key to competitiveness and increased profitability, with business operators encouraged to implement the key design principles inclusive of a memorable theme: affirmation of positive cues; the elimination of negative ones; provision of memorabilia; the stimulation of participants (via the engagement of all five (5) senses); and the enhancement of the chosen theme. This reflects that visitors are active participants wanting memorable experiences and eliciting emotional responses that help satisfy personal aspirations and desires [11]. At heritage (and battle) sites, Richards [12] suggests the "tourist gaze," defined by Urry [13] as those expectations that visitors place on host communities in search of an authentic experience, have now become a total tourism experience with visitors wanting the sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch of history. This paper discusses the implementation of the key design principles advocated by Pine and Gilmore [9][10] at Culloden Battlefield, which can assist in having positive experiential outcomes not only for visitors to Culloden but also for the heritage (and battlefield) tourism sector more broadly. The gap in the model, and hence the literature, is the use of technology as a method of storytelling, which is inevitable for visitors after their experience.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Heritage tourism

'Heritage' is an overly broad term that has extended over time to encompass both the built environment and natural heritage, such as landscapes [14][15]. The unifying thread regarding the variety of heritage examples is each place's historical and cultural significance. Southall and Robinson [16] define heritage tourism as "Visits to and experiences of places of historical importance and significance." These visits and the experiences enjoyed by people from outside the host community were motivated wholly or in part by their interest in the historical offerings [17][18]. Heritage tourism relies on creating an asset (or identity), adapting tangible and intangible resources, re-interpretation of past events, and a managerial approach incorporating conservation, preservation, and innovation [19].

There has been an interest in promoting heritage as a consumer product and reliving the past as part of the visitor experience [20]. Heritage tourism is an expanding market segment, with such expansion prompting discussion describing it as needing management and marketing differently [21]. Increased competition for visitor dollars has encouraged heritage (and battle) sites to deploy a more aggressive marketing strategy, with managers continuously seeking new ways to satisfy and delight visitors, including investing in technology to communicate history messaging. Undoubtedly, the significance of one heritage site over another is very personal and idiosyncratic, with visitors looking for a specific set of characteristics and attributes [18]. Consequently, heritage (and battle) sites must possess an emotional uniqueness that makes them appealing to visitors. This uniqueness can serve as a form of competitive differentiation between heritage sites, as image and visitor perceptions play a key role in the image creation process, especially in the context of visitors' final impressions [22]. Image creation is achieved through direct management of environmental stimuli via multimedia, technology, and promotional activities [19].

Recognizing heritage tourism involves offering new and varied experiences to domestic and international visitors [20]. Bonn et al. [22] argue that heritage (and battle) sites have been reformed into educational centers. Poria et al. [23] observe that this educational component is still a significant motivation for visitors, which has encouraged a "paradigm shift" in the management and presentation of heritage (and battle) sites. This trend has urged sites to

develop a scientific and technological focus to incorporate both interactive and multi-sensory exhibit/s where multimedia displays are standard, and visitors come to participate and interact rather than read associated notation in a more passive role. Similarly, Morgan et al. [11] discuss providing active rather than passive visitor experiences. Moscardo [24] believes heritage tourism involves understanding it as “An experience [that] is produced by the interaction of the visitor with the resource.”

The heritage value of battlefields involves memorials and preserved battlefields from the First World War [25][26], battle sites from the Second World War [27][28], as well as those from the Vietnam War [29], continuing to attract ongoing visitor interest [7]. Whilst the conservation and protection of battlefields occurred as hostilities continued, such as Gettysburg from the American Civil War [30][31], or immediately after the conflict ceased, such as Gallipoli [17] or the Belgian town of Ypres from the First World War [32], Culloden Battlefield was not. Not until a local farmer, Duncan Forbes, erected a memorial cairn and clan headstones in 1881 was there any formal acknowledgment of the site. Formed in 1931, The National Trust of Scotland (NTS) has taken the lead in protecting and preserving Culloden from further encroachment. In conjunction with other stakeholders, the NTS purchased locations adjacent to Culloden whilst ongoing archaeological research allowed the acquisition of more land to restore the battlefield's integrity [33]. Culloden Battlefield opened its current visitor center and re-interpreted battlefield in 2008, with both modern amenities and interpretative facilities being better able to achieve desired objectives whilst also helping optimize the visitor experience.

2.2. Heritage Interpretation

A key factor that influences visitor engagement at heritage (and battle) sites is interpretation. Site interpretation is essential to economic and cultural success. As the demand for more accurate and balanced depictions of history grows, so does the need for interpretative and progressive approaches [34], and this can be achieved through technology. Moscardo [35] defines interpretation as “a form of informal education or persuasive communication aimed at providing tourists with information about the place visited, both to improve their understanding of its significance and to encourage conservation.” The planning of site interpretation involves using signs, displays, brochures, and tour guides, including self-guided tours [36]. Tilden [37] believes that in capturing the essence of heritage (and battle) sites, visitors can engage various mediums, including tours, readings, audio and video clips. Various onsite media provide an opportunity to engage visitors' imagination by explaining and dramatizing in-depth the events that have taken place on a landscape invariably altered over time. The limitations of former battlefields to tell their own stories means that (heritage) managers must strive to show more than what visitors can perceive [38].

Heritage (and battlefield) narratives are stories where people talk about themselves and the past. In doing so, they emphasize the positives and sift through problematic ones [39]. Being a conduit between the past and the present, heritage (and battle) sites provide visitors with the materials and settings to combine lived experience with myth in the production of a uniquely personal narrative, which Chronis [30][31] refers to as co-construction. This ability to blend two different stories into a unique third facilitates heritage (and battlefield) tourism. Heritage (and battle) sites as storyscapes require narrative performance through staging, mediators, and somatic experiences. If the story, including the landscape, is not convincing, credible, or authenticated, then acceptance and engagement with the narrative will not begin and, therefore, be contested [30]. However, one way to reduce this likelihood is by emphasizing

their status as hallowed ground; the notion is that the ground where people died is sacred and, therefore, revered, respected, and understood as a place of remembrance [40]. Frew [41] believes those factors that determine the selection of a (historical) event and its remembrance reflect "The scale and uniqueness of the event, the ease of identification of the observer with the event, including its recentness; and its memorableness in terms of recordability, current relevance, and usability."

Moscardo [42] observes that interpretation can sometimes be uninspiring and repetitive, potentially resulting in mindless reactions and subsequently reducing engagement. To avoid such reactions, Tilden [37] believes heritage (and battle) sites "Must [convey] a broad impression of the toil, the sacrifice, the intelligence, and the conflict [which] is part of the national history by provoking the thought – 'under like conditions, what would I have done?'" Visitors sometimes find it difficult to appreciate a site without any explicit information or visual support [43]. Practical interpretation encourages mindful visitors who are "Active, interested, questioning, and capable of reassessing the way they view the world" [42]. Moscardo [42] further adds that interpretation must be:

Multi-sensory... personally relevant, vivid or effectively charged... novel, unexpected and surprising... provide an opportunity for visitor engagement and control... is dynamic... ha[s] structure underlying the organization of the content... use[s] questions to create conflict or ambiguity... [and] present[s] opportunity for visitors to control the information they receive all of which help to promote mindful visitor engagement with the narrative collaboratively.

Archaeology can form an essential part of a heritage (and battle) site's historical visibility and interpretation, with the remnants of fortifications, pits, graves, and ruins helping confirm the place is real. Where there is a lack of any visible evidence, a sense of emptiness can sometimes be problematic. Hence, archaeological finds are essential as they help dramatize the landscape narrative [43]. At Culloden, topographical, geophysical, and metal detector surveys have revealed a rich assemblage of metal objects, including musket balls, cannon shots, mortar shell fragments, pieces broken from muskets, buttons, buckles, a bayonet and personal possessions, including a king's shilling (a shilling formerly given to a recruit when enlisting in the army during the reign of a king), and a pewter cross which may have belonged to either a Jacobite or British soldier. Debris left behind on battlefields is significant evidence, providing a unique insight into the battle. In his study of British battlefields, Miles [32] revealed that visitation to Culloden was necessary because this was where history occurred; one visitor commented that "The field itself, the actual site, is the reason for visiting; trying to imagine what it was like at the time of the battle". Personal items such as buttons and coins bring history to life and, in doing so, make it more accurate; these items help authenticate the site and the experiential outcomes associated with the visit [44].

2.3. Staging the visitor experience - Key design principles

A significant part of satisfying visitors involves creating the right atmosphere (or physical space) to engage with various displays and exhibits [22]. A site's physical space's exterior and interior design fundamentally shape its identity and patronage. Goulding [45] recommends that heritage sites with symbolic meaning must actively engage visitors. Doing so creates visitor understanding and appreciation and establishes distinctiveness, a sense of place, and a sense of place. Hence, (heritage) managers must become "engineers of experience" by providing context. As visitors respond differently to various technologies and media, there is

a greater need to integrate those available interpretative techniques, orchestrate them, and provide opportunities for visitors to select from the mix of media what they find engaging [46][47]. Offering just a standardized product is the antithesis of the mixed approach. Adopting various techniques can generate emotional responses by placing the visitor experience at the center of the interpretative approach [42].

Several academic studies have applied the Experience Economy Model to examine the visitor experience in differing tourism contexts, which have included cruise ships [48], events and heritage tourism [49], bed and breakfast accommodation [50], wine tourism [51], museums [52], and battlefield tourism [53]. Using the Experience Economy Model as its conceptual framework, each study has contributed to the current knowledge regarding the visitor experience and its complexities. In general, this not only guides staging the visitor experience but has also collectively demonstrated the capacity of the Experience Economy Model to be a valid and reliable analytical tool. Tourism studies focusing on zoos [54], heritage trails [55], urban areas [56][57], destination management [11], wine tourism [58], special events [59], and innovation and strategy [60] have also discussed the influence and impact of the Experience Economy in its various contexts. Anecdotal support for the Experience Economy has also featured in discussions related to business success and tourism venues.

In the context of the Experience Economy, Pine and Gilmore [9] believe the visitor experience can be characterized along a horizontal and vertical axis. In Figure 1, each axis creates four (4) individual realms: entertainment, educational, aesthetic, and escapist. Along the horizontal (passive–active) axis, people are passive in entertaining and aesthetic settings whilst active in educational and escapist ones. Along the length of the vertical (absorption – immersion) axis, people typically absorb entertaining and academic offerings whilst immersed in aesthetic and escapist settings ([9][10][53]). Pine and Gilmore [9] believe the most compelling experience is that which meets in the center, with each experiential realm helping form a "sweet spot." Only then should a product and/or service offering be customized to accommodate diverse needs, expectations, and personal tastes. Stamboulis and Skayannis [60] emphasize the importance of tourism offerings, delivering experiences that encompass all four (4) realms despite differing points of emphasis. Pine and Gilmore [10] argue that staging visitor experiences should be as much a part of doing business as product and process design.

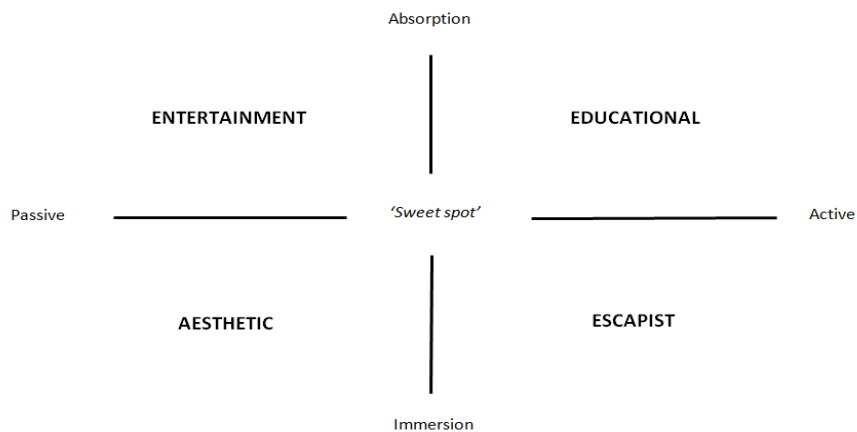


Figure 1. The experience economy (Source: [9][10])

Based on pioneering enterprises, including popular tourist destinations such as Disney World and Hard Rock Café, Pine and Gilmore [9][10] observe that business operators who wish to stage visitor experiences need to adhere to key design principles, namely,

- Providing a compelling and memorable theme to assist customers in organizing their impressions.
- Using positive cues that affirm the nature of the experience for the customer.
- Eliminating negative cues.
- Providing memorabilia as a physical reminder of the experience; and,
- Engaging all five (5) senses to stimulate participants and enhance the chosen theme.

Pine and Gilmore [10] believe that staging unified experiences involves all elements focusing on a well-defined theme with memorabilia adding to the mix of impressions and cues to engage visitors' senses better. Hayes and Macleod [55] suggest these principles are relevant to heritage, military, and historical sites. Visitors do not simply recall viewing buildings and the interpretative media and technology used to present those settings. Still, more importantly, they remember the experiences, judgments, emotions, and interests associated with the visit [61]. Staging the visitor experience involves considering visitors' mindful state since this is a key factor influencing the perceived value of any experiential outcome [62]. Leighton [63] describes the twenty-first-century consumer as demanding "A value-for-money and worthwhile experience, but expects at the same time to be entertained, stimulated emotionally, and creatively challenged." The key design principles advocated by Pine and Gilmore [10] can promote visitor engagement and optimize experiential outcomes, leading to continued viability, competitive advantage, and profitability.

3. Methodology

By adopting an interpretive (or constructionist) perspective, the fieldwork conducted at Culloden Battlefield took place over a week during the Scottish high season of July to August, when tourist numbers peaked. A descriptive case study approach was used whereby the study developed a descriptive narrative regarding experiential outcomes at Culloden. The documentary method was also used to gather applicable data from publicly available websites. The case study approach proposes a picture whilst providing various analytical insights. The 'analytical' component is essential as each study has a subject of interest (e.g., a person, place, event, or phenomenon) and an analytical (or conceptual) framework within which the phenomenon is studied. The case study approach offers a framework that gives a boundary to the research, thus providing a specific focus on a single entity [64]. In this context, Culloden is defined as the 'place,' with the Experience Economy Model devised by Pine and Gilmore [9][10] being the conceptual framework within which the experiential phenomenon is studied.

In a tourism context, Jennings [65] explains that a case study can focus holistically on just one tourism organization, tour operator, tourism event, or tourism site or attraction. In the case of battlefield tourism, there have been several individual studies focusing on well-known battle sites including Chronis [30][31] and Chronis and Hampton [66], each of which have discussed the visitor experience at Gettysburg (USA), as well as Dunkley et al. [67], Iles [38][40][68] and Seaton [69], all of whom have focused on various sites along the (former) Western Front from the First World War. Moreover, Seaton [70] also discussed visitation to the battlefield at Waterloo in Belgium in the context of thanatourism. A case study that meets

all the conditions for conceptual theory evaluation can confirm, challenge, or extend the known literature. Doing so can determine whether a theory's propositions are correct or whether some alternative explanations appear more relevant [71]. A case study can contribute significantly to knowledge and theory building, which can help refocus future investigations in an entire field.

In this study, participant observation was the primary data collection method, with the researcher taking numerous photographs (see Figure 2) and making extensive field notes. Secondary data was also collected via publicly available websites. Because of the nature of the fieldwork, this study did not require the selection of respondents, as the researcher intentionally did not directly engage with visitors at Culloden on those days that the researcher was onsite. Subsequently, there was no need to test the adequacy of the sample size nor detail the means regarding the collection of the sample. Jennings [65] defines participant observation as "Involves 'intensive fieldwork' in which the investigator is immersed in the culture under study." Marshall and Rossman [72] add that participant observation gives the researcher a deeper understanding of the phenomena, which can only occur through observations in the natural setting/s. One of the advantages of undertaking participant observation, as opposed to other data collection methods involving the use of sampling, is that it provides an opportunity to observe interactions and behaviors in a real-world setting. Furthermore, it enables the researcher to become aware of how participants engage and construct their tourist experiences and provide firsthand information that proved invaluable to the research findings [65].

4. Results and discussion: Key Design principles and Culloden battlefield

Pine and Gilmore [10] believe the most compelling experiences meet at the center of the Experience Economy Model. Heritage (and battle) sites promote diverse cultural products packaged as visitor experiences. Hayes and MacLeod [55] acknowledge that people are increasingly turning to heritage tourism to seek self-realization through engagement with authentic, emotional, and firsthand experiences. Experiential outcomes at Culloden Battlefield involve a process of dynamic co-construction and technology shared between managers who define the site offerings via the narrative and visitors who use their cultural background and firsthand experiences to mediate their imaginings and recollections, forming a collaborative approach. The following discusses each of the key design principles advocated by Pine and Gilmore [9][10] in the context of Culloden Battlefield and what management has done to optimize the visitor experience:

4.1. Providing a compelling and memorable theme to assist visitors in organizing their impressions

Pine and Gilmore [10] believe a compelling theme is stimulating but concise, with too much detail cluttering the effectiveness of the interpretation. At Culloden, the theme drives all the design elements towards a unified narrative that draws visitors' focus and attention. Capturing their attention with a clear and coherent theme enhances their understanding and satisfaction. At Culloden, the theme plays a vital role in the visitor experience by balancing those active technological elements and the more contemplative opportunities. Visitors need control over their experience via opportunities to interact with (or participate) in the various offerings [42]. In supporting the theme, multimedia at Culloden enhances people's engagement, whilst live performances add another dimension. Since the fixed exhibits are not

easily changeable, role-playing performers help expand the narrative whilst archaeology underpins the interpretation by ensuring accuracy and reinforcing a sense of place.

4.2. Using positive cues that affirm the nature of the experience for the visitor

Pine and Gilmore [10] argue that whilst the theme forms the foundation of an experience, the experiential outcomes need rendering with indelible impressions that people take away from their visit. The consistent integration of positive cues creates a favorable impression and reinforces the overriding theme. In the context of Culloden Battlefield, visual cues reaffirm the visitor experience via:

1. **Signage:** that provides visitors with clear directives in areas of public space such as entry and exit points and informational signage throughout the exhibit space, including free-standing signs detailing the relevant (sub-) theme/s for each stage of the narrative. Goulding [73] observes that clear signage, irrespective of its use, is "A form of spatial control providing a directed route which minimizes congestion at interpretative displays." Having directional and informational signage also helps improve visitor flow and reduces overcrowding.
2. **Lighting:** This creates the right ambiance with downlights in the visitor center, helping focus visitor attention on texts, images, and/or artifacts found within the exhibit space. The main room lighting is "mood-lit" to create something of a somber mood, in sympathy with the narrative, but also provides enough illumination to allow visitors to make their way safely through the exhibition halls and,
3. **Multimedia:** that facilitates visitor engagement with each of the exhibits, inclusive of various texts, images, and artifacts. The Culloden site's combination of GPS technology and portable audio-visual (PAV) guides provides opportunities for visitors to explore the battlefield at their own pace with options to access more information to satisfy their curiosity. In doing so, visitors can listen to voice recordings by trained actors. This enhances the narrative via eye-witness accounts and, more importantly, can engage people's imagination.

These positive cues help trigger impressions that consistently reinforce the theme in the visitor's mind. Just as positive indications help influence visitor impressions, so can negative ones undermine those same impressions. The disruption of an experience occurs from overlooking an architectural feature, a multimedia exhibit failing to deliver, or there is an incidence of poor customer service [74]. Any unplanned moments inconsistent with the theme can leave visitors dissatisfied and disappointed with their visitation.

4.3. Eliminating negative cues

Pine and Gilmore [10] believe that ensuring the integrity of the visitor experience can require more than just layering positive cues. (Heritage) managers need to consider the propensity for a mismatch between expectations and the reality of the experience. Today's visitors expect that they will have an engaging experience rather than a passive one. At Culloden Battlefield, the availability of multimedia provides opportunities to engage visitors via various exhibits as well as live performances involving period-costumed tour guides dressed as either a Jacobite, British soldier, or civilian. Whilst not as strict in comparison to Disney theme parks, where cast members must be in character whilst "on stage" [75], tour guides at Culloden Battlefield can "talk the talk" with visitors. Rather than undermine the

integrity of the visitor experience, the one-on-one interaction enhances it with the level of access, providing opportunities for visitors to ask questions or engage as part of a lecture or presentation. Modern technology helps eliminate negative cues by streamlining people's access to information, thereby preventing visitor frustration and potential negative feedback. Diggins [76] notes that the capacity of fixed touchscreens can give visitors ready access to exhibits. Additionally, fixed touchscreens allow visitors to enlarge text-based content for easier reading, whilst non-English speaking visitors can translate captions into their language, with such options helping to facilitate positive visitor experiences.

4.4. Providing memorabilia as a physical reminder of the experience

Pine and Gilmore [10] observe that people purchase memorabilia as tangible mementos of experiences they wish to remember. Such memorabilia can often be among an individual's most cherished possessions, its value being worth more than its monetary cost. Timothy (2011) observes that all heritage sites have something resembling a retail outlet, ranging from a desk selling postcards to expansive retail environments where visitors can purchase everything from replicas to food items. At Culloden, a retail shop is situated next to the main entrance to the visitor center. Visitors can buy merchandise ranging from postcards, pens, and key rings to books, soft toys, and framed pictures at various prices. Kent (2010) observes that brand management and the design of profitable retail operations are now an everyday function of heritage management. At Culloden, the retail outlet offers a range of branded products not only related to the battlefield itself but also brands that promote the Highlands (i.e., coat of arms of Scottish clans) and Scotland more generally (i.e., traditional Scottish "garb" and replica bagpipes.)

4.5. Engaging all five (5) senses to stimulate visitors and enhance the chosen theme

According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), the sensory stimulants accompanying an experience should support and enhance the theme. The more effectively an experience engages the senses, the more memorable it is. The visitor experience at Culloden Battlefield is multidimensional, incorporating entertaining, educational, aesthetic, and escapist elements from which visitors create meaning. Kent (2010, p. 68) observes that the heritage environment is one where the visitor can be part of "A seamless array of mutually reinforcing contexts in which free-choice learning is nonlinear and personally motivated, and which involves considerable choice on the visitor's part." The multimedia at Culloden Battlefield supports the narrative, encouraging visitors to engage with (or in) the heritage offering actively. During the visit, people can view an image, hear a story, and/or touch and feel an artifact. Moscardo (1996a) observes that, on occasion, a visit may reinforce and strengthen a person's current knowledge regarding a site's history. Intrinsically rewarding interactions with the narrative can result in positive intellectual and emotional changes. Moscardo and Ballantyne (2008) observe that interpretation that includes an affective component can prompt a range of emotional responses. Such interpretative experiences are common nowadays, particularly for "touristic" purposes where engaging visitors emotionally conveys the meaning and significance of heritage in terms of its people, places, events, and artifacts. The interpretative approach at Culloden confronts the violence of war but also draws the visitor's attention to those who lost their lives, of whom were ordinary people, each with a home, a family, as well as hopes and dreams.

Visitor engagement has a clear function that rewards people with opportunities to create personal meaning and develop mindfulness (Moscardo, 1999). Kent (2010) observes that

internal setting elements such as space, shape, colors, and textures can influence visitor exploration and curiosity and evoke memories. The visitor experience at Culloden is in part determined by its social and historical context as well as the interior design of the visitor center. By providing a supportive environment, visitors can make sense of the interior and exterior space of the site as well as the greater external environment surrounding the battlefield. Heritage (and battle) sites have allocated significant resources to developing spaces that create a multi-purpose interior with an impressive exterior that encompasses a diverse mix of past legacies and future potential [22]. While visitors learn about historical events by engaging the narrative, they also ask questions related not only to the battle itself but also those related to the broader conflict, its aftermath, legacy, and lasting impact on the Scottish Diaspora. Timothy [19] states that achieving educational aims requires direct internal and external environmental stimuli management.

Moreover, given Culloden's memorial status and sensitivity, it also seems appropriate to question the ethics of staging heritage (and battle) sites for either commercial (or non-commercial) purposes. It can be a fine line regarding the level of commercialization deemed suitable, especially when a site is a place of remembrance. If heritage (and battle) sites are to remain effective in optimizing the visitor experience, it is important that the tourism industry:

- Understands how visitors to battlefields perceive their visit holistically from start to finish and how managers use this feedback to implement or tailor existing strategies.
- Assists managers and staff in terms of their service delivery, educative action, accessibility, and communication to meet visitor expectations.
- Facilitates and supports staff training and development and
- Recognizes that optimizing experiential outcomes provides a competitive advantage, profitability, and visitor appeal in an increasingly diverse market.

In optimizing the visitor experience, managers and staff at heritage (battlefield sites) can work collaboratively by:

- Having the necessary (site) knowledge.
- Understanding the educational value of the exhibitions.
- Interacting with visitors.
- Encouraging participation; and,
- Providing the guidance needed to contribute to all aspects of the visitor experience.

The original model lacks the aspect of post-visitation experience at the heritage site. Pine and Gilmore [10] discuss memorabilia but fail to detail how this translates to story-telling and memory recall. Therefore, Figure 3 depicts a model that encapsulates the Experience Economy but adds another dimension of story-telling through technology that links with memorabilia as guests, friends, and family will inevitably ask about the background of such merchandise.

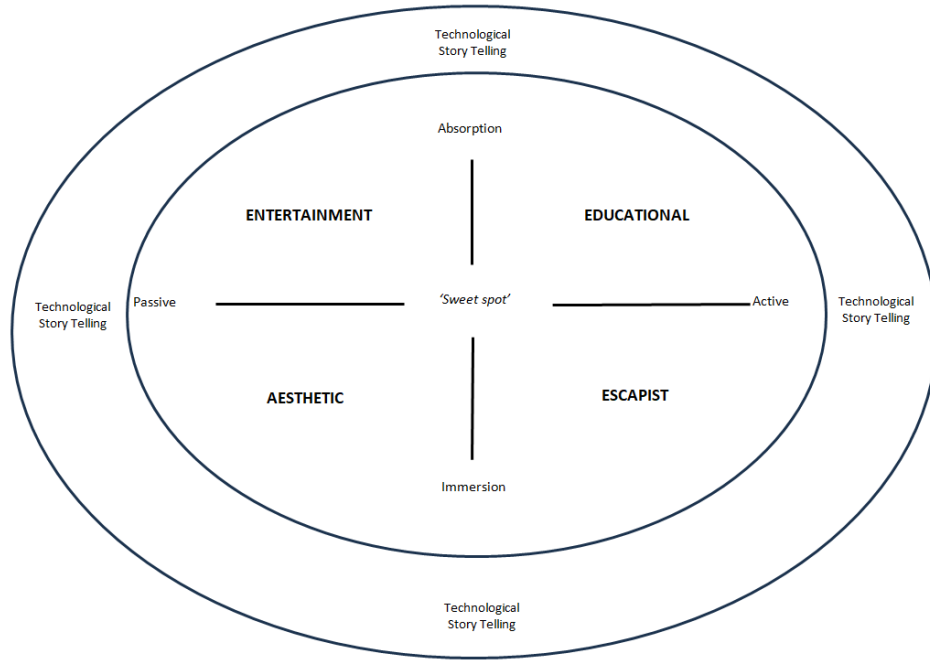


Figure 2. Source: Paul Willard, 2024, adapted from Pine and Gilmore [9][10]

This is important for potential future visitation and a visitor's hedonic experiences, as technological storytelling is an important component of a visitor's experience. It also preserves the memory of the experience as it is re-told many times. By adopting these approaches, managers remain observant of the sacredness of the heritage (and battlefield) sites while facilitating an effective learning environment that develops and sustains visitor engagement with the narrative.

5. Conclusion

Pine and Gilmore [10] emphasize the opportunity for staging memorable visitor experiences rests with the commitment of managers to facilitate and support experiential outcomes. In supporting the narrative, Culloden Battlefield implements the key design principles advocated by Pine and Gilmore [9][10]. The main (sub-) theme/s drives the remaining principles towards a unified approach, facilitating visitor focus and attention, thereby "setting the scene." The reinforcement of positive cues includes signage, lighting, and the use of technology and multimedia, each of which reaffirms the heritage offering and eliminates negative cues that can diminish, contradict, or distract visitor attention. The onsite retail outlet extends the visitor experience by allowing people to purchase mementos of their visit. The retail outlet provides a revenue stream whilst also serving as a specific learning function via informal opportunities for visitors to learn more about the battle and exhibits. Each of the sensory stimulants that accompany the experience promotes visitor engagement whilst also enhancing the theme. Although those who fought the Battle of Culloden are long gone, visitors continue to travel to the battlefield to discover an empathetic and intimate awareness of a landscape that today provides only a hint of the horror and turmoil that unfolded on the Highland moor that fateful morning in April 1746. Focusing on the key design principles associated with staging the visitor experience provides opportunities for

visitors to engage the narrative and immerse themselves in the (tourism) offering. Failing to acknowledge the importance of key design principles in optimizing experiential outcomes could impact the ability of heritage (and battlefield) sites to be both competitive and profitable. Adding the storytelling component allows the Experience Economy to continue the tales and keep them alive despite their dark history. It may also encourage repeat or future visitation by others who have not previously been to Culloden Battlefield.

5.1. Practical implications, limitations, and future research

This research adds to the growing knowledge of heritage, dark, and thanatourism. It highlights the positive aspects of a tourism experience and how seminal work from the 1990s still applies today. Heritage sites can use this knowledge to create hedonic experiences whilst communicating the original purpose, even with a darker past. Adding the component of technological storytelling ads to the overall experience is a vital factor in a visitor's experience. This addition enhances Pine and Gilmore's [10] research and allows for future growth of repeat visitation and encouraging new visitors. However, this study does have limitations. Observational research is individual and from a sole perspective. The data was collected quickly, and no visitors were interviewed. This was purposely done but does not get a broader visitor perspective. Future research should consider visitor interviews, exploring other battlefields of a similar history, and reviewing how technological storytelling plays a role in recalling the visitor experience, encouraging future visitation, and embracing changing technologies.

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