The roles of subjective vitality, involvement, experience quality, and satisfaction in tourists' behavioral intentions

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Abstract

This study provides and tests a model that examines the relationship between behavioral intentions and involvement, experience quality, satisfaction, and, as a personal resource, subjective vitality. Specifically, the study focuses on subjective vitality. Analyzing surveyed data from 408 cultural tourists, the results indicate that subjective vitality and involvement are the antecedents of experience quality. Given the results, theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

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Introduction

Tourism organizations and destination authorities emphasize the quality of tourism experiences and tourism satisfaction to foster positive behavioral tourist intentions (Yuksel, 2000). Tourism satisfaction has received attention from tourism scholars and multiple studies that have demonstrated this concept as an antecedent of behavior intention (Chen, Huang, & Petrick, 2016). For example, satisfied tourists are more likely to repurchase the product or recommend it to others (Chi & Qu, 2008; Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Petrick, 2004).

Other studies assert that tourism satisfaction makes a significant contribution to overall life satisfaction (Chen, Huang, & Petrick, 2016; Kim, Woo, & Uysal, 2015) and subjective well-being (Chen, Lehto, & Cai, 2013; McCabe & Johnson, 2013; Sirgy, Kruger, Lee, & Grace, 2011; Su, Swanson & Chen, 2016). On the other hand, other studies concentrate on antecedents of satisfaction such as perceived value, perceived service quality, motivation, and destination image in order to determine how tourist satisfaction is achieved (Chi & Qu, 2008; Devesa, Laguna, & Palacios, 2010;

Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Petrick & Backman, 2002; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Furthermore, recent studies have come up with a new concept, namely experience quality, which is now seen as more comprehensive than service quality (Altunel & Erkut, 2015; Chen & Chen, 2010).

In the tourism literature, when examining experience and/or service quality, and satisfaction, researchers are interested in the features of tourism (destinations, accommodations, transportation, etc.) rather than emphasizing personal resources. Therefore, in building experience quality and satisfaction, some personal resources (energy, attention, enthusiasm etc.) have been overlooked as antecedents. Other studies have investigated involvement (Goldsmith & Emmert, 1991; Zaichkowsky, 1985) as it may be considered a personal resource and include personal interest and importance as a tourism subject. Meanwhile, other personal resources can be used to predict behavior. Personal resources are characteristics that are associated with an individual's ability to impact his/her environment successfully and those personal resources may effect individual motivations (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis & Jackson, 2003). As a personal resource, energy has been operationalized in different ways. From Freud's concept of ego depletion to the idea of vitality, some concepts have been examined to clarify the availability of human energy. Among the concepts of personal energy (McNair, Lorr, & Droppleman, 1971; Thayer, 1987, 1996; Watson & Tellegen, 1985), vitality has been identified as a personal resource characterized by Ryan and Frederick as the energy available to one's self (1997), as in feelings of being alive, alert, and energized.

Accordingly, tourist vitality may be considered a determinant of cultural tourism, as such activities are generally believed to require energy (Martín-Ruiz, Castellanos-Verdugo, & Oviedo-García, 2010). In tourist activities, such as visiting old towns, museums, and interacting with local people, the quality of the experience and its satisfaction may be influenced by a tourist's energy level. Tourists who feel vital are expected to have positive feelings and greater quality experiences, resulting in positive word-

of-mouth in both the real and virtual world. If this is true, tourism organizations should pay special attention to the tourists' vitality at the time of the tourism and in the promotion of tourism products. This offers insights into why tourism firms should focus on customers with higher levels of vitality, thereby improving their efforts in achieving tourist satisfaction. Drawing on the broaden-and-build theory, a person's positive emotions may enhance his/her cognition and actions (Fredrickson, 2003). Thus, vitality may affect experience quality because it may increase an individual's feelings of learning and fun (Quinn, 2007).

In addition, vitality is seen as an indicator of well-being and life satisfaction (Ryan & Frederick, 1997), referring to optimal psychological experience and functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2001). In tourism, several studies exist that investigate the relationship between tourism satisfaction and life satisfaction. Most of these studies indicate that tourism activities affect a tourist's overall life satisfaction as well as the well-being of residents (Uysal, Sirgy, Woo, & Kim, 2015). However, there is no empirical evidence that separately examines the impact of life satisfaction on tourism satisfaction and experience quality. Taking vitality into account as an indicator of well-being and life satisfaction, this relationship should be researched because well-being (having feelings of vitality) may affect experience quality. Therefore, it should be clarified whether or not positive and negative effects of vitality influence experience quality.

Therefore, the purposes of this research are to understand the effect of subjective vitality on experience quality and investigate the interrelationship between five major constructs: subjective vitality, involvement, experience quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. The results provide theoretical and practical information concerning the relationships between the variables.

Conceptual background and hypotheses

Subjective Vitality

For decades, the energy concept has been a perplexity within psychology. Freud's "economic model" emphasized energy as

defense or resistance that can be depleted. Later, psychodynamic theorists agreed that energy could be lost or gained (Jung, 1960; Lifton, 1976; Perls, 1973). Generally, there is agreement that energy is depleted when there is psychological conflict and tension.

Energy is operationalized in different forms in psychology literature, although they all have somewhat similar meanings. However, in this study the concept of vitality is used (Ryan & Frederick, 1997) rather than other concepts of subjective energy (Nix, Ryan, Manly & Deci, 1999) such as vigor (Ryan & Bernstein, 2010; Shirom, 2003), feeling alive (Christianson, Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, & Grant, 2005), and zest (Miller & Stiver, 1997).

Vitality comes from the Latin word *vita* (life), implying that one who is vital feels alive, full of energy, inspired, and enthusiastic. It is conceptualized as “a dynamic phenomenon, pertinent to both mental and physical aspects of functioning and thus refers to a person who is energetic, feeling alive, and fully functioning” (Ryan & Bernstein, 2004, p. 274). It is an aspect of both eudaimonic and physical well-being (Salama-Younes, 2011). In short, vitality refers to feeling capable, energetic, and healthy. Psychologically and physically, vitality refers to the feeling of aliveness (Akin, 2012; Uysal, Satici & Akin, 2013). This state of “aliveness” psychologically provides meaning and purpose to an individual's actions (Ryan & Bernstein, 2004). It has also been described as creating an affective experience (Ryan & Frederick, 1997) and positive energetic arousal (Thayer, 1989). It involves living with excitement, energy, enthusiasm, vigor, and not acting inconsistently.

Vitality has been referred to with different names in different cultures but with similar definitions. While ancient Japanese and Taoist cultures are known to have *Ki* and *Chi*, and *Jing* concepts, respectively, they almost mean the same thing: being full of internal energy that can engender mental and physical health (Ryan & Frederick, 1997).

Although, vitality is characterized as positive energy available to an individual (Nix *et al.*, 1999), someone who is jittery, tense, or angry may be energized but not necessarily vital.

Ryan and Frederick (1997) found that negative affectivity with high arousal and subjective vitality are negatively associated. Negative energy, due to over-arousal, tenseness, or stimulants like caffeine, has been distinguished from vitality (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Thayer, 1996). Indeed, it has a more discrete affect than happiness and pleasure (Nix *et al.*, 1999). According to the Circumplex Model of Affect by Russell (1980), vitality is a positive affecting emotion, characterized by a high level of arousal, and is distinct from other positive affecting emotions with lower arousal levels (relaxed, pleased, at ease, and satisfied).

Due to the subjective vitality concept reflecting organismic well-being, it should be changed by both psychological and physiological factors that affect energy including somatic factors like physical symptoms and perceived body functioning, diet, exercise, sleep patterns, and smoking (Rozanski *et al.*, 2005). People, who have disabling chronic pain, demonstrate lower vitality. Personality traits and affective dispositions have also been found to be related (Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Stewart, Hays, & Ware, 1992). Physiologically, vitality is facilitated by health. Additionally, health-related stressors, especially those that represent potential threats to one's autonomy or control, are expected to negatively affect subjective vitality. Individuals vary in their experience of vitality as a function not only from physical influences (e.g., illness or fatigue), but also psychological factors (e.g., being in love, having a mission, being effective) (Ryan & Frederick, 1997).

People usually enhance or repeat situations that increase their vitality, and try to avoid situations they perceive as decreasing their vitality (Collins, 1993). Vitality also encourages people to interpret events positively and expect positive events to reoccur (Arkes, Herren, & Isen, 1988). Additionally, vitality affects the effort that people invest in activities, and reflects a person's well-being as well as how positive their experience is (Ryan & Frederick, 1997).

Vital people may become more active, invest more physical resources, be more productive, cope better with stress and challenges, report greater mental health (Penninx *et al.*, 2000),

desire to feel excitement, and focus their attention (Ryan & Frederick, 1997). Therefore, vitality is expected to foster experience quality because people who are vital are also expected to have more fun than others. Moreover, vitality is seen as a positive emotion. Examining the build-and-broaden theory of Frederickson (2000), vitality is a positive emotion enhancing people's ability to use cognitive skills such as learning. Because vital and cheerful people are more likely to be alert and fresh (Finì, Kavousian, Beigy, & Emami, 2010), vital people may learn more compared to others. Vitality could be one determinant that influences experience quality via increased learning. It is known that these positive affects are contagious to others (Barsade, 2002; Bartel & Saavedra, 2000; Totterdell, 2000), thus causing an increase in learning and fun at a group-level due to interactions between vital tourists and others in the group. Finally, according to Brown and Ryan (2004) and Ortner, Kilner, and Zelazo (2007) vitality influences mindfulness. This relationship has given us a clue which means vitality creates an active-living of the present situation and place. Therefore, by increasing a sense of presence, vitality may contribute to feeling of escape from daily routines, providing a powerful psychological detachment. It is believed that this mindfulness provides more presence in the moment and place for an individual who therefore is not thinking about other life issues.

Last but not least, it is thought to be a crucial experience quality factor for Istanbul's cultural tourism, as most of cultural places are located in old city in which cars and other vehicles are not reasonable to use. Thus, tourist generally go from one to other on foot within historical peninsula which is about 15km². Another issue is that Istanbul's crowdedness and number of cultural attractors may impede tourist's aliveness within visit days, tourist try to keep their attention and aliveness in order to maintain a high experience quality. Therefore, vitality concept, implying energy and aliveness, can help individuals to exert required effort and stay alert. Hence, it is proposed that:

H1. Subjective vitality positively influences experience quality of cultural tourists.

Involvement

Involvement is defined as the degree of importance that a person gives to a phenomenon. Involvement is also a variable that is frequently used in consumer behavior studies since involvement affects attitudes toward an activity and decision-making (Josiam, Smeaton, & Clements, 1999). Although there is no precise definition of involvement, from a marketing perspective, researchers define it as "a person's perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values and interests" (Zaichkowsky, 1985). Involvement represents an individual's interest level, an object's degree of importance to the individual, and an individual's orientation to an object (Zaichkowsky, 1994). Customer involvement also refers to the process where the agent is the customer who acts with zest, enthusiasm, and interest (Goldsmith & Emmert, 1991).

The introduction of the involvement concept in the leisure field occurred in the 1990s (Havitz & Dimanche, 1999) and identified tourism involvement as a factor that may influence tourists' decision-making process (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003; Hochgraeffe, Faulk, & Vieregge, 2012). Tourism researchers define involvement as a degree of interest in an activity and the affective response associated with that interest (Manfredo, 1989). Involvement is also defined as "the state of identification existing between an individual and a recreational activity, at one point in time, characterized by some level of enjoyment and self-expression being achieved through the activity" in a recreational context (Selin & Howard, 1988, p. 237). In this study, the visitor's involvement is conceptualized as per Goldsmith and Emmert (1991). Therefore, involvement is seen as a remarkable variable in leisure behavior as involved individuals planning leisure travel will pay more attention to relevant travel information (Reid & Crompton, 1993).

Many scales have been developed to operationalize the involvement construct (Havitz & Dimanche, 1999; Rothschild, 1984), but only two have attracted attention and have been tested by other researchers. These are Zaichkowsky's (1985) "personal involvement inventory (PII)" and Laurent and Kapferer's (1985) "customer involvement profile (CIP)."

While the CIP involves five constructs (importance, pleasure, sign, risk probability, and risk consequence), IIP is a bipolar adjective scale.

Several studies have been conducted that include a causal relationship between involvement, experience quality, and satisfaction. In particular, contradictory study results have drawn attention to the relationship between involvement and satisfaction. While some researchers suggest a positive and significant influence (Kim, Woo, & Uysal, 2015; Lu, Chi, & Liu, 2015), others reject the relationship (Chiu, Lee, & Chen, 2014). This conflict arises from the context used in the research. On the other hand, the relationship between involvement and experience quality is seldom considered. However, in a recent study, Altunel and Erkut (2015) found involvement to have a significant and positive influence on experience quality. Hence, it is proposed that:

H2. Involvement positively influences experience quality of cultural tourists.

H3. Involvement positively influences satisfaction of cultural tourists.

Experience quality

In much of the marketing literature, service-dominant logic has replaced the goods-centered view (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) and scholars are currently focusing on how the customer experience may stretch beyond the service itself (Klaus & Maklan, 2012). It is expostulated that the overall quality of a service experience cannot be determined solely by the results of SERVQUAL, the scale of service-dominant logic (Fick & Ritchie, 1991). Furthermore, experience quality is different from service quality in some aspects. For example, measuring experience quality is idiosyncratic; the evaluation appears to be holistic/gestalt; the scope more general; the structure of its benefit experiential/hedonic/symbolic; and the psychological result emotional (Otto & Ritchie, 1996).

From the tourism perspective, service quality connects with the excellence of the service under the control of the supplier; experience quality on the other hand refers to a more general concept because of the personal interpretation of the visitor. This term also

covers the attributes provided by the supplier and is analyzed as “tourists’ affective responses to their desired social-psychological benefit” (Chen & Chen, 2010).

Although the emotional nature of experience quality is emphasized, the evaluation of the experience does not only focus on emotions (Chang & Horng, 2010). In another study, “the customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction. This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer’s involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial, physical, and spiritual)” (Gentile, Spiller, & Noci, 2007, p. 397).

Looking at it from the tourism point of view, the tourist experience is said to be “a consistent flow of thoughts and feelings during moments of consciousness which occur through highly complex psychological, sociological, and cognitive interaction processes” (Kang & Gratzel, 2012, p. 442). Therefore, cognition is also a part of experience quality. In this study, experience quality concerning tourism is conceptualized as a “constant flow of thoughts and feelings during moments of consciousness that occur through highly complex psychological, sociological, and cognitive interaction processes as tourists participate in consumption activities and interact with the service surroundings, service providers, other customers, customers’ companions, and other elements in the destination” (Altunel & Erkut, 2015).

Otto and Ritchie’s (1996) experience quality scale consists of four dimensions: hedonics, peace of mind, involvement, and recognition. Kao, Huang, and Wu (2008) also examined it in four dimensions (immersion, surprise, participation, and fun). Chang and Horng (2010) stated that quality of experience is made up of five dimensions: physical surroundings, service providers, other customers, customer’s companions, and the customers themselves. Kang and Gretzel (2012) and Altunel and Erkut (2015) analyzed tourist experiences in three dimensions: learning, enjoyment, and escape. The effect of service quality on satisfaction and behavioral intentions are well studied in

literature (Hui, Wan, & Cheng, 2010; Lee & Beeler, 2006; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Malhotra, 2005). Service quality studies still dominate the marketing and tourism literature, however, in recent years, the number of researchers examining the experience side is increasing (Altunel & Erkut, 2015; Chen & Chen, 2010; Cole & Scott, 2004; Kang & Gretzel, 2012; Kao, Huang, & Wu 2008; Zins, 2002). The positive effect of experience quality on satisfaction and behavioral intentions seems justified by the results of past studies. Hence, it is proposed that:

H4. Experience quality positively influences the satisfaction of cultural tourists.

H5. Experience quality positively influences behavioral intentions of cultural tourists.

Satisfaction

A vital issue for any firm's marketing activities is the concept of satisfaction (Machleit & Mantel, 2001). High levels of customer satisfaction are thought to engender customer loyalty, reduce price elasticity, lower future transaction costs, attract new customers, and minimize competition risk (Anderson, Fornell, & Lehmann, 1994). In service industries, such as tourism, managing customer satisfaction becomes critical for survival, development, and success (Sirakaya, Petrick, & Choi, 2004). It is said that satisfied tourists will revisit the areas or advise others to; dissatisfied ones may share undesired comments externally. Negative comments are detrimental to both business success and a destination's market reputation (Chen & Chen, 2010; Reisinger & Turner, 2003).

Satisfaction is defined as "the consumer's fulfillment response" and "a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment" (Oliver, 1997, p. 13). Additionally, there may be a gap between pre-consumption expectation and perceived post-consumption performance. From the tourism point of view, when a tourist's level of fulfillment and enjoyment is above prior expectations, satisfaction occurs. Dissatisfaction is when the opposite occurs (Chen & Chen, 2010).

The operationalization of customer satisfaction has been done in different ways, as there is a considerable amount of debate around the meaning and application of the term (Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremler, 2013). At least, two approaches to satisfaction exist (Ekinci, Dawes, & Massey, 2008; Nam, Ekinci, & Whyatt, 2011): transient (transaction-specific) and overall satisfaction. Transient satisfaction stems from activity and behavior evaluations, which occur while interacting with the service (Oliver, 1997). Accordingly, transient satisfaction should be captured right after the customer interaction with the service (e.g., satisfaction with a food) (Nam *et al.*, 2011).

On the other hand, overall satisfaction is based on all of the interactions with the service provider (Ekinci *et al.*, 2008; Nam *et al.*, 2011). While transient satisfaction may vary from experience to experience, overall satisfaction is generally, relatively stable and reflects overall purchasing attitude towards a brand (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). According to Anderson and Fornell (1994), most satisfaction research uses overall satisfaction for predicting a customer's behavioral intentions and a firm's past, present, and future performances due to its underlying structure and usefulness.

Because satisfaction relates to positive post-purchase behaviors and the overall success of a destination, tourist satisfaction has become an interesting topic in literature (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). In particular, satisfaction has been previously identified as a predictive factor of destination and event loyalty (Akhoondnejad, 2016; Chi & Qu, 2008; McDowall, 2010; Sun, Chi, & Xu, 2013), revisit or repurchase intention (Alegre & Garau, 2010; Prayag, 2009; Rittichainuwat, Qu, & Mongknonvanit, 2002), and positive word-of-mouth (Prebensen, Skallerud, & Chen, 2010; Wang & Hsu, 2010; Williams & Soutar, 2009). Thus, it is proposed that:

H6. Satisfaction positively influences behavioral intentions of cultural tourists.

Behavioral intentions

For marketing strategists, achieving satisfaction was a bigger goal in the 1970s and 1980s. Today, there is some belief that performance can be better predicted by behavioral intentions

(Chi & Qu, 2008) associated with a service provider's ability to get customers to: (1) make positive comments (2) recommend services to others, (3) remain loyal, (4) spend more with the firm, and (5) pay price premiums (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996).

Loyalty is described by Oliver (1999) as a strong commitment to repurchase or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, hence causing repetitive same-brand purchasing, regardless of situational factors and marketing efforts by other product/services. Another study also crystalized loyalty as the relationship strength between relative attitude and the repeated patronage of individuals (Dick & Basu, 1994).

A unique definition of the customer loyalty concept does not yet exist. In literature, it is conceptualized in three ways (Uncles, Dowling, & Hammond, 2003): (1) attitudinal loyalty to the brand, (2) behavioral loyalty, and (3) co-determinants of brand purchases. From a behavioral perspective, observing purchasing behavior can provide a measurement of loyalty. From an attitudinal perspective, loyalty is indirectly measured via the attitude or intention to repeat the purchase (Hernandez-Lobato *et al.*, 2006). Likewise, from a cognitive perspective (i.e., when the consumer receives information), an affective phase (i.e., an attitude of liking the brand), conative stage (i.e., behavioral intention), and action control of loyalty (i.e., behavioral consistency of repurchase) are argued (Lee, Graefe, & Burns

2007). In this manner, indirectly measured loyalty in the conative stage may refer to behavioral intention. Loyalty in tourism literature demonstrates a tourist's willingness to recommend the destination to others and intention to revisit (Opperman, 2000). Figure 1 shows this proposed conceptual model.

Method

A self-administered questionnaire survey was conducted to collect data from cultural tourists visiting Sultanahmet district in Istanbul. The questionnaire included sections about demographic information, involvement, vitality, experience quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. Demographic questions are located in section 1. In section 2, involvement is measured with eight items derived from a previous study (Wirtz, 2003). In section 3, vitality is measured with six items derived from a previous study (Ryan & Frederick, 2007). In section 4, experience quality is measured with nine items derived from a previous study (Kang & Gratzel, 2012). In section 5, satisfaction is measured with three items derived from previous studies (Chen & Chen, 2010; Kang & Gratzel, 2012). Finally, in section six behavioral intentions are measured with four items derived from previous studies (Chen & Chen, 2010; Kao, Huang, & Wu 2008). All the items except demographic variables are measured using a seven-point Likert-type scale from "totally disagree (1)" to "totally agree (7)."

Partial least squares (PLS) was performed using the statistical software package

Figure 1. *Conceptual Model*

SmartPLS 3 (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015) to analyze the scale accuracy and structural model. The PLS method is a variance-based structural equation modeling for causal-predictive analysis (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009) and unlike traditional structural equation modeling, it does not generate an overall test statistic, such as the χ^2 goodness-of-fit (Rigdon, 2005). It is a soft modeling technique proposing "soft" distributional assumptions (Vinzi *et al.*, 2010) and it is considered a powerful tool because of its ability to cope with small sample sizes (Bontis, 1998).

To test the coefficient significance of the path modeling, the bootstrapping method was applied. The measurement model is composed of 7 latent constructs and 30 observed variables. Experience quality, the second-order latent construct, was combined with three latent variables, learning, enjoyment, and escape to form one measure of experience quality.

The survey was conducted in Sultanahmet district during June and September 2015. Sultanahmet (located in historical Old Istanbul) contains tourist sites such as the Hagia Sophia,

Topkapi Palace, Hagia Irene, Great Palace Mosaic museum, Istanbul archaeological museums, The Blue Mosque, Basilica Cistern, the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, the Byzantine Hippodrome, and the Spice Bazaar, which are visited by the majority of cultural tourists in Istanbul (Tonguç & Yale, 2010; Yenen, 2013). During face-to-face interactions, data was collected by trained assistants in the center of Sultanahmet. The survey was conducted on different days in different spots between 11 am and 9 pm. Respondents were selected randomly. Visitors who can speak English and had visited at least two of the tourist sites in the Sultanahmet district were asked whether they had free time to complete the questionnaire. A total of 450 questionnaires were collected, and 408 usable responses were obtained due to incomplete surveys.

In the visitors' profile, 49.8% were female. The age distribution of the sample was as follow: under 20 (10 %), 20-29 (23 %), 30-39 (21.6 %), 40-49 (18.6 %), 50-59 (23.5 %) and 60 or more (3.2 %). Approximately % 67 of the sample held a university or postgraduate degree. The visitors who were student accounted for 23.3 %, employed individuals for 25.7 %, employers

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Gender			Marital Status		
	N	%		N	%
Female	203	49,8	Married	204	50
Male	205	50,2	Single	204	50
Total	408	100,0	Total	408	100
Education			Age		
	N	%		N	%
No formal education	8	2,0	Under 20	41	10
Primary/Elementary School	7	1,7	20-29	94	23
Secondary / High School	122	29,9	30--39	88	21,6
College / University	224	54,9	40-49	76	18,6
Postgraduate	47	11,5	50-59	96	23,5
Total	408	100	60 and older	13	3,2
			Total	408	100
Occupation			Income		
	N	%		N	%
Employer	63	15,4	Less than \$ 1000	50	12,3
Employee	105	25,7	1001-3000 \$	144	35,3
Retired	63	15,4	3001-6000 \$	109	26,7
Student	95	23,3	6001-9000 \$	28	6,9
Not working	82	20,1	9001 \$ or more	15	3,7
Total	408	100	No regular income	62	15,2
			Total	408	100

for 15.4 %, not working individuals for 20.1 % and retired for 15.4 %. The majority of the sample had a monthly income of 1001-3000 USD (35.3 %). The demographic profile of the respondents is presented in the Table 1.

Empirical results

Measurement model

Reliability and construct validity scores were examined to ensure the appropriateness of the research instrument before testing the hypotheses. The internal consistency for reliability of the measurement models was tested using Cronbach's alpha and Fornell's composite reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Each construct should have Cronbach's α values above the recommended lower limit of 0.6 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), and CR indexes should be greater than 0.8 (Werts, Linn, & Jöreskog, 1974), to support construct reliability.

Convergent and discriminant validity were examined to test construct validity (Chin, Gopal, & Salisbury, 1997). Convergent validity is the measure of constructs that, theoretically, should be related to each other (Kim, 2012) and was assessed by examining the item loadings and their associated t-values and AVE values of the constructs. All of the indicators must be greater than 0.50 (Wixom & Watson, 2001) and constructs had AVE values above the lower limit of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), indicating that convergent validity has been achieved. Discriminant validity refers to the degree of specific construct, which is different to other constructs, and AVE can be used for evaluating discriminant validity. The square root of the AVE should be greater than any of the inter-construct correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair *et al.*, 2013). Convergent validity and discriminant validity work together as subtypes of construct validity, and neither measure alone is sufficient for establishing construct validity (Chin, 1998).

Because of a low t-value and standardized loadings, 3 questions in the vitality scale and 1 question in the experience quality scale were deleted and other constructs were reanalyzed. Table 2 shows factor loadings, t-values, Cronbach's alpha, Fornell's composite

reliability scores, and AVE and indicates adequate internal consistency and convergent validity.

Table 3 presents the square root of the AVE of the constructs compared to the correlations. According to the results, discriminant validity is achieved.

Structural model and hypothesis testing

The structural model was evaluated using standardized path coefficients, their significance level (t-statistic), and R^2 estimates. Figure 2 provides details on the parameter estimates for the model and Table 3 reports the results of the hypotheses tests. The R^2 s of experience quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions are respectively 0.31, 0.36 and 0.36 respectively, which indicate that the exogenous variable of each construct explains 31%, 36%, and %36 of the variance of each construct, approximately. R^2 values are greater than the recommended value of 0.10 (Falk & Miller, 1992).

Five of six hypotheses including the direct paths between variables are supported according to the statistical results. H1 and H2 predict that a high level of vitality and involvement have a direct positive effect on experience quality. The analysis results support H1 and H2 because a positive and statistically significant relationship was found ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$). H3 predicts that involvement has a direct positive effect on satisfaction. This hypothesis is rejected due to the insignificant effect ($\beta = 0.05$, $p > 0.05$). H4 and H5 predict that a level of experience quality has a direct positive effect on satisfaction and behavioral intention. The analysis result supports H4 and H5 because a positive and statistically significant relationship was found ($\beta = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.26$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, hypothesis 6 predicts that a high level of satisfaction has a direct positive effect on behavioral intention. The result supports H6 because a positive and statistically significant relationship was found ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$). Table 4 presents the results of the hypotheses tests.

Table 2. Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Constructs

Construct and Indicators	Factor Loading	t-value	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
First-order					
Involvement			0.90	0.92	0.59
Cultural tourism matters to me.	0.715	17.8			
Cultural tourism means a lot to me.	0.814	30.4			
Cultural tourism is important to me.	0.786	31.0			
Cultural tourism is relevant to me.	0.812	39.3			
In general, I think that cultural tourism is a lot of fun.	0.757	29.2			
In general, I think that cultural tourism is interesting.	0.726	21.5			
In general, I think that cultural tourism is neat.	0.775	34.5			
In general, I think that cultural tourism is appealing.	0.749	23.2			
Vitality			0.76	0.86	0.67
Sometimes I am so alive I just want to burst.	0.889	45.5			
I have energy and spirit.	0.771	17.2			
I nearly always feel awake and alert.	0.782	20.2			
Learning			0.85	0.91	0.77
I expanded my understanding of Sultanahmet destination.	0.835	37.0			
I gained information and knowledge about Sultanahmet.	0.909	85.3			
I learned many different things about Sultanahmet.	0.881	61.8			
Enjoyment			0.76	0.86	0.68
I had fun.	0.834	40.6			
I enjoyed being in Sultanahmet.	0.820	48.4			
I derived a lot of pleasure from the visit of Sultanahmet.	0.819	39.5			
Escape			0.84	0.93	0.86
I got away from it all.	0.923	76.8			
I got so involved that I forgot everything else.	0.935	113.0			
Satisfaction			0.82	0.90	0.75
Overall, Sultanahmet is satisfactory.	0.888	71.0			
The atmosphere of Sultanahmet is satisfactory.	0.880	52.8			
The historical relic authenticity of Sultanahmet is satisfactory.	0.820	30.2			
Behavioral intention			0.88	0.92	0.73
If I could, I would revisit this destination again.	0.861	38.3			
I will speak highly of Sultanahmet destination to my friends and relatives.	0.872	38.7			
I always say positive things about Sultanahmet destination to other people.	0.866	42.6			
I would recommend Sultanahmet destination to other people.	0.815	34.3			
Second-order					
Experience quality			0.84	0.88	0.59
Learning	0.787	27.9			
Enjoyment	0.801	36.7			
Escape	0.719	17.4			

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Behavioral intention	0.85						
Involvement	0.21	0.77					
Vitality	0.08	0.35	0.81				
Escape	0.41	0.39	0.37	0.93			
Enjoyment	0.41	0.42	0.26	0.40	0.82		
Learning	0.27	0.40	0.24	0.33	0.47	0.88	
Satisfaction	0.56	0.35	0.09	0.41	0.46	0.50	0.86

^a p < 0.001, ^b not significant/

Note: 5,000 samples bootstrapping procedure used

Discussion and conclusions

Theoretical implications

The main purpose of this research was to examine the effect of subjective vitality on experience quality and investigate the interrelationship between subjective vitality, involvement, experience quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. Although there is increased attention on the concept of subjective well-being among tourism researchers (Dolnicar *et al.*, 2012; Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004; Sirgy *et al.*, 2011) and the antecedents of tourists' subjective well-being have been explored (Su *et al.*, 2016), the effect of subjective well-being (specifically vitality) on experience quality has not yet been examined.

The major finding of this study is that subjective vitality has a positive effect on experience quality. This reveals that subjective vitality is a critical resource. As stated similarly in existing

literature, vitality is found to engender feelings of fun and escapism (Ryan and Frederick, 1997; Brown and Ryan, 2004) as well as enhance learning capacity (Frederickson, 2000), all of which increases experience quality.

The relationships between involvement, experience quality, and satisfaction were investigated by a previous study (Altunel & Erkut, 2015). In this study, positive and significant relationships were found between involvement and experience quality and involvement and satisfaction. A relatively low beta coefficient between involvement and satisfaction may be a clue to the mediating role of experience quality. Similarly, in our study a positive and significant effect of involvement on experience quality and experience quality on satisfaction were found. However, an insignificant effect of involvement on satisfaction was found, therefore, it can be

Table 4. Hypotheses Tests

Research hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-value	Results
H1-Vitality → Experience quality	0.20	3.57 ^a	Supported
H2-Involvement → Experience quality	0.46	8.89 ^a	Supported
H3-Involvement → Satisfaction	0.05	0.98 ^b	Rejected
H4-Experience quality → Satisfaction	0.57	11.1 ^a	Supported
H5-Experience quality → Behavioral intention	0.26	4.69 ^a	Supported
H6-Satisfaction → Behavioral intention	0.41	6.62 ^a	Supported

^a $p < 0.001$, ^b not significant/

Note: 5,000 samples bootstrapping procedure used

Figure 2. Estimated Results of the Model

asserted that experience quality has a mediating role between involvement and satisfaction. This is consistent with previous studies that handle experience quality as a mediator (Altunel & Erkut 2015; Liu, Horng, & Chou, 2015). Additionally, a number of prior studies have investigated the relationship between involvement and satisfaction. For example, Chiu *et al.* (2014) and Prayag and Ryan (2012) found no significant relationship. In contrast, Hwang *et al.* (2005) proposed and found a causal relationship.

This study demonstrated that there is a positive and significant effect of experience quality on satisfaction. These results are consistent with past studies (Altunel, & Erkut 2015; Chen & Chen, 2010; Jin, Lee, & Lee, 2015; Martin-Ruiz *et al.*, 2010). Consistent with previous studies, experience quality has a positive effect on behavioral intentions including the intention to recommend (Altunel, & Erkut 2015; Liu *et al.*, 2015; Martin-Ruiz *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, a direct link between tourists' satisfaction and their behavioral intentions is indicated, similar to other studies (Akhoondnejad, 2016; Hutchinson, Lai, & Wang, 2009; Prayag, Hosany, & Odeh, 2013; Zabkar, Brencic, & Dmitrovic, 2010).

Managerial implications

The major finding of this study reveals that vitality has a positive effect on experience quality and this significant relationship presents some managerial implications for the tourism industry. These implications can be framed in terms of travel agencies/tour guides and cultural site managers.

Tourism agencies and tour guides should take tourists energies and attention levels into consideration and should plan the travel roots, vehicles, lunch & dining activities well in order to maintain tourists' vitality levels high. Because all these factors impact tourists energy levels, aliveness and enthusiasm. For site managers, it is also important to keep tourists attentions on cultural objects and provide a safe place for visitors in which they would not have problems. It is important that visitors focus on cultural elements and keeping safe themselves from other disturbing stimulants. Site managers may use

gamification concept to attract and keep their attentions on the site.

Additionally, it is known that energetic people's behaviors are contagious to others and thereby increase the productivity of others (Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2005). Of course, having high energy and energizing others are different concepts but having high energy may be a requirement for energizing others (Schipper & Hogenes, 2011). Therefore, identifying these vital tourists and serving them in a special manner may be important for two reasons. First, the experience quality felt by such individuals may significantly affect the experience of others in the same group. Second, vital tourists (maybe opinion leaders) are more likely to recommend their experiences to their social environment (network).

To distinguish these individuals from others, the behavioral indicators listed below can be useful for tour guides and site managers. People with feelings of vitality tend to:

- Engage in more social interactions than others,
- Get in contact faster,
- Express less fatigue,
- Get involved in activities via asking questions and seeking more information,
- Participate in extra activities apart from tours or groups.

Finally, the link between satisfaction and behavioral intentions is crucial for travel agencies/tour guides and cultural site managers. Satisfaction of visitors is essential for re-visit and recommendation intentions which both of them are significantly important for a company's survival. Hence, it is reasonable for managers to focus on the antecedents of satisfaction. Involvement and experience quality are important factors in the formation of satisfaction. However, it should be noted that involvement with cultural tourism is not sufficient for satisfaction. A cultural site or destination should first increase the experience quality of visitors. In a similar study, Altunel and Erkut (2015) found a direct link between involvement and satisfaction. However this effect was relatively weak in comparison with the involvement-experience quality and experience quality-satisfaction relationships. As

a result, experience quality's mediation role between involvement and satisfaction represent why experience quality of visitors is critical in satisfaction process and this finding should be taken in consideration by site managers.

Recommendations for further research

Age and generational differences may play an important role in the mediating effect of experience quality as older generations place more importance on the quality concept than younger generations (Coleman, Hladikova, & Savelyeva, 2006; Proudfoot, 2009). Hence, it is essential for a senior tourist to have a quality experience to be satisfied with the tourism product. Younger adults are more likely to create satisfaction internally such that the balance between the environment (supply) and intrinsic motivation is skewed toward intrinsic. Age differences role in this mediation effect should be analyzed in further researches.

Limitations of the study

In the measurement of vitality scale, 3 items are deleted due to the low t-value and standardized loadings. This situation may be a sign of the scale reliability problem. However, in the reliability analysis it is seen that Cronbach alfa's of the scale is increasing when these items are deleted. Therefore, it is assumed that there is no problem of reliability in the scale of vitality.

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