Conceptualizing the experiences of heritage tourists
A case study of New Lanark World Heritage Village

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Contemporary refinements to SWOT analysis in the management sciences have argued for a new technique that is both 'focused' on issues critical to product development and customer-orientated. To this end, a new management tool has been developed, ASEB grid analysis, and is demonstrated here in its demi-grid form as applied to New Lanark as a tourist attraction. ASEB grid analysis is an aid to consumer-orientated marketing research, product development, planning and promotion as it pays crucial attention to what is actually being gained or 'consumed' by tourists at an attraction visit (in terms of visitor experiences, emotions, thoughts, expressive behaviours and the benefits gained from satisfying experiences). It also points to what visitors actually want or expect from their visit. The grid is informed by qualitative in-depth interviews conducted with visitors. In this way, insight can be gained (as expressed in the respondents' own words) into the fundamental experiential product being provided by tourist attractions. © 1997 Elsevier Science Ltd

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The desirability for organizations to focus on customers in terms of their needs and motivations and to become market-orientated at every level of operation and planning is predominant in strategic management texts and is increasingly becoming recognized in tourism management texts. Paradoxically, for an essentially experiential product, much tourism research to date outside North American leisure science has not focused on what tourists 'consume' or 'experience', and the benefits which may have been gained, from visiting tourist attractions. 'Experience' can be defined as 'something felt or learned by personal contact' (Oxford English Dictionary) and therefore as the subjective mental state(s) felt by participants. Visiting a tourist attraction is likely to involve a flow of experiences; for example, visiting a theme park may encompass a flow of varied emotions. Those experienced might include: excitement, thrill, fun, fear, challenge. In consequence, if experiences are ignored the managers of tourist attractions are in effect ignoring their publics and, in particular, their customers' expectations and experiences.

There is a long tradition of visitor surveys at museums and heritage attractions. However, the majority of these studies do not focus on visitor experiences. In a review of 240 museum surveys for the Museum and Galleries Commission, many museum visitor surveys were criticized as 'asking only the most basic demographic and how did you get here type of questions'. Any attention to the tourist experience has tended at best to be summary, such as the rating of staff efficiency or friendliness or the enjoyment of attractions visited. Sociodemographic profiling of tourists as well as summary statements of satisfaction have also featured highly in such an approach. Conversely, tourist experience has been referred to as an aspect of motivation...
(or experiences sought), for example, as travel as indulgence or enlightenment or in terms of a change from domestic routine. In this way, coherent and comprehensive social psychological models of tourist experience are not yet available, either in theoretical analysis or in empirical research. Exceptions to this, however, are the studies of visitor experiences at Black Gold – the Rhondda Heritage Park in South Wales, Blists Hill Open Air Museum – the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, and the Black Country Museum in the West Midlands of England. More generally, as noted above, there has also been a considerable amount of research into the benefits gained from outdoor recreation, but this has not been attraction focused.

For tourist attraction development and promotion, and ultimately for destination development, it is the contention of the present authors that managers need to understand how different market segments of tourists are likely to ‘experience’ both their attraction and those of competitors. The attractions base of a tourist destination is an important component of the overall resource offered to tourists and a failure to deliver appropriate experiences and benefits to visitors (in terms of understanding, anticipating and satisfying pertinent visitor needs and wants) may lead to commercial failure in the increasingly competitive market. This has implications for attraction development and design and the whole nature of the tourism product offered and has led tourism into the realm of experiential consumption, customer perception auditing and has consequently focused attention on ‘the service experience’.

The elements of experiential consumption combine the settings facilitated through interpretive provision at a tourist attraction with consumer thoughts, feelings, expressive behaviours, emotional reactions, activities, evaluation and stimulation through sensation. In effect, through their consciousness and imagination, consumers aid in the production of their own individualized products as each visitor will arrive with his/her own ‘personal agenda’ or ‘cultural preconceptions or imaginings’, that is, a predefined set of expectations and anticipated outcomes for the visit. Each visitor’s personal agenda is unique and will include varying degrees, for example, of experience and knowledge of the content and design of particular museums/attractions, individual interests, motivations and concerns. Such factors will ultimately tailor which experiences people enjoy or appreciate, how they react to exhibits and which experiences will lead to self-fulfilment. Such factors will also affect the effectiveness of interpretive media employed at attractions in facilitating the experiences directed by attraction managers. As individuals are too numerous a basis to build market strategies upon, important to an experiential analysis are the differing market segments (customer groups) which can be derived on the basis of the experiences gained and also the benefits received from satisfying experiences.

To facilitate an experiential product, tourist attractions need to create, provide and maintain an experience which is able to attract a visitor’s attention, stimulate interest, and meet visitor expectations as well as raise them. Attractions need also to appeal to emotions and other feelings, and in particular to offer beneficial feelings. To this end, attractions need to convey relevant information and essentially meet tourists’ personalized needs. This is recognized in recreational leisure literature, and increasingly within the heritage tourism field and in museums literature. Attraction managers, in effect, become engineers of experience through the provision of context. As visitors respond differently to media, in order to create a worthwhile experience, attraction managers must integrate the different interpretive techniques available, orchestrate them, and allow visitors to select from the mix presented those elements they find personally of interest. A single standardized product is the antithesis of this approach. Such an approach places visitor needs and interest at the heart of interpretive provision at attractions. A consequence of this stance is that messages and exhibits are more likely to be understood if attraction managers take time to understand their existing visitors and the requirement of their potential visitors.

Attention needs therefore to be focused on how tourists’ consume tourism products and on identifying pertinent consumer demands. Most conceptualizations of demand are essentially hierarchical in that certain products are consumed to derive ends (that people undertake certain leisure/tourism activities to fulfil their individual needs or attain certain goals) which may be hedonic or utilitarian, or both. The former postulates visiting as pleasure seeking. The latter utilitarian model of behaviour proposes that visiting behaviour to tourist attractions would be seen more as a means to an end than as an end in itself. For this reason, consumer needs, benefits and motivations should also be seen as hierarchical. One such hierarchical system is Gutman’s Means–Ends Chain Model. The Means–End Chain focuses on how consumers think about products in terms of the product’s physical characteristics or attributes, the consequences of product consumption (perceived benefits and costs) and the

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**Footnote:** Interpretation is important as it has the capacity to affect the experiences and ultimately also the benefits to be gained from a tourist attraction. The more recent means of interpretation adopted by tourist attractions have included for example dark rides, live interpretation, interactive displays and other technology-based experiences designed to engage the visitors’ senses and imaginations.
personal values or beliefs that consumers seek to achieve and which form the underlying preferences for a purchase decision.

An alternative conceptualization is based on the work of Haas et al., Manfredo et al., Manning and Bruns et al. who have identified four levels or hierarchies of demand for outdoor recreation. These are: the demand for a particular leisure 'activity' (Level 1), the particular recreational 'settings' (environmental, social and managerial settings) in which activities are undertaken (Level 2), the 'experiences' (Level 3) gained from undertaking these activities in that setting, and the ultimate 'benefits' (Level 4) that flow from the satisfying experiences. These levels of demand can be ordered into a Sequential Hierarchy of Demand, as shown in Table 1. As a hierarchical model, experiences (or 'physiological outcomes' resulting from on-site recreation engagements) are therefore facilitated by the activities and settings and consequently, in order to understand visitor experiences, we must pay attention not only to Level 3 demands but also the earlier levels of the hierarchy. Furthermore, Bruns et al. in particular, advocate that concern for experiences should be taken a stage further. As human behaviour is in part goal directed, one also has to look at what people gain or benefit from recreation experiences (Level 4 of the demand hierarchy) to provide better information about visitors' choice options. This benefits approach therefore builds on the first three levels of the demand hierarchy to define the improved conditions (final outcomes) of visitors' participation in recreation activity which can be spatially divorced from the site (for example, in people's memories of a tourist experience), or can be realized by society as a whole rather than just the individual recreation user (for example, an enhanced environmental stewardship ethic).

### The limits to SWOT analysis

Within the tourism industry, as in many other areas of business management, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis has been used as a practical but analytical management tool in strategic planning. The major attractions of SWOT analysis have been, first, that it is familiar and, second, that it is 'user friendly' and does not require the need for complex information or computer systems. Indeed, SWOT analysis offers a simple structured approach to identifying a company's strengths and weaknesses and comparing these to opportunities and threats facing the organization in the wider business environment. In this way, SWOT analysis provides management with the ability to develop strategies to ultimately balance all controllable (usually internal) and uncontrollable (usually external) factors in order to aid a more successful future for the organization.

Conventional SWOT analysis has, however, been criticized in management sciences for a number of shortcomings in the technique itself, as well as in the way it has been used. These shortcomings include, for example:

- SWOT analysis is global to a product (or attraction in this case) and can be unfocused.
- Owing to its simplistic nature and ease of use, the technique has been used in a slack manner and is susceptible to subjectivity and bias from managers who can present an unrealistic appraisal of company attributes.

### Table 1 A sequential hierarchy of demand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of hierarchy of demand</th>
<th>Example 1 (Manning)</th>
<th>Example 2 (Prentice)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1: Activities</td>
<td>Wilderness hiking</td>
<td>Visiting heritage attractions (e.g. castles and other historical monuments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2: Settings (a)</td>
<td>Rugged terrain</td>
<td>Interesting and pleasurable viewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Few people</td>
<td>A place for a family day out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) No restrictions</td>
<td>Educational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3: Experiences</td>
<td>Risk taking</td>
<td>Relaxing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Educational/informational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical exercise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4: Benefits (a)</td>
<td>Enhanced self-esteem</td>
<td>Increased knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Societal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Refinements of SWOT analysis have already been proposed in the management sciences. In particular, Piercy and Giles\[^{14,50}\] have argued for ‘focused’ SWOT analyses in which the analysis is focused on a defined area/issue that excludes non-relevant material. In this manner, the evaluation is made less global and therefore potentially more productive. Piercy and Giles argue that SWOT analysis can be focused, for example, on critical issues to product development valued by customers and recognized by them. In this way, SWOT analysis becomes ‘focused’ and essentially ‘customer orientated’\[^{14,50}\] and thereby forces users of SWOT to identify the critical factors influencing the success of the business, customer needs and the factors leading to customer satisfaction. In effect, managers are forced to confront the difference between what they think is important and what the customers who purchase/consume the product think is important. After all, the bottom line in achieving goals of any organization is doing best the things that the customer values most and maintaining this level of customer satisfaction. In effect, without the customer, there is no business. These issues and the need for a greater focus in organizational analysis are required to frame an application of SWOT analysis to tourism and, in particular, to the management of tourist attractions. This paper proposes a new management tool, ASEB grid analysis, as a focused SWOT derivative. The analysis is demonstrated by a part application of this technique.

### ASEB grid analysis

**ASEB** (activities, settings, experiences, benefits) grids analysis is offered as a new management tool for tourist attraction managers and has been specifically designed to aid consumer-led organizational analysis.\[^{15,16}\] In particular, it has been developed to examine the experiences and benefits gained by visitors from visiting tourist attractions, and thereby to address issues arising from experiential consumption, an area as yet neglected by most visitor research. It facilitates ‘mission analysis windowing’\[^{1}\] (p. 76) and offers the opportunity to develop both qualitative and quantitative applications.

ASEB grid analysis is a joint derivative of a focused SWOT analysis\[^{19,50}\] and the sequential hierarchy of demand set out in Table 1.\[^{12}\] ASEB grid analysis is conceptually formed as a matrix with rows based on the conventional levels of SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) and columns defined as the levels of the sequential hierarchy of demand (activities, settings, experiences, benefits), as shown in Table 2. This matrix or grid is informed by visitor surveys at attractions, and in particular the top two rows of the grid. Data from tourist interviews are collected under the column headings and then entered into the matrix in the appropriate cells under each column. Once completed, the matrix is then read row by row, as in a conventional SWOT analysis, each row being read by each column of the matrix outlined in Table 2 progressing sequentially from cell SA to SB, WA to WB, OA to OB and TA to TB. In this way, two objectives are achieved. First, the strengths and weaknesses of the activities, settings, experiences and benefits gained at an attraction are evaluated from a consumer perspective, and likewise the opportunities and threats facing the attraction. Second, this process in effect also achieves ‘laddering’\[^{11}\] up Gutman’s Means–End Chain.

In this paper the top two rows of an ASEB grid analysis are examined. Such an analysis may be termed an ASEB demi-grid to distinguish it from the fuller grid. As a focused SWOT, ASEB grid analysis focuses, first, on a specific critical issue in product development (the experiential product dimensions of a tourist attraction) rather than global issues of an attraction. Second, ASEB grid analysis is customer orientated as the strength and weaknesses of the attraction are not only defined in terms of things valued by customers and recognized by them, but can be defined by the consumers or visitors themselves in their own words through in-depth qualitative interviewing. In this way, ASEB grid analysis provides consumer insights into the success of the tourism experience being offered at a tourist attraction, how that experience may be improved or seen as beneficial, and an interpretation of how the experiences being provided at an attraction might be located in terms of the wider market.

### Survey

This paper presents a qualitative application of ASEB demi-grid analysis. It is based on a visitor survey undertaken at New Lanark World Heritage Village in Scotland during August and September 1994. Forty semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with domestic tourists (defined as residents of the British Isles and spending at least one night away from home) as they left the village. The in-depth interviews sought primarily to explore in the tourists’ own words their motivations, satisfactions, experiences and benefits gained from their

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**Table 2** ASEB grid analysis and cell identifiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaknesses</td>
<td>WA</td>
<td>WS</td>
<td>WE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>OA</td>
<td>OS</td>
<td>OE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>TA</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>TE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
visit to New Lanark. The overall objective of this survey was to provide insight into, rather than quantitative measurement of, the experiences and benefits gained by domestic tourists from visiting New Lanark (although where consistent responses were found they have been noted).

The forty tourists interviewed at New Lanark were to be generally representative of the profiles of heritage site visitors found elsewhere. Three-quarters of the respondents were from non-manual and managerial social-class backgrounds, over half of them held further or higher educational qualifications and 30 out of the 40 tourists interviewed were aged between 31 and 60 years. In these ways the sample reflected the over-representation of non-manual and educated groups and an under-representation in particular of more younger aged (especially those aged in their twenties) visitors to heritage attractions generally. Roughly equal numbers of male and female respondents were interviewed, and just over one-half of all tourists were visiting without children of 16 years of age or under in their personal group.

New Lanark World Conservation Village as a visitor attraction

New Lanark is an industrial conservation village sited in the Clyde Valley surrounded by the Falls of Clyde Nature Reserve and is located one hour’s drive from both Edinburgh and Glasgow. The village is a major Scottish tourist destination and in 1994 attracted approximately 410,000 visitors (British Tourist Authority). In addition to New Lanark’s environmental setting, the village is steeped in historical significance and has become internationally renowned for the pioneering technology and social change that took place at the time of the British industrial revolution.

Founded in the late 18th century by an entrepreneurial banker, David Dale, New Lanark became a thriving and highly productive centre for cotton manufacture. The historical significance which David Dale awarded to New Lanark stemmed from his concern for human welfare and the provision of better social and working conditions for his mill workers. However, this concern was more prominently shown and has become more widely associated with Dale’s son-in-law, Robert Owen, a social pioneer who carried out social experiments at New Lanark during his period of management (1800 to 1825). As New Lanark was a highly successful capitalist enterprise, Owen saw the village as an ideal site for the application of his socialist philosophies and community experiments. Indeed, Robert Owen created a physical quality of life for all his workers that at that time was barely equalled elsewhere in other industrial areas. The belief behind Owen’s social reforms was that by improving living and working conditions, he would create a happier and harder working labour force that would, in turn, yield better profitability. To this end, Owen opened a school (the then known-world’s first infant school) to provide a general education for the children, an institute which served as a community centre for his workers providing adult education, recreation, singing and dancing, and a village store (recognized as the inspiration for the start of the international Co-operative movement) was also opened to ensure that his workers got proper food at reasonable prices. These buildings and the fundamental socialist philosophies of Robert Owen have provided the foundations upon which New Lanark has emerged as an award-winning tourist attraction since 1968 when closure of the mills threatened the existence of the whole village.

Over the last two decades, following the establishment of the New Lanark Conservation Trust (NLCT), around £16 million has been spent restoring New Lanark. At the time of the mills’ closure, there had been little additional building in the village since the early part of the 19th century. In this way, the village remained an original example of an early industrial community. New Lanark therefore is something of a ‘time capsule’ with rows of terraced cottages and the high sandstone mills. The New Lanark Conservation Trust’s ongoing aim is to ‘restore and revitalise the village as a working community, not to preserve it as a museum piece’. New Lanark is being restored as a living village community as well as both a significant social and industrial heritage site and a last monument to Robert Owen and his philosophies. In effect, therefore, visitors to New Lanark experience local history within the social context of a 20th-century community. This is a key facet of the provision of context at New Lanark: the fact that New Lanark is not a ‘museum’ but a living community affects the interpretation adopted, and consequently the experience(s) to be gained by visitors. New Lanark is not predominantly artefact based as found at traditional industrial museums, neither is it a re-created, re-enacted heritage park, but it represents a 20th-century living village community within the physical setting of an earlier era.

Through their site interpretation, the NLCT aim to explain the history of the village with use of interpretive methods to cover all ranges, especially education and entertainment, to encourage visitors to find out how Robert Owen ‘wrote himself into the history books’. In addition to creating a major tourist attraction, the tenement housing provided at New Lanark has been restored, with the external period fabric of the houses remaining preserved. These houses are now home to a mix of owner-occupation and housing association tenancies.

Tourism development at New Lanark has included a Visitor Centre which opened in 1990 in
Robert Owen’s former ‘Institute for the Formation of Character’. The mills and engine house have also been utilized in tourism development and visitors now have access to a range of exhibits which include a visitor reception area and café, a restored steam engine of the kind once used to power the mill machinery, an audio-video presentation on the history of New Lanark, a textile machinery display with working machinery to demonstrate yarn being spun and twisted, and a dark ride known as the ‘Annie McLeod Experience’. The dark ride uses multimedia facilities as well as the fabrication of sounds and smells. Visitors are seated in two-seater suspended pod-like modules and are guided through re-created scenes of life at New Lanark in 1820 by the voice and spirit of Annie, a 10-year-old mill girl who appears as a hologram. The ride is designed to give visitors an emotive impression of what a typical day at New Lanark was like under Robert Owen’s management and how the effects of his ideas affected the daily lives of ordinary people. To this end, on leaving the ride, visitors can listen to short taped stories of past New Lanark villagers describing aspects of their daily lives.

In the re-creation of a mill worker’s house, visitors to New Lanark can also experience how Annie McLeod’s family would have lived in 1820 and also how those conditions compared with 1930s living conditions in the village. The Millworker’s House also encompasses an exhibition area where information panels relate the changes in New Lanark’s housing from its origins to restoration. A similar presentation is provided for visitors in New Lanark’s Village Store whereby visitors see how Annie McLeod’s family would have shopped in 1820 and, in comparison, how the store would have looked in the 1930s.

New Lanark has additional tourist activities which are independent of the visitor centre complex and free of any entry charge. For example, visitors can make the most of New Lanark’s valley setting and enjoy a scenic woodland riverside walk to the Falls of Clyde; picnic and play areas are provided in certain areas; and among other attractions there is also a Scottish Wildlife Centre which has information about local flora and fauna.

Case study: applying the ASEB grid to New Lanark World Heritage Village

A summary of the ASEB demi-grid analysis conducted at New Lanark is given in Table 3 and is informed from the interviews.

Strengths

Strengths: Activities (SA). The in-depth interviews showed that New Lanark was perceived by the tourist visitors as an interesting place to visit when on holiday. As a tourist attraction, New Lanark was perceived very positively; indeed, of the 40 domestic tourists interviewed, almost all (38 out of the 40 respondents) stated that they had enjoyed their visit.

Table 3  ASEB demi-grid analysis: case study of New Lanark World Heritage Village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strengths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a range of attractions</td>
<td>Picturesque and pleasant environmental and social settings, restored as a living and working community</td>
<td>Provides ‘learning’ or an experimental insight into local social and industrial history</td>
<td>Provides a range of benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High satisfaction levels</td>
<td>Managerial setting provides interesting and novel ride, elsewhere able to wander at own pace</td>
<td>An enjoyable day out in pleasant surroundings</td>
<td>Facilitates a beneficial learning experience and an enjoyable day out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat visiting</td>
<td>Favoured over rival attractions for its picturesque natural and built settings and more ‘humane’ interpretation of past industrial society</td>
<td>Emotional and thought provoking, gives comparison, insight and appreciation of past and present lifestyles, in some cases reminiscent</td>
<td>Stimulates comparison with, and appreciation of present-day life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offers a pleasant day out in beautiful surroundings</td>
<td></td>
<td>Part of a wider tourist complex</td>
<td>Beneficial to others</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weaknesses

Weaknesses: Not as much action or to give visitors an ‘immersed’ feel for the past

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Settings</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not as much to see and do in comparison with similar attractions, or to give visitors an ‘immersed’ feel for the past</td>
<td>Perhaps too commercialized</td>
<td>Only a minority of visitors experienced fun or entertainment</td>
<td>A majority of visitors do not benefit from being able to draw upon personal insights or memories of the lifestyle being presented as has been found at some other attractions. Consequently, the lifestyle presented remains unfamiliar to the majority of visitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not as much action or lived ‘reality’ in comparison with similar attractions</td>
<td>Visitors experience the past and not their past, which can be seen as different from analysis at similar attractions where informal memory prompting is a major source of visitor satisfaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potentially too many static displays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficult terrain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to the village overall. When asked directly, 27 out of the 40 respondents interviewed said that they would strongly recommend New Lanark to a friend or relative who was visiting the area. The remaining 13 respondents agreed that they would also possibly recommend a visit to New Lanark. As a focus for activities, the interviews revealed that New Lanark was liked for its pleasant and beautiful natural surroundings, its historical context and for its interesting exhibits. The range of attractions is therefore a particular strength of the site.

In particular, 22 out of the 40 tourists interviewed found the Annie McLeod ride to be the most satisfying aspect of their visit overall. These respondents enjoyed the ride because it was ‘interesting’, ‘fun’ (especially for children), had ‘a nice endearing story’, ‘brought history to life well with smells and noises’, was ‘technically and artistically well designed’ and provided visitors with a ‘different’ and ‘refreshing’ way to gain insight into local history. In contrast, only a minority of respondents (six out of the 40) interviewed mentioned the walk to the waterfalls as the most satisfying aspect of their overall visit. Other activities which tourists felt had contributed to their overall enjoyment of New Lanark included the Millworker’s House and seeing working mill machinery.

Further satisfaction with the attractions offered at New Lanark can be seen in the tourists’ reasons (motives) for visiting the village and, in particular, the fact that one-quarter of all respondents had already made a visit to New Lanark at least once within the previous two years. Of the tourists who had made a previous visit to New Lanark, their main reasons for making a repeat visit included returning to see what changes or improvements had been made to the village; as somewhere to spend a nice day out whilst staying with friends or relations nearby; or because their decision to revisit had been prompted by a recent advertisement. Most of those respondents who had visited before thought that there was always something new to see or do each time they had revisited the village. Overall, most repeat visitors had enjoyed visiting New Lanark because of its interesting history, and the novel way in which life in a past era had been portrayed through the Annie McLeod ride and other exhibits. Repeat visiting was made even more enjoyable for tourists as its location was perceived as aesthetically spectacular but portrayed a pleasant village atmosphere.

The in-depth interviews showed that the specific motives or ‘push’ factors given by tourists for their decision to visit New Lanark were varied. In the main, tourist visitors were visiting out of a general desire to spend a nice day out in interesting, pleasant and beautiful surroundings (although the main source of their overall satisfaction with the visit stemmed from the specific activities actually undertaken at New Lanark). This rather unspecific or generalist context for visiting has similarly been reported in heritage and museum studies elsewhere (for example, 9,12,25,26). Word-of-mouth recommendation was also found to be a factor in influencing tourists’ decisions to visit (mentioned by one-quarter of the tourists interviewed), with the influence of advertising being mentioned by six out of the 40. Other reasons for visiting New Lanark identified in the visitor survey included somewhere to visit whilst touring in the area (mentioned by 10 out of the 40), especially whilst staying with friends or relations (eight out of the 40 interviewed); or as a result of an unplanned decision whilst ‘just passing’ or driving through the area (four out of the 40). New Lanark is also seen as somewhere to take and entertain children and also as a place where one can re-establish past personal or family links with the area. In a minority of cases, the initial decision to visit had been made by another person in the visiting party, although this did not affect the respondent’s satisfaction with the activities undertaken at New Lanark. Notably absent from these motives, however, was an interest in socialist or labour history, which has been cited among motivations for visiting other social and industrial heritage sites.14,15 In this way, the activity of visiting New Lanark was very much an informal, general experience for the majority of visitors.

Strengths: Settings (SS). The environmental and social settings facilitated at New Lanark were found to form an important and underlying strength of the village as a successful tourist attraction. When asked why they had liked visiting New Lanark, 12 out of the 40 tourists interviewed mentioned that they had particularly enjoyed either the ‘spectacular’ natural or built surroundings or the ‘pleasant and relaxed atmosphere’ of the village. One respondent explained how ‘The real experience is coming down the hill and through the trees, seeing the whole majestic village laid out in front of you’; another respondent mentioned how ‘It’s such a wonderful setting, you feel like you’re out in the countryside’. Several visitors also mentioned that they had liked the fact that New Lanark was being restored, in its entirety, to re-create a living and working community, but also that parts of the village’s history were being presented.

A degree of satisfaction with the managerial settings was also reported by visitors to New Lanark. Above all, tourists had enjoyed the Annie McLeod ride (mentioned by over one-half of all respondents) as it was ‘a different, interesting and an endearing way to be given information. One respondent also explained how she had ‘enjoyed being given the [Annie McLeod] story’ as she visited parts of the village. Visitors to the village also mentioned being able to wander around at their own pace and without restrictions as an aspect of the setting which
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they had favoured (stated by six of the 40 tourists interviewed).

Further insight into the strengths of the settings facilitated at New Lanark can be gained from the visitors' comparative comments in respect of other attractions interpreting social and industrial heritage. When asked directly, 26 out of the 40 tourists interviewed said that they had visited a similar attraction within the previous two years. In comparison with these other attractions, New Lanark was especially favoured for its picturesque natural and built settings in which a 'more humane' interpretation of past industrial society was presented (as opposed to the hardship and gloom more commonly associated with industrial heritage interpretation). Respondents also favoured New Lanark over rival attractions because village life had not been 're-created' in a museum setting, but was actually seen to exist.

**Strengths: Experiences (SE).** The main experiences gained by tourists from visiting New Lanark were found to be twofold. First, visitors described their overall experience as one of 'learning' or of gaining an insight into the social and industrial history of New Lanark (mentioned by 37 out of the 40 tourists interviewed), and, second, visitors reported an enjoyable, interesting day out in pleasant surroundings (mentioned by 23 out of the 40 surveyed). The experiences gained by visitors to New Lanark were also found to be emotional and thought provoking. Similar studies have also shown visits to heritage attractions not only to provide insights into past lifestyles but also to be emotional in quality.14–16,73

The tourists interviewed described the experiences they had gained at New Lanark as having 'learned about social history' or 'seen how people in the past used to live and work'. Those comments serve to describe direct and indirect 'learning'. In particular, visitors felt they had 'been taken back in history' to gain an insight into 'past life' and the 'inspiration of Robert Owen and how his socialist ideology had affected the everyday lives of the people of New Lanark'. Some tourists also considered they had experienced 'the history of the region' (cited by 19 out of the 40 tourists interviewed), or 'of a particular industry' (14 out of the 40) and 'how things were made' (17 out of the 40). Through the latter some tourists felt that they had also gained an insight into how technology has changed over the centuries. Some visitors also felt that they had gained insight into the restoration/conservation process of the mills and housing at New Lanark (mentioned by 15 out of the 40 respondents).

The in-depth interviews also revealed particular emotions felt by tourist visitors at New Lanark. Visitors said how they had 'deeply reflected' on past life (stated by 24 out of the 40 tourists) and related an overwhelming 'sympathy' for how people lived and worked in the past (mentioned by 31 out of the 40). The 'amazement' and 'astonishment' generated from reflecting upon past lifestyles frequently made visitors think about what life would have been like for their child(ren) if they had lived during that era. By comparing the basic living and working conditions then and now, and an analysis of how life had changed, the majority of visitors interviewed mentioned appreciation of their present lives. As one respondent commented, 'I wouldn't like to have lived then. I'm glad that I live now and that my children are in the life of the future'. Another respondent described how he had felt amazed at seeing how things had changed, in particular, 'I was looking at the old boots and bottles in the Village Store and the way the oldest [1820s] shop had been laid out; it's quite amazing how things have developed and changed since then'. It should be noted here that some respondents commented that the lifestyle they had experienced was totally 'unbelievable' for many people today, especially children, as we tend to take so much for granted and, therefore, reflection upon the differences in how lifestyles have changed would have been impossible.

The Annie McLeod ride was seen as foremost in providing insight into social history. Tourists reported that the ride had given them an 'endearing' and more 'personalized' perspective to learning about how people in the past had lived and worked under Robert Owen's management. One respondent explained, 'I felt I could really identify with Annie's life and it made me realize that two of my daughters would be working in the mills by now as they are both over 10 years old'. In this way, visitors at New Lanark are learning through an experiential insight into history, rather than from factual information.

Reported visitor thoughts centred mainly on an experience of what life would have been like at the time of Annie McLeod and on some of the hardships which would have been endured in past industrial society generally. Visitors described the living and working conditions presented from 1820s New Lanark as 'gruesome', 'a tough hard life', 'the hardest times', 'terrifying, especially with all the machinery working at once' and 'frightening to think how young children especially had to work in those dark, hot, dusty and noisy conditions'. However, these visitors did believe that the people of New Lanark had been fortunate as they had a 'safe community life where everything was provided for them' and 'they helped each other', especially in comparison with perceptions of workers in many other industrial regions in that period. Visitor descriptions included how 'the people must have been happy because of Robert Owen', 'he was good to his workers' and 'was a visionary for his time' and 'I felt pleased that the people of New Lanark got medical help and an education, especially as we take those things for granted today'. One respondent
described how, 'I was astonished to learn that one person could actually make such a difference'.

The feeling of admiration for Robert Owen as a social pioneer therefore was found to be a common emotion experienced by many visitors. Other tourists were found to experience feelings of 'enlightenment' and 'astonishment' at the history of New Lanark and how 'remarkable' it all seemed. As one tourist described it: 'The whole history of the village is so impressive, I just can't believe that such a thing could have happened here'. A further tourist commented that 'My main feeling is that I'm ashamed to say that I've never been here before. I had no idea about what went on here historically'.

Some tourists interviewed (nine out of the 40), described the experience they had gained as memory related or reminiscent. 'Nostalgia' was also found to be a feature of other studies into the recreation experience. 

Visitors who had described their experience as reminiscent or nostalgic were in particular reminded of things from their childhood years or of things they could remember their (grand) parents having, such as the tin bath, old sewing machine or black lead grate (as presented in the Millworker's House). As one respondent said, 'It takes you back to your youth and makes you think of what your gran had before'. Another elderly respondent explained, 'I was comparing it all to when I was young; I can relate to a lot, even Sunday activities; nobody would dream of doing anything on a Sunday in those days; I used to feel guilty even putting the washing out'. More frequently, visitors had experienced more general memory prompts such as, 'I can remember that' or 'Can you remember having one of those?' For the vast majority of tourists interviewed, however, the experience gained at New Lanark were largely impersonal and 'astonishment' at the history of New Lanark and times of the nineteenth century' and in particular, 'insight into the social reforms of Robert Owen' (mentioned by 28 out of the 40). As one tourist commented, 'We hadn't realized that the Co-operative movement had started here or about Robert Owen's Socialism; we hadn't fully appreciated what Robert Owen had done and to think it all took place so long ago'. Another respondent described what they had gained from their visit as, 'I learned a lot more about our history and that Robert Owen had vision about things that we take for granted nowadays'. The visit to New Lanark was therefore perceived to have increased visitors' general knowledge, primarily through a beneficial learning experience.

A minority of tourists also felt that they had benefited from having had an enjoyable time or 'good day out' (stated by six out of the 40 interviewed). Factors which had contributed to a 'good day out', as reported by visitors, included the experience being 'restful', feeling 'relaxed', 'learning about something of interest', and 'enjoying a pleasant walk in the fresh air' and in 'scenic surroundings'. One tourist stated, 'I've simply just had a nice day out, it's been an interesting and relaxing day'.

A small minority of tourists felt that they had also benefited from being able to draw comparisons between life then and now, which frequently made visitors more appreciative of their life today and in the future. The comments of one respondent described how, 'It's nice to see the past, it makes us appreciate the present and the future, but it also makes you appreciate a wee bit of the past; it made me feel sad that we'd lost some things in today's society like the Co-op shops and community spirit, nor can kids play safely in the streets like we used to be able to in the old days; it does make you realise how different things are today'. In fact, a small minority of tourists believed they had benefited from reliving personal memories of the past, as certain familiar exhibit items had reminded them 'of a part of your life that you had forgotten about'.

The fact that all visitors to New Lanark did benefit by the insight they had gained is a clear strength in meeting disparate needs. In part, this was dependent on the attractions and activities they had chosen to experience during their visit as mentioned above (eg whether they had decided to visit the Visitor Centre complex or undertake the riverside walk to the Falls of Clyde and a general stroll around the village). The benefits they gain from undertaking those experiences will also be determined by how that particular experience is constructed. Indeed, some visitors to the Millworker's House, for example, may benefit from reliving memories as they are faced with 1930s household items from a lifestyle they can personally

Strengths: Benefits (SB). An overall majority of the tourists interviewed reported that their visit to New Lanark had been beneficial (mentioned by 36 out of the 40 interviewed). The research suggests that a strength of New Lanark is therefore the range of benefits being gained by visitors. The main benefits gained by tourists flowed from their experiences of learning, from 'gaining insight' into social and industrial history, as well as 'an appreciation of the life and times of the nineteenth century' and in particular, 'insight into the social reforms of Robert Owen' mentioned by 28 out of the 40). As one tourist commented, 'We hadn't realized that the Co-operative movement had started here or about Robert Owen's Socialism; we hadn't fully appreciated what Robert Owen had done and to think it all took place so long ago'. Another respondent described what they had gained from their visit as, 'I learned a lot more about our history and that Robert Owen had vision about things that we take for granted nowadays'. The visit to New Lanark was therefore perceived to have increased visitors' general knowledge, primarily through a beneficial learning experience.
remember, whilst other younger visitors will benefit from an educational insight into how people in the past lived.

The interviews conducted showed that tourists visiting New Lanark also believed the visit to be beneficial to other people as well as themselves. A visit to New Lanark was thought to be an enjoyable day out for all types of visitor and highly educational (mentioned by 32 out of the 40 interviewed), especially for children of school age (even though it was felt that these children would find it difficult to relate to fully and, consequently, to understand fully the lifestyle being interpreted). From gaining an experiential insight into past life, it was felt by respondents that children would be educated 'in a way they can’t learn at school'. One tourist described how, 'it has given my daughter insight into a bit of our history, she could see how people used to live by going into the old shop and houses and has been shown that life has never stayed the same'.

Another respondent described how they felt children could benefit from visiting New Lanark: ‘Being young, children compare their lives to their contemporaries whereas, as parents, we compare their lives to those that we had when we were young; therefore we perceive them to be a lot better off nowadays whereas they only see the things their friends have got and which they haven’t; hopefully, it’ll make them appreciate what they have got today’.

A small minority of visitors also reported that the visit had kept their children occupied and that this had been seen as beneficial. Visitor comments included, ‘It has kept the children entertained and will hopefully have tired them out as they’re always hyper-active on holiday’, as well as, ‘The kids were kept occupied even though they are too young to really take much in’.

A small minority of tourists interviewed also believed that people who were of an old enough age to remember artefacts and past living conditions would benefit from reliving past personal memories. Visitor comments included, ‘For older people, it’s enjoyable to live in the past for a wee while, and there is enough at New Lanark to be nostalgic’, and ‘my mother really enjoyed remembering some things from looking around the houses and shops’. In general, however, the tourists interviewed believed that other visitors could benefit in the same ways as themselves, although this would be dependent upon visitor type and individualized motivations.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses: activities (WA). Insight into possible weaknesses of the activities provided at New Lanark can be seen from visitors’ comparative comments. Of the tourists interviewed who had visited a similar attraction within the past two years, over half of them (14 out of 26 tourists) reported that there was not as much to see and do at New Lanark in comparison with the activities offered at other similar attractions. Tourists reported in particular that like attractions had a wider variety of more ‘novel’ exhibits which gave visitors a greater ‘immersed’ feel for the past such as an underground mine trip or seeing costumed demonstrators re-enacting what life would have been like. In comparison with other visits, the lack of activities in which tourists could feel totally ‘immersed’ was felt to be a potential weakness at New Lanark.

Weaknesses: Settings (WS). The visitor survey conducted at New Lanark showed that only a very small number of visitors (two out of the 40 tourists interviewed) were dissatisfied with their visit to New Lanark. The reasons for their dissatisfaction were that the village was ‘too commercial’ and ‘over-idealized’. One respondent commented that, ‘Having cars parked in the village does not give the right impression of how life used to be, and there is now too much commercialism here; I feel that the whole village is just too over-idealized’.

In comparison with similar attractions, New Lanark was perceived by the visitors interviewed to have a more spectacular and pleasant setting. However, a minority of those tourists who had visited a similar attraction within the previous two years commented that New Lanark did not present as much ‘action’, or ‘reality’ of the hardships of past life, such as that re-enacted by costumed interpreters or staged with the use of industrial smells and noise at some other attractions. In this way, it may be considered a possible weakness as well as a strength that New Lanark does not concentrate on a setting which interprets the hardships and gloom of past industrial society, as presented at many other attractions with which tourists may be familiar.

A minority of visitors also felt that there were too many static displays (information boards) which were perceived to deter some visitors, especially children, from stopping to read the information. One respondent commented that, ‘there should be more things for the children as they just will not stand and read labels’. These visitors commented that they would have liked to have seen perhaps the use of more audio-visual displays, as well as even more things to involve children or for people to touch.

A minority of tourists at New Lanark (13 out of the 40 interviewed), notably the elderly visitors and infirm, expressed concern over the village’s difficult terrain and this may present possible restrictions to the undertaking of the activities at New Lanark. The sitting of the village requires visitors to descend a steep hill to enter the village, and even though many tourist coaches drive visitors down into the village, some visitors are prevented from walking around
because of the uneven ground surface and frequently need places to rest.

Weaknesses: Experiences (WE). While it appears from the visitor survey conducted that a vast majority of visitors had enjoyed an educational experience, only a small minority (six out of the 40 tourists interviewed) said that the experience they had received was one of ‘fun’ or ‘entertainment’. This finding suggests caution in providing solely educational experiences to the neglect of visitor fun or entertainment, when the primary motivation of tourists visiting heritage attractions is one of a ‘generalist’ day out.

A small minority of tourists also commented that in comparison with their experiences at like attractions, they had found it harder to actually experience or ‘relive’ past life at New Lanark or that the experience they had received as more a ‘rosy’ or ‘idealistic’ portrayal of the past. One visitor commented that, ‘I got more out of my visit over twenty years ago when we were walking around the empty shells of the houses’ and ‘having cars parked in the village does not give the right impression of how life used to be’. Some visitors therefore reported that they would like to have seen even more ‘old houses’ or ‘industrial relics’ or, conversely, even more ways to have become ‘immersed’ in the past.

From the in-depth interviews undertaken at New Lanark, only a minority of visitors described their experience as memory related, although these visitors appeared to be instancing, rather than reliving, personal memories. Tourist visitors appeared therefore to be experiencing the past rather than their past, and this experience can be seen as different from ASEB grid analysis at similar attractions interpreting social and industrial heritage where informal memory prompting has been found to constitute a major source of visitor satisfaction. However, we need to be careful not to over readily generalize from a few case examples of attractions. Equally, this can be interpreted as a strength rather than a weakness if reaching beyond memory is regarded as pertinent.

Weaknesses: Benefits (WB). New Lanark has clearly avoided the often criticized focus on nostalgia. This point noted results from the visitor survey, which highlighted that more experiences at New Lanark could perhaps be constructed to enable visitors to more frequently draw upon personal insight or memories, particularly as regards the 1930s period displays. In this way, visitors interviewed believed that the otherwise unfamiliar lifestyle being presented would be readily made more familiar to the majority of visitors. A danger of pursuing this, however, is the risk of dissipating the period message given by the present displays.

Conclusions

The present analysis has taken the core products of attractions to be the experiences of their consumers. In this sense, attractions are constructions for experience, and need to be evaluated on this basis. Refinements to SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis proposed in the management sciences have included the notion of developing a new version of the conventional technique which is ‘focused’. Focused, that is, on issues critical to product development and ‘customer orientated’, whereby the strengths and weaknesses of an organization are identified in terms of things valued by customers and recognized by them. To this end, a new type of analysis has been proposed, ASEB (activities, settings, experiences, benefits) grid analysis. This is one potential refinement of conventional SWOT analysis, and one readily applicable to the management of tourist attractions. The new technique proposed has been demonstrated in its demi-grid form by use of a case study of New Lanark World Heritage Village in Scotland.

ASEB grid analysis is a joint derivative of a focused SWOT analysis and the levels of the sequential demand hierarchy. By focusing specifically on the experiences and benefits gained by tourists from visiting attractions, ASEB grid analysis pays crucial attention to what is actually being gained or consumed by tourists from a particular attraction visit (as expressed in tourist visitors’ own words). It also points to what visitors actually want or expect from their visit. This constitutes an area of tourism research which is of paramount importance in meeting customer needs and wants, and in delivering and maintaining customer satisfaction at tourist attractions, but an area which to date has been widely neglected in many visitor studies.

ASEB grid analysis focuses on the experiential core of tourist attractions, that is, the visitor experiences being facilitated through products offered and how these are consumed by individual tourists. ASEB grid analysis is therefore a conceptualization of consumption which facilitates a focus not just upon more conventional activities and settings but also upon the core products of what is actually experienced and how these experiences may be beneficial. The experiences being gained by visitors to New Lanark were found to be emotional and thought provoking and, in the main, constituted an enjoyable educational experience for tourist visitors. The main benefits gained by tourists were found to have stemmed from having a beneficial learning experience even though the majority of tourists were found to have been visiting New Lanark for a generalist day out. Furthermore, New Lanark should not on the basis of this survey be characterized as a nostalgia park, and in consequence the analysis raises implicit questions about the over ready characterization of historically themed attractions.
Clearly, New Lanark is perceived by its visitors in a substantially positive light and therefore the present application of the ASEB demi-grid focuses upon strengths rather than upon weaknesses. The ASEB technique requires testing on less positive applications to see how far consumers will reveal weaknesses as well as strengths. The present application is only a demi-grid rather than the full grid. The parts of the grid being resourced in the present analysis are those which derive extensively from consumer experience. The other parts of the grid (those not discussed in the present application) require the use of external data through which consumers' reactions can be positioned. ASEB grid analysis is offered as one technique whereby the experiential components of tourism may be studied, and may thus be thought of as a technique supplementing studies of memories and expectations which may also have an indirect experiential focus.

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