Fame is Not Always a Positive Asset for Heritage Equity!
Some Clues from Buying Intentions of National Tourists

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In fact, fame is a poor asset for well known National Heritage sites: it drives site-seeing (coming to the heritage place) but not site-visiting (consuming cultural products: i.e. the entrance fees, the guided tours, etc). Since fame and strong brand awareness are not always synonymous with good reputation and favorable brand equity, some implications for Heritage site branding are proposed.

Brand Equity; Name Awareness; Buyer Behavior; Heritage Sites; Fame; Branding

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A strong brand is typically considered a very valuable asset for a corporation (Aaker, 1991, 1996; Keller, 1998). In fact, referring to the power of consumer-set brand equity, what is postulated is that consumers, who have good brand awareness and a positive brand image, are more willing to select the brand and to pay a premium price (Keller, 1993). Therefore, at a very basic level, the general strategy is to make consumers ever more familiar with firms and brands. Paradoxically, there is no compelling body of research to suggest that familiarity has a purely positive effect on firm and brand reputation or on attraction and consumer behavior. When corporations are highly familiar, judgments of consumers are clear cut, whether positive or negative (Brooks, Highhouse, Russel and Mohr, 2003; Shafir, 1993). In the same line, Silverman, Sprott and Pascal (1999) noted that brand familiarity (recognition measure: “Have you ever heard of this brand name?”) is weakly correlated with market-place success. Actually, familiarity offers little inside, especially when consumers are familiar with most brands in the category, as for airlines, gasoline, automobiles, etc (Silverman, Sprott and Pascal, 1999). Research on this ambivalent effect of strong brand awareness has focused on attitudinal responses and reputation evaluations of consumers. In actual settings, the behavioral scope was not investigated much although it is a major concern for managers. So, there are intriguing questions. What about the impact of strong brand awareness on intentions to buy? Could brand awareness have an ambivalent impact, sometimes positive and sometimes negative, or even, simultaneously positive and negative? Finally, could strong brand awareness not be a positive asset although it is considered to guarantee commercial success?

To answer such questions about the impact of strong brand awareness on consumer buying behavior, this article analyzes the influence of brand awareness level on tourist purchasing intentions in the context of heritage tourism. In detail, results reveal intentions to buy a cultural product when the Heritage site Name is famous, which leads to a strong Brand Name Awareness, versus when the Heritage site Name is not famous and hence calls up a weak Brand Name Awareness.

For general understanding of Brand Name Awareness in the heritage tourism context, the paper begins by a brand equity literature review and follows with an explanation of the Brand Equity concept relative to Heritage sites and monuments. Since the results suggest Heritage Brand Management should involve more than just building name recognition and awareness, the study proposes various operational recommendations for Heritage site managers. Limitations and research prospects are then discussed.

Literature review and theoretical background

This literature review on brand awareness restates a managerial postulate: a well known product—whether it is the brand or a place- is more likely to be considered for purchase (Silk and Urban, 1978). But, as it will be presented hereafter, the Brand Awareness concept should be slightly adapted when applied to sectors where the superstar phenomenon (Rosen, 1981) is found. Actually, some sectors call for an adaptation of the brand concept. Working alike for cultural consumptions in general, and heritage tourism in particular, the Brand concept is here operationally defined as Heritage site Equity.
Brand Awareness: a Simple Cue to Measure Brand Equity

Since the mid-1980s, brand equity has been of interest for practitioners and academics because a high equity ensures successful extensions, resilience against competitors’ promotional pressures and creation of barriers to competitive entry (Farquhar, 1989). It is also the premium asset valuation for managers to have an indication of the importance of well-known brands (Lassar, Mittal and Sharma, 1995).

In academic research, brand equity has been viewed from a variety of perspectives, whether the customer or the organization. It can be defined as “the marketing effects uniquely attributable to the brand” (Keller, 1998, p.42). More precisely, brand equity is the marketing effects or outcomes that accrue to a product with its brand name compared with those that would accrue if the same product did not have the brand name (Aaker 1991; Dubin 1998; Farquhar 1989; Keller 2003). According to Aaker (1991), brand assets and liabilities can be grouped into five categories: brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary assets.

Measuring brand equity is less consensual (Baker, Nancarrow and Tinson, 2005; Feldwick, 1996). There are methods for measuring the financial value to the firm: Financial World ratings, annual sales, revenue premium (Ailawadi, Neslin and Lehmann, 2003), etc. But little attention has been devoted to measuring value to the customer (Washburn and Plank, 2002)

To help managers and academics better measure brand equity, Keller (1993) proposes to distinguish sources of brand equity held in consumer knowledge structures (i.e., customer-based brand equity) from marketplace outcomes of brand equity (i.e., market-based brand equity). He develops a conceptualization of brand equity from the perspective of the individual consumer: consumer-based brand equity. He defines it as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (p2). In this associative network memory model, two components are distinguished: brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness refers to the strength of a brand in memory, i.e. the likelihood and ease with which the brand is retrieved from memory (recall or recognition), and brand image refers to the brand associations held in consumer memory.

Although academics and managers are well aware of the multidimensional nature of consumer-based brand equity (Washburn and Plank, 2002) and of halo effects (Leuthesser and Kohli, 1995), there is still a tendency to reduce the measure of consumer-based brand equity to the classical measure of brand awareness. The underlying assumption of this practice is that if a brand is relatively strong in a customer's mind in terms of being top of mind and with very positive and relevant associations, then theoretically it should have a positive brand equity that will be converted into large sales (Agarwal and Rao, 1996; Baker, Nancaron, and Tison, 2005; Day and Pratt, 1971; Hoyer and Brown, 1990; Mackay, 2001).

Yet, relationships between market-based outcomes and consumer-based measures of brand awareness are weak (Krishnan, 1996; Silverman, Sprott and Pascal, 1999). That suggests brand awareness is not the key indicator of firm and brand performance in terms of consumer purchases. In modern marketing, brand awareness measures (aided, spontaneous, top of mind) are the classical tool for planning marketing strategy (Warren, 1967), guiding advertising strategies (Percy and Rossiter, 1992), and identifying dominant choice heuristics of each awareness-groups (Hoyer and Brown, 1990). The usability of these measures is largely justified by their simplicity: only one open question for spontaneous, one more for aided, and a synthesis for top of mind.

Brand equity implemented to fit Heritage Tourism Sector
Visiting Heritage sites: A Purchasing Process and A Cultural Pre-Experience

The first historical monuments and museums appeared in the 1850’s to bear witness to the history and collective heritage of nations. Today, these Heritage sites, preserved because of their historic and artistic interests (i.e. “Monument Historique” in France), are visited by tourist and local communities. Generally preserved in their original structure and decoration, with replicas (e.g. the Mayflower replica at Plimoth Plantation) or embellishments (e.g. the Pyramid of Le Louvres Museum), the most popular ones propose a form of “living history” with actors. To quote Pine and Gilmore (1999), the marketing objective is “to stage and engage” visitors. The principle is that consumers buy an experience. Hence, they pay for spending time to appreciate memorable events designed by the Heritage site managers (stage) but also to get involved in what is happening on stage (engage).

According to Falk and Dierking (1994), the whole visiting experience of a museum is a trip beginning with the intention to visit, followed by the visit and then, revisiting through memory. Petr (2002) argues that the visit of a monument is a “product” that is complex to sell. And cultural tourists should be marketed regarding their main motivations and interests (McKercher and al., 2002; Poria, Avital and Reichel, 2007).

Actually, visiting involves both a decision-making process (the decision to enter into the core monument, even if they have to pay for it) and a cultural pre-experience. This cultural experience is an initial acculturation with the monument’s spirit when tourists walk in the surroundings (the urban, natural, human and civil environment), trying to appreciate the place and to find their way up to the entrance.

Heritage sites and tourism: a Superstar Phenomenon

In Rosen’s econometric model (1981), the superstar phenomenon occurs when a few prominent individuals dominate the market. In view of the attendance data, the heritage sector is a good example of the superstar phenomenon.

In fact, a few monuments are particularly well-known. They drive large flows of visitors whereas most of the monuments available for visits have too few attendees to be financially profitable (Collardelle and Montferrand, 1993). For instance, in France, National Heritage data (French Ministry of Culture) show that only 100 places, the French heritage superstars managed by the “Monum” administration, attract visitors and tourists whereas more than 40 000 Heritage Sites are in the National Heritage List. And similar to conclusions about the absence of a superior talent of the superstars (Evans and Wilson, 1999; Chung and Cox, 1998), it appears that success is not due to objective quality differences. Numerous Heritage sites are not famous and do not attract extensive audiences although their cultural value has been legitimated by institutional and local conservatory administrations and experts.

In the same line, annual statistics rank the same sites as the top-ten winners: in France, the Musée du Louvre has 8.3 million visitors and the Eiffel Tower, more than 7 million; between 1 to 1.5 million for the European Heritage sites of the Unesco World Heritage list. In all countries, attendance patterns reveal the heritage superstar phenomenon.

Already reported in other cultural sectors (Benhamou, 2002), the heritage star system has at least two major negative effects. First, the star system that is increasingly found in Western societies induces a vicious circle in cultural consumption. Artists and places, in terms of consumer awareness, have more and more difficulties to enter the market. Consequently, the heritage star system means overwhelming gaps, in terms of attendance data, between famous sites and not famous ones. For instance, in the museum sector, the spotlight on some super-museums has
Second, Heritage sites are very fragile locations. Although attendance is welcomed, excessive presence is always harmful for conservation. In fact, attendance is synonymous with material degeneration and experiential congestion (Kerbs, Petr and Surbled, 2007). In other sectors, high turnover (numerous consumers) of a product can justify lower profit margin or price (consumer spending) since the higher number of consumers may compensate for the lower spending per unit. But, in the heritage sector, every consumption corrodes what is consumed: every unitary visit participates in the cumulated damaging of the Heritage site. Consequently, attracting visitors and tourists is a double-edged sword for Heritage managers. Today, the globalization of tourism is worsening this tricky situation. For instance, at the Musée du Louvre (France), 70% of visitors are foreigners (Direction des Publics, Musée du Louvre, 2005 records). At Bilbao (Spain), about 80% of visitors assert they come in the town mainly to visit its Guggenheim Museum, a museum that is a franchise of the New-York one (Guash and Zulaika, 2005). Actually, cultural artefacts are more often the primary asset of a destination (Richard, 1996). Famous Heritage sites have already entered in the globalization era (Gombault and Petr, 2007). This extension of globalization (Karp, Kratz, and Szwaja, 2007) to the whole heritage sector is promoting singular reflections on branding and advertising management to suit this challenging situation of heritage in renowned, but also fragile, locations.

To offer a conceptual basis for such advertising and reputation research dealing with heritage, the following section proposes a way to characterize and model Heritage site Equity.

The Heritage site Equity Model: A Proposal

Since Heritage possesses original features especially when consumed by tourists, it is necessary to adapt the brand equity concept. Furthermore, specific measures for tourism place branding should be implemented (Pike, 2007). So, after discussing Heritage site Equity, relationships are shown up between Heritage site Equity and its components and effects.

The Heritage site Equity Concept

Familiarity (commonly revealed through Brand Awareness measures) and Likeability are the two core components at the heart of various brand equity models. In the tourism heritage context, these two components are adapted and implemented through the following concepts: a) Heritage site Awareness and b) Heritage site Obligation.

a) The Familiarity dimension: Heritage site Awareness

Reproducing traditional measures of brand awareness, Heritage site Awareness has two features. The a1) Heritage Name Awareness (HNA) is a mimic of brand name recognition. It corresponds to the ability of visitors and tourists to recognize the Heritage site name, for example when they see it on road signs or on tourist maps. The a2) Heritage Pictures Recognition (HPR) is an enlargement of brand’s graphic components recognition. It relates to the ability of visitors and tourists to recognize the iconic pictures of a heritage place. For instance, Heritage Pictures Recognition occurs when tourists, looking at postcards in a given region, identify monuments and landscapes as familiar images. Pictures or just pictorials allow tourists to retrieve stored acquaintance about the heritage place.

1 Nowadays, the franchising of brands’ establishment is a focal point for Superstars museums (see for instance debates about the Abu Dhabi (Arab Emirates) “Musée du Louvre” project of the “Agence France Muséums”).
From likeability to duty: the Heritage site Obligation dimension

Usually, Brand Equity combines familiarity and likeability. But, likeability has little meaning in the heritage sector. To better fit heritage tourism specificities, likeability should be converted into an Obligation component.

Referring to the heritage superstar phenomenon evoked above, this fame effect compels tourists’ behaviors. Indeed, Heritage sites superstars are those famous places where all tourists have to go when they spend their holiday nearby. Heritage attracts tremendous attendance when it possesses a “must” dimension. This must dimension corresponds to a “must- go” or “must-see” status. Consumers spending holidays nearby feel that they have to discover these places. Even if the discovery is minimal (a quick look and picture from a viewing area, a little tour at the surroundings), tourists experience a compulsion regarding heritage places.

Even if a consensus exists about the compulsory feature of some tourist consumption, it is rarely evoked in the academic literature dealing with heritage icons. To our knowledge, only Bull (1991) formulates clearly this “must-be” motivation of tourists visiting heritage places. Therefore, some conceptualizations are proposed and detailed here.

The “must-be” motivation is expressed in compulsory behavioral advice. The first one refers to mobile tourism and results in transient experiences and encounters (Jacobsen, 2001). The other obligation features felt by consumers facing famous heritage are listed in illustration 1.

Illustration 1 – The Compulsory Advice for Tourist Behavior at Famous Heritage

| 1) “must-see the location” (i.e. a stop, or even a look, from a viewing area zone or a scenery road); |
| 2) “must-go to the location”; |
| 3) “must-discover the location” (i.e. spend a certain amount of holiday time on the location); |
|   3a) “must-tour the monument surroundings”; |
|   3b) “must-visit the monument”; |
| 4) “must-learn about the heritage contents” (i.e. the choice of a guided-tour instead of a free visit especially when visiting, the choice of learning things about the place via readings or web-consulting before, during and after the trip); |
| 5) “must-remember the experience” (i.e. take snapshots of the family at the location, buy souvenirs for oneself); |
| 6) “must-transmit” (i.e. escort one’s children to the location); |
| 7) “must-refer” (i.e. speak of the place and/or the experience after the trip with friends and relatives, send postcards of the location even in case of cursory visit, buy souvenirs for gifts, etc.). |

The Heritage site Equity Model

According to Keller (1993), customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favourable, strong, and unique brand associations in memory. In the heritage sector, we can posit that Heritage site Equity occurs when the consumer, whether a tourist or a local resident, is familiar with the Heritage site and experiences an obligation feeling that implies some compulsory behaviors.

As in other consumption contexts, consumer-based equity leads consumers to make the assumption that equity is a quality signal. Products, places, companies, brands, and by extension, Heritage sites, are assumed to be renowned because of a superior quality. When the Heritage site Equity is strong, tourists anticipate a higher quality. This anticipated quality could be interpreted
by tourists through assumptions about the quantitative attributes of the site (i.e. bigger or numerous spaces and artifacts to see) and about its qualitative attributes (i.e. uniqueness, scarcity, fragility, etc.).

As a consequence of this anticipated quality, consumers will be more likely to go to the place and, when at the location, to reply to the must-visit compulsion of the most famous heritage places. This visiting likeability could be measured by the extent of the site visiting behavior (time spent, number of spaces visited, etc.), the amount spent, and the willingness to pay. The willingness to pay measure is relevant especially for European countries where tourists have to prepay for the entrance, conversely to Anglo-Saxon countries where donations and free entrance are usually the norm.

All these relationships are summarized in the model of Heritage site Equity (see figure 2).
Figure 1 – The Heritage site Equity Model: from components to consequences

- Willingness to pay
- Amount Spending
- Site visiting Behavior

Visiting Likeability

Anticipated Quality

Heritage Site Equity

- Familiarity
- Obligation

- Heritage Name Awareness
- Heritage Pictures Recognition
- Compulsory Site Comming Behavior
Hypotheses about Heritage site Equity

Postulate: The Obligation Dimension of Famous Heritage sites

There is a distinction between legendary brands and all other product brands, those which could be qualified as ordinary product brands. According to Vincent (2002), legendary brands subscribe to a brand mythology. That means they use “narrative to convey a worldview, a set of sacred beliefs that transcend functional and epistemic product attributes” (p.19). It is the device of the narrative, engraved in the brand mythology system, which allows brand to become and remain legends with performed rituals and created symbols.

Brand rituals allude to consumer enactments and re-enactments with the brand products: buying frequencies and obligations, consuming modes, gathering events, using of tribes’ libraries of symbols, etc. But, rituals refer also to the psychological and physiological effects of these enactments. For anthropologists like Turner (1993), rituals induce a feeling of oneness with the sacred space used by consumers to shape their self (McCracken, 1986; Rook, 1985). For physiological scientists, rituals create a powerful emotional response. “The intense concentration of the brain that occurs in ritual practice […] force[s] the hippocampus, a regulatory center of the brain, to inhibit neural flow” (Vincent, 2002, p.39). Ritual practices inhibit the “normal” brain activity. From the consumer point of view, that suggests consumers lose part of their capabilities to make their decisions in a normal and rational way. The pressure of the rituals influences their behaviors both psychologically and physiologically. Because of a social pressure and because of the imperative mode (“You should use this product”) embodied in the consumer relationship with celebrities (McCracken, 1988) and with superstar brands, consumers have to respond positively to the behavioral compulsion driven by fame.

Since the cultural values of the heritage sites act as a compelling reason for tourists to visit places even though they were not particularly keen to visit heritage sites, one may posit the following postulate for this research.

Postulate= In case of a Famous Heritage site, consumers consider more that there is a required behavior than in case of less famous one.

The Fame – Consumption Relationship of Heritage sites

If we consider only the brand awareness dimension of consumer-based brand equity, a first hypothesis can be formulated. When Brand Name Awareness is high, brand equity should be strong and positive. Then, theoretically, when brands are famous, consumers should be more willing to buy the product. Conversely, when brands are less familiar, brand equity will be weak and less positive. Then, when brands are not famous, consumers should be less willing to buy the product.

This distinction between high familiarity and less familiarity can be transposed into “famous” versus “not famous” brands for economic sectors that are examples of Rosen’s superstar model (1981). So, the first hypothesis of this research is expressed as follows:

H1= In case of a Famous Heritage site, the willingness to buy products is greater than in case of less famous one.

The Fame – Quality Relationship of Heritage sites

In numerous sectors, brands are divided into few superstars and a great number of “normal” brands. Rosen defines the star phenomenon: “when relatively small numbers of people earn enormous amounts of money and seem to dominate the field in which they engage” (Rosen, 1981, p.449). What is postulated is that the phenomenal commercial success of the few
superstars is explained by their superior talent (Adler, 1985; Rosen, 1981; Mac Donald, 1998). Even if there are polemics on the effective and perceptible superior talent of the superstars (Evans and Wilson, 1999, Chung and Cox, 1998) and on the rationales for this economic phenomenon (Bowbrick, 1983; De Vany and Walls, 2004; Lockwood and Kunda, 1997; Hamlen, 1991; Krueger, 2005), a consensus exists regarding one of the reasons consumers prefer superstars and celebrities rather than anonymous or less famous entities. Actually, consumers minimize search and consumption costs by choosing the most popular star (Chung and Cox, 1998; Rosen, 1981). Consumers make the assumption that superstars are famous because they have superior quality. Fame is viewed as a proof of quality. Thus, the second hypothesis refers to this underlying assumption.

\[ H2= \text{In case of a Famous Heritage site, consumers consider the product has a higher quality than in case of less famous one.} \]

**Methods**

A face-to-face survey was done simultaneously on two Heritage sites differing by their fame level. The aim of this double and simultaneous study was to compare consumers’ responses (intention to buy, anticipated quality and obligation impression) according to the fame-status of each Heritage site.

**Research sites: a different fame-status**

The two experimental sites are examples of the same archeological heritage. According to heritage specialists (Giot, Monnier and L’Helbouac’h, 1998), these monuments present identical style and belong to the same historic period. Situated in the western part of France, they are 10 miles apart. The first site (Site A- Famous situation) is the Alignments of Carnac: a unique worldwide exemplar of the megalithic (standing stones) style because of its hugeness. Its status as famous heritage landmark is particularly obvious for French national tourists since this iconic place is a subject of study during primary school. The second one (Site B- Not Famous situation) displays three monumental elements of the same Neolithic period: a “cairn”, a standing stone (latterly engraved and inexplicably fallen), and a “tumulus”. Although this site possesses a great artistic and historic value defined by specialists, it is not famous. National tourists do not know the name of this site before they come in the tourist area.

**Sampling and procedures**

To neutralize cultural background and the impact of distance on Heritage visiting motivations and behaviors (Poria, Butler and Airey, 2004), respondents were only French national tourists. Participants were approached if they parked on pre-selected parking locations and, if their car plate was a national one, but not a local one to be sure to contact tourists and not local people. Respondents were asked to answer a face-to-face questionnaire. The total sample exceeds one thousand tourists, with 717 for site A (Famous) and 367 for site B (Not Famous). The total number of tourists approached for this study was 1373 individuals. The ratio of survey acceptance was 79%.

**Development of measures and pre-testing of questionnaires**

To implement concepts presented in the Heritage site Equity model (figure 1), three variables were measured through questionnaire items. They were the intention to buy, the anticipated quality of the Heritage site and the feeling of being compelled to come to the Heritage site (obligation impression).

The intention to buy was a single measure. It involves the “willingness to buy” variable of the visiting likeability component described in the Heritage site Equity model. Showing the welcome
office, respondents were asked to reply to the question: “A priori, do you think you will buy the cultural offer proposed at this building?” Already tested (Perrien, Cheron and Zins, 1983), the scale combines a percentage scale (willingness to buy from 0% to 100%) and semantic items. To note, the first hypothesis perhaps should have been refined by stating that “buy the cultural offer” means to “pay the entrance fees” to perfectly fit the context of European heritage sites. However, two reasons justified keeping this general expression. First reason, it would allow replication of the study in Anglo-Saxon heritage contexts, where the payment corresponds mostly to a post-visit donation. So, we deliberately chose to ask visitors if they would be interested in “buying a cultural offer” with no more details. According to consumer experience and cultural habits, the term could be interpreted by visitors as a guided tour, an access payment (at the entrance with a paid ticket, or at the exit through a free donation), a pedagogical visit booklet, an audio guide rent, etc.

Second reason, Petr (1998) noticed that 94% to 99% visitors do not know the products available in a Heritage visit. There is very little risk indeed that respondents know what is proposed. Consequently, the term “cultural offer” appears suitable and satisfying.

For the measure of the Heritage site anticipated quality, a scale of five items was proposed. It was validated during the pre-testing of the questionnaire (during the May public holiday week-ends). A principal component analysis (PCA) demonstrated that the scale is only one-dimensional (39% of the variance). This was confirmed by the reliability test of Cronbach, with an acceptable level for an exploratory scale (α=0.6) regarding Nunnaly’s comments (1978). Consequently, the respondents’ regression measures on this unidimensional axis were the data ultimately used to measure the supposed quality.

The measure of the obligation component stated the site-coming behavior was compulsory. The imperative idea was expressed in a double negative way. In fact, it is not obligatory to come but, at the same time, it is not possible not to come! The item refers to the fact that a visit to the site could not be forgotten: “when on holiday in this county, it is a place we could not fail to see”.

Hence, it alluded to one of the “must-be” behaviors described in Illustration 1. It refers to the “must-go to the location” behaviour (a location where the coming behavior is not freely chosen).

The fourth variable used for this research, the level of fame, corresponds to an objective measure since it refers to the attendance figures of the two sites. Site A represents the Famous situation as it pertains to the 100 National French Sites managed by “Monum”, with more than 8.5 million visitors per year, whereas Site B gathers less than 70’000 visitors. The differential demonstrates a heritage superstar situation versus a “normal” heritage situation.

Results
Descriptive statistics about the samples
In contrast with previous research about demographic characteristics and profiles of heritage tourists demonstrating that heritage visitors are extremely homogeneous (Chandler, 2004) and that they progress from general travelers to specialized heritage tourists (Kerstetter, Confer, and Graefe, 2001), the current study pointed out two main differences among tourist profiles according to whether the Heritage site is famous or not.

First, the famous site (site A) attracts more common visitors than site B. In site A (famous situation), visitors have less higher education, fewer years of studies after High School Diploma, more often technical studies. Consequently, by comparison with the sub-sample of site B, visitors of site A are less often senior executive and managers.

Second, a look at the vacation profile demonstrates differences in the holiday style. Visitors of
Site B have a higher level of expectations regarding their holidays. Simultaneously, they are looking for relaxation, rest, culture, but also change of scenery, and time devoted to the family, whereas visitors of site A have fewer expectations. Although they spend less money for accommodation (essentially because they are welcomed by friends and relatives), site B visitors seem to have more active holidays than site A visitors, as proved for instance by the preference for itinerary formulas.

All the results and the tests used to describe samples are synthesized in Appendix 1.

**Test of hypotheses**

**The Obligation Dimension of Famous Heritage sites (Test of Postulate).**  
The level of fame impacts the impression of obligation responses ($F=8.63; 1-p=99.65\%$). At the famous Heritage site, 80% of the sub-sample declared they did not exercise their free-will totally when they made up their choice. At the not famous site, only 56% of the sub-sample thought it imperative to come to the location.

**The Fame – Consumption Relationship of Heritage sites (Test of H1).**  
Test Results show that Heritage fame does not guarantee an intensive visit (with the entrance in the core monument). It was supposed that fame would have led to higher intentions to buy the monument cultural offer. Actually, the result is opposite, H1 is rejected ($F=61.86; 1-p=99.99\%$). In details, the ratio of visitors who declare they are willing to buy the cultural product is lower at site A (famous) than at site B (not famous). Only 17% of site A sub-sample state they will, probably to certainly, buy a cultural product to visit the monument, whereas this ratio increases to 39% for the site B sub-sample.

**The Fame – Quality Relationship of Heritage sites (Test of H2).**  
Regarding the anticipated quality level, visitors were ranked according to their positive or negative position on the one-dimension artistic variable. Results are as follows: at site A, 54% of the sub-sample are situated on the positive side of the axis whereas only 36% are in this situation at site B. The fame of the Heritage site determines whether the anticipated quality is positive versus negative ($F=36.75; 1-p=99.99\%$), i.e. high versus low. Consumers surely make this assumption: if the Heritage site is famous, it is because of high artistic and historic qualities. When it is not famous, the quality should be less valuable.

The details of all the hypotheses tests are presented in table 1, and illustrated in figure 1.
### Table 2 - Synthesis of test hypotheses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship Hypotheses</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Obligation Dimension of Famous Heritage sites</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Postulate</td>
<td>Implemented Hypotheses: In case of Famous Heritage site, consumers consider more that there is a required behavior than in case of less famous one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hp:</td>
<td>Tested Hypotheses: In case of famous Heritage site (famous brand), consumers consider more that they go to the location to reply to a must-be motivation than in case of not famous Heritage site (non famous brand).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tests: ANOVA F=8.63; 1-p=99.65% (**) Postulate accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **The Fame – Consumption Relationship of Heritage sites** | |
| | In case of Famous Heritage site, the willingness to buy products is greater than in case of less famous one. |
| H1: | Tested Hypotheses: In case of Heritage Name Awareness (famous brand), the willingness to buy products is greater than in case of no Heritage Name Awareness (non famous brand). |
| | Tests: ANOVA F=61.86; 1-p=99.99% (**) H0 rejected, Hp accepted |

| **The Fame – Quality Relationship of Heritage sites** | |
| | In case of Famous Heritage site, consumers consider the product has a higher quality than in case of less famous one. |
| H2: | Tested Hypotheses: In case of Heritage Name Awareness (famous brand), consumers consider the product has a higher quality than in case of no Heritage Name Awareness (non famous brand). |
| | Tests: ANOVA F=36.75; 1-p=99.99% (**) H0 rejected, H2 accepted |

**Legend:** (**) Result is significant at the 1% risk level.

This diagram (figure 2) shows that fame-driven Heritage site Awareness increases the anticipated quality level and the obligation impression of the Heritage site, but decreases intentions to buy a cultural offer.

**Figure 2- The impact of fame on tourist opinions and behaviours**

To summarize, results show that Heritage site Awareness is not always a guarantee of commercial success since its impact is ambivalent. In fact, regarding buyer behavior, fame is a poor asset for
Heritage sites. Fame drives site-seeing (coming to the heritage place) but not site-visiting (consuming cultural products: i.e. the entrance fees, the guided tours, etc).

**Discussion and managerial implications**

The implications and managerial applications of this phenomenon are now discussed.

**Awareness is an ambivalent measure of Heritage site Performance**

Brand awareness is discussed in most texts on advertising measurement. It is a central part of the popular hierarchy-of-effects advertising model. And marketing managers claim it as an important goal of their communications activities. Are they wrong? In 1987, Rossiter and Percy wrote "Brand awareness is widely misunderstood and often wrongly measured, even by experienced managers" (p41).

Basically, there are three types of "normal" awareness measures: unaided (brand recall), aided (brand recognition), and top of mind (order of recall). Managers use these discrete measures both in the real and in the virtual world (on-line surveys). They are close but highly non linear (Laurent, Kapferer and Roussel, 1995) and, above all, they represent only a partial measure of consumer-based brand equity. Actually, when managers take into account only brand awareness measures, they forget image associations although these represent very interesting clues for understanding the differences between first and second market positions of brands within a category (Silverman, Sprott and Pascal, 1999).

In the heritage context also, results show that consumer-based Equity should be carefully measured and not reduced to Awareness. The current study confirms this ambivalent impact of pre-venue Heritage site Awareness on intentions to buy a cultural offer. Differences between the two sites were not statistically tested but the lower intention to purchase for the more famous site demonstrates that awareness is a deficient indicator of Heritage site performance in terms of visiting behaviors.

Heritage site Name Awareness (HNA) does not directly determine visiting and purchasing intentions. HNA curtails Heritage site Equity to a very limited and unfair pointer of commercial success for Heritage sites. Even if more people come to famous Heritage sites, those places which benefit from a high consumer-based Awareness, lower percentages of the audience become concrete site-visitors than in non famous sites. From a quantitative point of view, some will argue that the huge size of famous sites’ sigh-seeing audiences allows anticipating more numerous visits and purchases than at non famous site. However, others will insist on congestion consequences. In fact, the hyper-frequentation of famous heritage sites jeopardizes consumer experiences and security, and hinders heritage integrity and safeguarding (Krebs, Petr and Surbléd, 2007). Consequently, they will explain that a fame-driven audience is a parasite audience. It represents tourists who scrounger the heritage site essence (i.e. by just doing site-seeing, purchasing some postcards or sandwiches at some surrounding private retail shops, using lavatories) without complying with the heritage legatees’ duty (i.e. site-visiting and payment participation in heritage management financing).

Consequently, it can be argued that even Heritage Name Awareness (HNA) and Heritage Picture Recognition (HPR) are the simplest tools to gauge tourists’ familiarity with Heritage sites, yet they are not effective markers for managers. Conversely, they can induce incorrect advertising strategies (i.e. based on pictures and name promotion, instead of heritage and facilities contents-focused campaigns and marketing), as is developed below.

**Heritage site Promotion Campaign: from images to contents**

Brands possess brand equity if the name adds value to the marketing mix when compared to the
same mix under a fictitious name or no name. Current results show that strong brand awareness, implemented through fame-status, does not guarantee intentions to buy. In the case of Heritage sites, awareness surely drives equity but not systematically positive buyer behavior. In fact, awareness is not always a positive asset for a Heritage institution, especially regarding national tourism audience.

This result can be explained by the ambivalence of brand awareness. Highly familiar brands are evaluated both positively and negatively by consumers (Brooks, Highhouse, Russel and Mohr, 2003). Regarding firm reputation, brand familiarity level appeared not to be positively and linearly linked with brand equity. Conversely, a high level of familiarity (fame situation) often leads to negative judgments about brands. This ambivalence of brand awareness is explained, according to Brooks, Highhouse, Russel and Mohr (2003), by the fact that famous brands and corporations present larger targets for disparaging information than less familiar corporations. Moreover, Leuthesser and Kohli (1995) noted that the notion of brand equity, viewed as the associations consumers make with the brand's name, does not necessarily imply a positive effect. It is clearly possible for a brand to possess negative equity, in which case the name is a liability rather than an asset.

Brand management is generally believed to have emerged in 1931 when the president of Procter & Gamble decided that “each P&G brand should have its own brand assistants and managers dedicated to the advertising and other marketing activities for the brand”. But, in fact, as Crosby and Johnson (2003) pointed out, “brand management has to be more than just building name recognition and awareness”.

**Limitations**

Obviously, this research has limitations. The first type is the empirical context of the survey. Actually, to neutralize the tourist sample diversity and the Heritage site diversity, the survey took place in only two experimental sites and the sample was restricted to national tourists. The second limitation is due to the preliminary status of this research dealing with Heritage site Equity on *in-situ* tourist consumption behaviors. Consequently, the implementation of the variables used in the current study should be improved for advanced investigations. Instead of using only a few items expressing the Heritage site Equity concepts and its components (e.g. must-be behaviors), more precise psychometric scales and, ideally, pre-tested should better approximate the Heritage site Equity. In the same line, the current research employs only some variables of the conceptual model whereas further investigations should implement all the variables in order to operate structural equation analyses.

Moreover, it is important to bear in mind the fact that we don’t know the reason for the higher intention to purchase in the less famous site. Differences in demographics and travel behavior are likely to explain much of the differences in the ‘intention to purchase’ but these are unaccounted for. These differences might be specific to this particular pair of famous - non famous sites, and generalizations and extrapolations of the findings might be misleading.

**Research Prospects**

Future research must focus on the meaning of brand awareness (Mac Cracken, 2005), following perhaps the proposals of Mark and Pearson (2001) who listed twelve archetypes for a brand to be able to tell stories in ads. These authors gave some advice to select the archetypal meaning matching the brand, to position it and to concretely tell a brand story to consumers, Heritage site managers, as well as product managers, should perhaps follow this communication strategy. Many interesting academic questions remain but three seem more crucial and urgent for Heritage
managers who have to plan careful site management for simultaneously increasing tourist visit outcomes (Masberg and Silverman, 1996) and replying to sustainable principles (Fyall and Garrod, 1998; Morais, Dorsch and Backman, 2005; Vitic and Ringer, 2007).

First, according to the precise audience figures and fame situations of heritage sites, it is interesting to wonder when heritage promotion generates more negative externalities than positive ones. For instance, under what conditions does a renowned and correctly promoted Heritage site welcome fewer site-visitors (inside the monument) than a Heritage site with no advertising campaign? What is the minimum level of fame for a positive attraction power on tourists and local visitors? On the contrary, what are the thresholds of its negative impact in terms of parasite audience?

Second, these preliminary results trigger questions about the meaning of being famous and not only about the awareness level (amount of fame). What does being renowned mean in the Heritage context? What are the implications regarding tourist representations of the places, their artistic features, their uniqueness, their representativeness (or “prototypicality” to quote Nedungadi and Hutchinson, 1985), etc.? What are the implications regarding the “must-be” behaviors? Replying to such questions will better guide Heritage site advertising strategies. In particular, it is essential to determine if, when considering awareness as a major communication objective, it is a successful strategy to look for a high level of awareness without questioning the contents promoted? Should Heritage site managers be more careful about how external pictures of the site and the monument are used by other firms to create a positive reaction to their products? Do they have to engage in economic estimates of the consumer-mind value of their sites in order to financially recover (e.g. via a kind of heritage image copyright) the damage of parasite fame-driven audiences initiated by various local stakeholders (tourism but also food market, gastronomy, etc.)? Since name and symbols are potent communication tools (MacInnis, Shapiro and Gayathri, 1999), do they have to engage in a strategic branding and franchising management of their Heritage site assets?

Third, the obligation dimension of Heritage site should be further investigated. As a prelude, every must-be behavior proposed here should be implemented via usable measures, easy to use for managers. Then, this concept must be tested in different heritage contexts to check the validity and generalization of this concept and dimensions for the whole heritage sector. Moreover, to orientate segmented marketing plans, some comparison of responses with different audience samples (local, national, main foreign nationalities) will allow identifying the dominant choice heuristics of each group and the elements that should be promoted to transform these obligation feelings into actual heritage consumption behaviors. And finally, at a more operational level, merchandising actions should be tested to discover how to strengthen and take more advantage of the behavioral compulsion driven by fame, and more generally, by cultural values and social meanings of heritage.

References


## Appendix 1: Famous or not famous: Demographics and Vacation style Differences in the Audience Profile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Test Results</th>
<th>Fame status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitors Profile</td>
<td></td>
<td>Famous (Site A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies</td>
<td>Chi2 = 19.14, 1-p = &gt; 99.99% (**)</td>
<td>Primary School (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Technical Education (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of studies after High School Diploma</td>
<td>ANOVA F= 4.68, 1-p= 97.08 (*)</td>
<td>Average= 3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matrimony status</td>
<td>chi2 = 9.20, ddl = 3, 1-p = 97.32% (*)</td>
<td>Living alone (single, divorced, widowed (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of child</td>
<td>ANOVA F=0.76, 1-p=61.08% (ns)</td>
<td>identical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio Professional group</td>
<td>chi2 = 43.22, ddl = 8, 1-p = &gt;99.99% (**)</td>
<td>Senior executives and professions (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family income</td>
<td>chi2 = 14.97, ddl = 10, 1-p = 86.67% (ns)</td>
<td>identical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence town size</td>
<td>chi2 = 4.72, ddl = 5, 1-p = 54.93% (ns)</td>
<td>identical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>chi2 = 13.58, ddl = 8, 1-p = 90.65% (ns)</td>
<td>identical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation Profile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday benefits sought</td>
<td>For each of the 5 items describing these holidays: ANOVA 1-p = &gt;99.99% (**)</td>
<td>Relaxation, rest, culture, change of scenery, time with my family: Totally disagree (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holiday formula</td>
<td>chi2 = 16.72, ddl = 2, 1-p = 99.98% (**)</td>
<td>Stay (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of the holiday budget devoted to lodging (a)</td>
<td>ANOVA F=10.21, 1-p=99.84% (**)</td>
<td>Average= 43.84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:** (**): Result is significant at the 1% risk level; (*): Result is significant at the 5% risk level; (ns): result is not significant at these two levels (1% and 5%).

(a): the data does not suggest that visitors at B “spend less on accommodation”; it shows that they spend a lower percentage of their budget for accommodation. If their total budget is higher than for site A, then they may actually be paying more in absolute terms.