Emerging Markets Queries in Finance and Business

Should museums and art galleries be just "for arts' sake" or should they suit the needs of tourists?

Marija Dragicevic[a,*], Stijepo Letunic[a]

[a]University of Dubrovnik, Department for Economics and Business Economics, Dubrovnik 20000, Croatia

Abstract

The museums and art galleries market is heterogeneous with many and varied visitors, who are differently motivated and have different expectations. The purpose of the paper was to respond to the question „What museums and art galleries really are in the opinion of tourists and how they sell art to the tourists", such and „What museums and art   galleries should be and how they should sell art to the tourists? ". For the purpose of this paper we have explored the perception of 300 tourists who have visited Dubrovnik in September, October and November in 2012. According to the results of the research it is visible that museums and art galleries often do not fit tourists needs and expectations applying object based approach instead selling art applying customers based approach The challenge for curators is to rewrite the agendas for museums and art galleries, so that collections can begin to serve the needs of tourists and to fulfil their expectations.

Key words: museums; galleries; art; selling; Dubrovnik

1.   Introduction

Falk and Dierking, 1992 emphasizes that experience they get while visiting museums is the process start before, during and after the event. McLean, 1994 states that museums are essentially object-based and their very existence depends on the possession of a collection. This could also explain the custodial centric approach to museums in general i.e. a focus on the object rather than customer centric. When Schmitt, 1999 proposed the term "experiential marketing", it has started discussions about the content of experience and elements influence on the level of satisfaction, what is important for further marketing strategies decision making. Bernardi, 2005

* Corresponding author. Tel.: 0038520445923; fax: 0038520445901
E-mail address: marija.dragicevic@unidu.hr.

suggests museum sustainability is questionable in the long term, with a need for fundamental change and using more effective and appropriate marketing strategies. At the same time museums must reflect what honestly comprises "localness" Harrison, 1997.

Given the role of museums is to educate, inspire and portray stories of the past, knowledge generation and stimulation, a service centric paradigm for analysis and management is argued to be more appropriate. Very often in art museums (classical and modern) and art galleries tourists are guided in the manner that they only pass by the exponats and it fails to satisfy visitors adequately. Very rarely curators go one step further applying innovative and new strategies including all this elements. For the purpose of this paper we have stated basic hypotheses:

H1. Product (custodial) centric focus which is still most usually used in museums and art galleries collections presentation has to be changed with the one focus on the customer preferences.

For testing this hypotheses we have carried out the primary research in the area of Dubrovnik on the sample of 300 tourists.

2.   The Role of Museums/art galleries in the tourist destination

Culture and cultural heritage become prominent resources in any society. Cultural tourism resources are monuments, museums, routes, entertainment centres, manifestations Pancic-Kombol, 2000, p. 176-177. There is currently great debate on the scope and practice of museums/art galleries in the 21st century. Falk & Dierking, 1992 proposed an interactive experience model, and suggested that visitor experience is not necessarily passive. Uzell, 1998 suggests that „museums and interpretive centers can be seen as places where people come to understand themselves". Wang, 2000 identifies two objects related notions of authentic experience, that exist in the literature (objective and constructive authenticity) and introduces a new approach named existential authenticity which emphasizes tourist's subjective activities. Recently museum directors from around the globe were upset when Frank Howarth (director of the Sydney Museum the oldest museum in Australia) suggested ''museums should exhibit in shopping malls as that is where the audiences are" Wynhausen, 2007. Howarth's suggestion focused on the need for museums to focus on what is ''contemporary and relevant" to be sustainable**.** According to the Weerawardena, Sullivan and Mort, 2006, sustainability is used with the meaning of an organization having sufficient resources to maintain existence, and fulfill its objectives into the future and as Caldwell, 2005 identifies ''demonstrate that they deliver 'value for money' . They have gradually acquired visitor-based roles instead of museum based roles. Thus, the need for visitor studies has emerged Weil, 2000.

Pierroux, 1998   or   Caldwell, 2005 cite that critics of museum management argue they lack customer orientation, they are playgrounds of political correctness and that they are trapped in custodianship of ancient artifacts failing to present them in an exciting and marketable way. Others as Boorsma, 2006 have criticized the lack of research scope for many institutions and the lack of customer orientated interaction. Understanding the customer dimensions of the service is essential for the development of increased visits and creating value not only for consumers but for the investors Weerawardena, Sullivan and Mort, 2006.

Moreover, museums/art galleries as cultural attractions tend to attract market segments with relatively high levels of education and income, which can lead to relatively high benefits to all stakeholers in destinations Robinson, 1999. Robinson, 1928 cites that museums have been gathering information on their visitors since at least late 20st**.** Hood, 1983 urged museum professionals to focus on the psychographic characteristics of visitors. In recent years, there has been a greater concentration on collecting data of a more qualitative nature Hooper-Greenhil, 1994 or Walsh and Duke, 1991. Specifically of interests in this paper is the nature of tourists' experiences, what makes a museum an attraction, and what the tourist looks for when visiting museums and art galleries in Dubrovnik as a touristic destination with rich cultural heritage**.**

3. Results of the empirical research carried out in the tourist destination Dubrovnik

3.1. Metodology of the research

   For the purpose of this paper we have carried out primary research in Dubrovnik.The empirical research has been carried out by interviewing tourists and including the sample of 300 tourists. The aim of the research was to explore the tourists' perception towards museums'/art galleries' collections presentation in Dubrovnik. We have interviewed tourists in October, November and December 2012. The questionnare was semi-structured and included 20 questions. The first group of questions was about demographic data, the second group of questions was about tourist experience during visiting museums/art galleries in Dubrovnik. For analyzing data we have used 5-point Likert scale, descriptive and inferential statistics.

3.2. Results of research and discussion

   Men in the study were represented with a share of 46%, while women accounted for 54%. The share of 42% belongs to the individual tourists and 58% of the tourists have used package-tour. According to the results of the research it is visible that we have included all categories of age. The largest number of tourists (26%) were between 56 and 65 yeras old, than between 46 and 55 (20%), 36 and 45 (18,66%), than follow tourist older than 65 (17%). Smaller part of 7% belongs to youth tourists till 25 and 11,33% were tourists between 26 and 35. Tourists are mostly college-educated or have finished high school (42%) or secondary school (40%). One important part of 12% has master's or doctor's degree. The fact is that only small part of them (5%) have finished elementary school. According to the chi-squre testing ($\alpha=0,05$), it is evident that there is no correlation between educational level and satisfactional level with the experience in museums/art galleries.
   The results of the research show that 24% of the respondents indicated the image of museums/art galleries as one of the motives or the only motive for visiting museums/art galleries in Dubrovnik, 15% consider it is curiosity, 24% cite it is education, 15% state the entertainment, 28% consider it is value of collection. Only 23% visit museums/art galleries because of the low prices so we can conclude the price is not so significant factor for making decisons for visiting museums/art galleries in Dubrovnik as much as the other factors.The most of them come because they would like to get some new experience (67%). According to the results of the research 73% of tourists are for the first time in museums/art galleries and the rest have allready visited museums and art galleries in Dubrovnik. The largest part of tourists (54%) that have visited museums/art galleries in Dubrovnik for the first time would like to come agan if they can expect something new in return visit, 20% of them do not want to come again and 25% do not know.
   Satisfaction with museum/art galleries collection reports 54%, of which 15% are very satisfied, 30% of tourists are   neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with collections, while   15% of them are dissatisfied with collections. Satisfaction with museum/art galleries presentation reports 27%, of which 12% are very satisfied, 46% of the tourists are   neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with presentation, while 26% are dissatisfied with presentation. According to the results of the research it is visible that there are different categories of tourist expectations realizing. The largest part of tourists (65%) have partially realized their expectations, 19% have not realized their expectations at all. At the same time 16% of them are in the category of tourists that have realized their expectation. The main reasons for dissatisfaction with the visit are expecting better collections, unprofessional guiding, not experiencing something new and not realizing them-self as they would like. So we can conclude that besides art collections as a core products selling in museums and art galleries there are other factors which have significant influence on the expectations realizing.
   The most of the respondents, 39% who have visited museum/art galleries in Dubrovnik consider the strategies applied in museums and art galleries are not adequate, 35% think it is partialy adequate, while 23% consider it is adequate. We can conclude that curators have to rewrite the agendas applied in museums/art galleries

practice. Tourists also consider that the strategies are based on selling objects and just a small part of them thinks that strategies are based on customer preferences and expectations.

4. **Conclusion**

   According to the survey data obtained by interviewing sample of 300 respondents who visited Dubrovnik it is evident that the approach towards museums/art galleries offer presentation in Dubrovnik has not become adequate and adapted to customers needs and expectations. It can be concluded that curators have to rewrite the agendas in museums/art galleries practice because tourists mostly consider that the strategies are based on selling objects and just a small part of them thinks that the strategies are based on customers preferences and can satisfy their expectations. The socio-economic activities such as education could be an important variable for making decisions about strategies that can be efficient**.** Mckercher and Cros , 2002 point out that curators at the same time should take care of providing a sence of authenticity allways asking themselves: "What is autentical?". We consider it is necessary to continue with such researches in the future including more tourists. The number of 300 participants we consider as the basic limitation of our research. We consider that the curators do not care enough about marketing researches and do not apply results of scientific research in museums/art galleries practice, so we suggest to apply it more in the future. In this research we have not divided public and private art galleries, so it can be subject for the further research such as depth analyzing each art museum in Dubrovnik. Both we consider as the limitation of our research, too. Although there are limitations in our research we hope we have given our contribution to lightening of this problematic.

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