

Article

Potential of Marketing Communication as a Sustainability Tool in the Context of Castle Museums

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Abstract: Based on the OECD research from 2020, tourism is one of the biggest and fast-growing sectors of the world economy. Tourism plays a key role in job creation as well as in added value creation. In 2018, the revenue from tourism in Slovakia totaled EUR 2.7 billion, which is EUR 4.7% more than the year before, where the mentioned refers to 3% GDP and 27.6% of the services-related exports. The authors drew their attention to identifying some marketing communication tools' impact on the castle museum attendance in Slovakia and analyzed the degree and dynamics of the communication structure implementation in the context of cultural heritage. In general, 5840 cultural tourists were interviewed during three restricted cycles: 2006–2009, 2011–2014, and 2016–2019; the interviewing was held through the questionnaires only during the summer seasons. The study herein shows that the quality perception of the carried out offline marketing communication activities and the visit intention itself have significant influence on the interest of customers in repeated visits to castle museums.

Keywords: marketing communication; castle museum; cultural heritage; museum attendance



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1. Introduction

Tourism is a dominant source of jobs on a global level [1], and there is also a meaningful quantity of indirect work engagement in construction and infrastructure development, along with the work of providing food, drinks, and souvenirs to tourists [2].

All cultural agents participate in the production and distribution of cultural goods and services, while governments and their institutions have additional duties to incorporate cultural rights into legislation and elaborate cultural policy [3].

Culture is the essence of tourism [4] when it is content-rich and meaningful for tourism development [5]. On the other hand, tourism may support cultural sustainability when it becomes a valuable tool for the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage and the diversity of cultural expressions [6].

Cultural policy is an administration instrument for culture-related issues. This view is also shared by the culturologist Zuzana Slušná [7], who defines cultural policy as the governance and management of culture, mainly by authorities, that create and handle the material content of artworks. Cultural policy is mainly understood as a set of propositions and actions implemented by governments for the promotion and support of cultural practices and values [8]. Traditionally, it is concerned with providing support for the arts and cultural heritage institutions, but it has expanded, and now includes areas such as cultural industries, urban development, and tourism, encompassing a wide range of cultural products [9]. The models of cultural policies differ significantly in each national or regional case [10–12].

The cultural policy then sets out a direction and a way of guiding the culture in a particular state or territorial area concerned. Patočka and Heřmanová [13] mark cultural policy as the summary of measures and provisions which form the development strategy of institutions, responsible for certain cultural segment and specific cultural issues. The concept of cultural management is often linked to the general management in the culture sector [14] or arts management (basically understood as management of cultural institutions and/or organizations, practically using all management functions: planning, organising, implementing, monitoring). It is still important to state that cultural management is a broader term that gives the ability to look at the cultural sector not from the perspective of the narrow, internal, organizational, and cultural environment, but by using a more contextual view, paying a proper attention to the external environment of the field [15]. Along with that, the institution, as a driver of cultural policy, would choose the most suitable approach, tools, and particular measures to operate in the content and forms of its strategy execution in complete synergy with the existing state organ, as a crucial player in the field of cultural development. The cultural policy may be defined as a way of handling the management in the field of culture in the terms of operational, tactical, and strategic management.

Cultural management in the culture sector (particularly identified as arts sector management at state, regional or city level) functions in the complex social system [16] as it is a unique process, which can determine different ways of development according to national or international policy goals (regarding managing cultural differences, [17], debureaucratization of decisions [18], strategic decision making [19], transnational cultural policy making [20], cultural industries [21], etc.

The interdisciplinary character of management is interesting for cultural, artistic, and museum environments where the use of certain management methods is called arts management [22]. This definition not only interconnects the theory and practice of the successful management of cultural institutions, but primarily gives the emphasis on appropriate deployment of creative [13], human [23–25], and financial resources [26]; ensures motivation and support from the widest possible community; and implements the artistic ideas, planning, governance, and control of different cultural projects or museum programs. It is also possible to define it as the series of activities for ensuring customer access to cultural heritage, its presentation, interpretation, correct positioning, appropriate project funding, effective marketing, and dynamic marketing communication [27].

Numerous authors agree that cultural management's success in the ever-changing environments at the state level depends on timelessness of managerial competencies [28,29] such as good knowledge of European (or international) and national cultural policies, knowledge of cultural history and/or the arts [15], planning, organizing knowledge and skills [30], implementing tactics, monitoring decisions [31], and understanding concepts. The spectrum of variations and understandings differs according to the understanding of the culture: either the concept explains culture as a system or a process, and cultural management can be seen broader from the state level perspective, or from the state management point of view, culture is explained as the arts sector [15].

Museums play an important role in promoting tourism industries and creating local jobs. Being related to the consumption of the people's leisure time, museums should build marketing communication strategies inspired by the successful activities adopted by other entertainment industries and learning institutions competing for the same attention and interest from the audience [32]. Marketing communication itself, and in particular its forms and methods in the context of cultural heritage, has seen a lot of changes in recent years, which is evident in the extension of communication infrastructure varieties in castles, the strengthening of communication activities towards the wider public, and the constant search for new, non-traditional methods to present historical sites [33]. This process is linked with the building of identity [34], strengthening the image of castle museums, stimulating the demand for its brand [35,36], changing cultural tourism temples opinion

concerning media and targeted visitor groups, and of course, understanding the marketing communication as a tool for management-level decisions.

The study herein aims to search the potential of marketing communication tools in the context of castle museums to increase museum attendance and promote awareness of customers about cultural heritage and its sustainability. The authors draw attention to the impact of individual marketing communication tools on the attendance of investigated historical sites and analyze the level and dynamic of implementing communication infrastructure in the cultural environment.

Additionally, the ubiquity of marketing in contemporary society, providing the wallpaper to social life, both online and offline, plays into the notion that marketing is responsible for fuelling irresponsible levels and types of consumption [37,38]. Marketing is fundamental to tourism businesses and destinations [39,40]; thus, effective marketing is largely responsible for the number, types, and origins of tourists found in a destination and for ensuring viable destinations which provide a valuable contribution to economic development and growth [37]. Modern marketing is oriented at sustainable development, which is a framework for designing policies and strategies for continued economic and social progress [41]. Taking into account that the sustainable development of business organization largely depends on the quality of relations and builds on the long-term and marketing communication that plays a key role in this process [42]. Marketing and communication can make sustainability relevant to the decision-making and purchasing behaviour of the consumer [37]. Marketing communication is unique and complex because it focuses on feelings, moods, and personal preferences [43]. In order to promote the sustainable development of business, the organisations must learn to choose the most appropriate ways of marketing communication, ensure strengthened relationships with customers, and gain a competitive advantage [42,44].

2. Theoretical Background

At the beginning was arts marketing concerned with “marketing as a set of techniques” such as promotion, pricing, and market segmentations [45]. In other words, the tactics from marketing in commercial sectors were directly applied into arts to increase the sales of tickets [46]. The proliferation of research in arts marketing has led the discipline “from marketing as a functional tool to marketing as a business philosophy and strategy” [47].

For the museum environment, marketing communication plays a vital role [48]). It is not only focused on addressing the existing audience [49] but also the potential visitors who have not shown any interest in the given institution yet [50]). Moreover, it performs as the challenging task of creating a powerful feeling and sense of credibility, satisfaction, and security (repeated affirmation).

Marketing communication creates an exposed past of museum management [51,52]. The evaluation of the effectiveness of marketing communication is done based on the comparison of results achieved within the objectives, set in the marketing plan [53]. These objectives, however, might be identified not just as direct economic objectives [54–57] but also as communication objectives [49,58]). Consequently, the effectiveness of marketing communication might be monitored from at least two perspectives: the economic impact as well as the communication one [59].

Economic effectiveness is associated with the provision and monitoring of only economic indicators [54,55], which, in a museum environment may be considered the change in the sold volume of entrance tickets for exhibitions or the amount of profit on turnover from the rent of historic premises as such indicators. The sales impact of marketing communication with evaluation measurement are treated as more complex issues than only the measurement of communication effects [60]. The reason why this aspect is more problematic is connected with the challenge of saying to what extent some progress in museum attendance is influenced by effective marketing communication. Marketing communication comprises only one element of the marketing mix, but a great number of various factors,

for example, the product itself [55], the museum and its value [54], and competition in the leisure-time market [61], might influence the sold volume of entrance tickets for exhibitions.

Thanks to the evaluation of different marketing communication tools and their effectiveness [62,63], museums can now target and plan their communication activities. It is generally recognized that each museum should find the best possible presentation form and specific method of marketing communication, which would help the museum to set itself apart from the crowd [64]. Marketing communication tools should be deployed in an integrated manner to ensure the message consistency and maximum impact [65].

The museum marketing communication process itself is based on the constant communication with visitors [61], where the basic communication pillar is formed by the promotional or communication mix, currently known as offline marketing communication tools.

Institutions with the focus on cultural heritage management might also use one of four forms of advertisement for their better visibility:

- advertisement to promote the institution, its name, and image;
- advertisement to promote the product, means exhibition;
- advertisement to promote a one-time event or social occasion;
- advertisement aimed at raising the awareness of visitors, for example, by museum club membership [66].

The preparation of a museum's communication strategy should build on properly planned activities and procedures [63] that are appropriate for cultural tourism temples, to identify the level of relative importance, and to allocate advertisement costs considering the other elements of the promotional mix [67]. The decision should be based on the marketing research results [68,69], the knowledge of the market [70], the most precise visitor segmentation per chosen targeted groups [71], and the choice of advertising means should be built on the strategic objectives of the museum. Only on this basis is it possible to specify the objectives of each advertising campaign and choose the correct content, timing, and available channels, where timing in particular applies to the time-limited offers, for example, exhibitions. In practice, the museum utilizes communication mix means in conformity with the marketing communication objectives of the given historical site and marketing, or rather, the communication strategy [72] of the museum as well as its financial possibilities [73,74].

Public Relations provide a great alternative to almost all advertisement drawbacks [75], which is of vital importance to non-profit organizations. Even in the case of cultural-property customers, who are more advertisement-resistant, public relations allow greater space for attracting the consumers' attention [75,76] towards a specific historical site. Public relations in museums and cultural institutions might be considered as a part of marketing and communication activities [61]. At the same time, they can be a precursor for further museum marketing activities, and in the minds of customers and specific targeted groups, they may evoke a positive attitude towards the institution [77]. As public relations influence the public opinion, not only they have an impact on museum attendance but also on fundraising from state and private sectors.

Although the face-to-face trade is a matter for the commercial segment [78], it also has an irreplaceable role in the field of culture [79]. Museum presentations during different expos and exhibitions represent the most common tool [65,80] in the battle for public attention toward the organization. In historical sites, face-to-face trade is assigned to individual employees, museum guides; in turn, they give the museum services their unique creative contribution and create their variations and quality. Depending on the inventiveness, willingness, and disposition of museum guides, customers are satisfied with museum tours and might consider another visit in the future. A visitor feels when the guide himself is engaged in the tour, when he has a special relationship to the historical site (for example the castle), and when the guide does not only tell memorized phrases but invests a part of his own experience, interesting facts, and memories into the tour [77]. Such a personal approach enhances the credibility of the organization, strengthens customers'

experience, and thus reinforces the service quality. Museum guides become the so-called brand ambassadors [81]: they represent the museum or some particular exhibition brand.

In the museum environment, the sales support is given in a financial form [82]). In museum practice, this comes in different discounts for entry tickets for some customer categories [83] or in the form of “free entrance days”. In Slovakia, such days are set on the first Sundays in a month, when museums, under the authority of the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic, do not charge their entrance fees. European Night is a similar type of event for museums and galleries abroad [84], when during one May night, all the museums are opened and charge-free, eager to show all professional activities and initiate visitors into the mysteries of museum cuisine. For several years, a similar event has been taking place in our country as well.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a meaningful influence on the tourism industry as a result of travel restrictions together with a collapse in the demand from the part of potential tourists [85]. The travel businesses have been greatly hit by the spread of COVID-19, as a lot of states have instituted travel constraints and are trying to keep the spread under control, which led to the stop of the whole sector [86,87]. Research by the BBC revealed that in multiple areas of the world, organised trips decayed by 90% [88]. Divergent and one-sided travel boundaries happened locally, and plenty of tourist sites visitation across the globe, such as museums, amusement parks, and sports venues, stopped their operation [89]. We can assert that tourism is one of the hardest-hit sectors by the pandemic, and it requires quick and complex mobilization. Tourism entities should focus on the development of activities, which would allow tourism to recover from the effects of pandemic.

The opportunities to strengthen the territorial development by enhancing of the cultural heritage are not always consensually agreed upon. Conflicts arise when there is a lack of coordination between the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural values for local communities and the heritage marketing based on customer needs [90].

The creation of an effective marketing strategy according to current trends is the key process needed to achieve the sustainable growth that can result in attracting the great number of existing as well as potential customers [91,92]. Marketing strategies could help museums to fill up their mission and maximize customer satisfaction [61]). Furthermore, modern marketing components can largely contribute to museum financing [93,94]. The presented study is aimed at the research and the potential of marketing communication tools in the context of castle museums to increase museum attendance and promote awareness of customers about cultural heritage and its sustainability. The authors draw their attention to the impact of individual marketing communication tools on the attendance of investigated historical sites, to analyze the level and dynamics of communication infrastructure implementation in the cultural environment.

3. Materials and Methods

The goal of the study is aimed at the identification of individual marketing communication tools with their impact on the attendance of investigated historical sites and the analysis of level and dynamics of implementing the communication infrastructure in the cultural heritage environment.

Historical buildings, presented under the notion of historical sites, were chosen as the object of the study, and under this category belong castles, marked in museum classification as castle museums. The objects are situated in the territory of the Slovak Republic, from the north to the south, from the east to the west, and each of them is located in different territorial unit (self-governing region). From the local as well as foreign customers' interests, such castle museums are ranked among the most attractive cultural exhibitions in Slovakia. The main criterion in choosing the sites was the existence and availability of requested figures and secondary data where the comparison of individual investigated castles covers several common multiple criteria:

- registration in the Central List of Cultural Heritage of the Slovak Republic;
- offering of services for the general public throughout the year;

- a part of Slovak history and national identity;
- receive regular transfers commonly known as internal or foreign grants for their activities and development;
- have more than 1000 expert-registered museum items;
- in the terms of human resources, they recruit on permanent employment and work agreements;
- core museum product is created permanent exhibition (sightseeing tour)
- exhibitions are available only with the supervision of the museum guide (lecturer) who provides interpretative services to museum customers. Audio guides might be used for additional customer communication activities;
- provision of a wide scale of cultural, educational, and recreational activities;
- communication with the public conducted via websites, social media, media reports, conferences, open days, etc.

All the reviewed objects are the members of Union of Museums in Slovakia, the independent legal entity and professional networking association in the Slovak Republic.

The data collection in the museum environment, in the form of customer interviews, was initiated during the period 2006–2019, and ran during three restricted cycles, always during the summer seasons of 2006–2009, 2011–2014, and 2016–2019. The results from the primary data collection might contribute to the identification of potential marketing communication tools to specify the key activities supporting the rise in attendance and customer awareness of Slovak cultural heritage.

The process of actual data acquisition took place continuously, throughout the year, with the regard to the opening hours of the historical sites and the individual field-research days for data collection were randomly chosen. The basic measured set includes all castle museum customers, and the sample contains data from the customers who visited the castle museum during the field-research days. In other words, the sample was selected by quota sampling. When choosing the respondents, the method of appropriate opportunity was chosen, so the approached respondents were only Slovak-speaking customers who visited an exhibition, participated in animation activities, or attended a sociocultural program, and in total, 5840 cultural customers participated in the research during all three restricted cycles.

During the primary information gathering period from 2006 to 2009, the method of writing was used, in other words, the handed-out paper questionnaires. Later, during the periods 2011–2014 and 2016–2019, visitors filled in the questionnaires in the Google Forms application on a tablet with Internet access. In the terms of methodology, we focused on the existence of the psychological barriers of the respondents to respond to technology-intensive and content-extensive questionnaires. Based on these facts, we chose the most adequate questionnaire extent to eliminate possible technical issues and to make it less time-consuming. While creating questions, we focused on their mutual symbiosis. Ten questions on facts and five sociodemographic questions were offered in the Slovak language on three pages, and for the purpose of this paper, the answers to the following six questions from the questionnaire were processed:

What was the purpose of your visit?

How many times have you visited this castle museum?

Will you visit this museum in the future?

What were the information sources and how did you learn about the museum?

How do you rate the museum's website?

How do you rate the museum's communication via social media?

We aimed to receive the most indicative answers to enable their usage for making conclusions that leads to future recommendations. The foundation for the methodology was the necessity of gathering the data not just for the castle museums but also for the individual historical sights. Respondents answered via the scale from one to five—the 'indefinite answers' were included. The returnability rate of questionnaires in individual

historical sights was 100%, as every visitor filled in the questionnaire along with buying the entrance tickets, and statistical analysis was conducted in SPSS software.

Considering the current trends were the use of marketing communication tools has an enormous positive economic impact on the subjects that can use them effectively, the authors were eager to identify the key aspects of available tools to maximize the tool potential for the benefit of objects under investigation. In research terms, the authors have targeted interview questions connected with offline marketing communication activities and repeated visits to castle museums from the customers' side. Based on the above-mentioned examination, the authors focused on the issues as follows:

- Vo1: Is there a dependency between the quality of offline marketing communication activities and the intention of customers to visit the castle museum repeatedly?
- Vo2: Is there a dependency between the events organization and the intention of customers to visit the castle museum repeatedly?

Coming out from the stated research questions, the authors proposed two research hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *The quality perception of implemented offline marketing communication activities has a significant influence on the customers' interest to visit castle museums repeatedly.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *The intention of visiting the castle museum itself has a significant influence on customers' interest to visit the castle museum repeatedly.*

Data Analysis

The effect of evaluating the quality of offline activities, as well as the influence on the intention of visiting and the subsequent repeated visits to the objects under investigation, was assessed by fitting two separate cumulative-link mixed effect models (CLMM; 'ordinal' package in R) [95]. In both models, a random interception was estimated to the account for ratings, nested within the objects. The Gauss–Hermite quadrature approximation [96] of the maximum likelihood function with logic link function was used to fit the models, and likelihood ratio tests served to derive statistical significance values (p). For the first model (offline activities), the effects of evaluations were tested against the reference 'Cannot evaluate'. In the second model, the effects of the intention of an individual to visit an object were tested against the reference 'Exposure' intent of a visit.

4. Results

Our research has primarily focused on the reasons that played the key role in deciding to visit a certain castle museum.

The results from the period from 2006 to 2009 had shown essential and statistically significant difference between museums, with $\chi^2(12) = 3729.23$, $p < 0.001$, Cramer's $V = 0.811$. In Museum A, visitors unequivocally chose social events that statistically dominated in 92.3% of the responses. However, in Museum B, different values prevailed: almost all respondents (97.4%) chose the permanent exhibition as a reason for their visit. The situation in Museum C was slightly different compared to Museum B, with 65.3% of responses for a permanent exhibition as the reason for their visiting. However, Museum C, when compared to Museum B, showed higher interest in seasonal exhibitions, accounting for almost one-third of respondent answers (34.7%). In Museum D, answers on educational program visits, which were marked by 92.5% of respondents as the reason for visiting, were statistically significant. Such rating is directly related to the previous question on the economic status of visitors, which was, for this individual historical site, made by a higher percentage of students. Museum E received 100% of visitors' attraction from the permanent exhibition.

During the period from 2011 to 2014, the high and statistically significant difference between museums was repeated: $\chi^2(12) = 1391.95$, $p < 0.001$, Cramer's $V = 0.601$. Shifts in the numerical values occurred in all five castles. Museum A recorded a slight decrease

in the social occasion interest, which accounted for 82.6% of all answers, but the interest in permanent exhibition went up (15.1%). Museum B faced a noticeable fall in permanent exhibition interest (68.5%), which showed that more than two-thirds of visitors preferred the social events to the exhibition. The same 68.5 percent rate was identified in Museum C for the interest in the exhibition, which increased when compared to the previous research period. In Museum D, visitors were separated into three groups where the highest rate of 67.4% was for the permanent exhibition. In Museum E, the interest in permanent exhibitions decreased by 23.4% to the benefit of the social events.

The evaluated data from the third period from 2016 to 2019 also showed obvious and statistically significant differences between museums, with $\chi^2(12) = 3026.33$, $p < 0.001$, Cramer's $V = 0.707$. However, the difference was not as striking as from two previous research periods of 2006 to 2009 and 2011 to 2014. In Museum A and Museum B, there was an increase in the visitors' interest in social occasions and the rates reached 100% and nearly 90%. Museum C was able to keep the stable interest in seasonal exhibitions, however, a slight 3.9% decrease in the interest could still be seen compared to the previous research period. The most intense change had occurred in Museum D, where interest in the permanent exhibition almost reached zero points, and more than 80% of visitors showed interest in social events. In Museum E, the situation from the years 2006–2009 was repeated: all visitors marked the social events as their visit reason, which contributed to the statistical significance of the given value.

Following a brief review, three museums have their permanent visitors in terms of preferences. Museum A is visited by those who prefer social events, Museum B is preferred by those who are looking for seasonal exhibitions, and Museum E is visited due to the permanent exhibition.

In the context of the study, the authors were investigating whether visitors of individual castle museums would repeat their visit to historical sites sometimes in the future. Respondents were asked to evaluate their probability of repeated visits based on the scale from one to five—including the 'indefinite answer'. From the data comparison from individual museums was noted a statistically significant difference in repeated visit probability rate where $H(4) = 401.84$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_H^2 = 0.068$. The museum has shown the lowest probability rate of repeated visits in comparison with other museums with $Z \geq 5.228$, $p < 0.001$. In museum II, there was a lower probability rate of repeated visits when compared to museums V and III, where $Z \geq 8.513$, $p < 0.001$, and there was a distinctly higher probability rate of repeated visits in museum I, where $Z \geq 3.216$, $p \leq 0.013$.

Subsequently, the authors statistically evaluated the predicted probabilities of repeated castle museum visits as an estimate of the evaluated quality of offline marketing activities with $p < 0.001$ against the reference evaluation (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Cumulative link mixed model: Evaluation of offline activities → Repeated visit.

Predictor	Estimates			Analysis of Deviance			
	β	SE β	p	(e^β) O-R	χ^2	df	$p(\chi^2)$
Offline activities							
Poor	−0.713	0.175	<0.001	0.490	4417.6	3	<0.001
Satisfactory	2.623	0.164	<0.001	13.772			
Excellent	7.620	0.210	<0.001	1422.97			

Note: The unstandardized coefficients (β) are estimated with reference to "Cannot evaluate" level of the quality evaluation. SE—standard error of the estimate. O-R—odds ratio.

Table 2. Consideration of the repeated visit by evaluated quality of offline activities.

Evaluation of Offline Activities	Would You Consider Visiting an Object Again?				
	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Don't Know	Probably Yes	Definitely Yes
Cannot evaluate	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.9%)	99 (45.6%)	102 (47.0%)	14 (6.4%)
Poor	27 (5.6%)	64 (13.3%)	83 (17.2%)	274 (56.8%)	34 (7.0%)
Satisfactory	0 (0.0%)	164 (8.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1268 (61.6%)	625 (30.4%)
Excellent	0 (0.0%)	22 (0.7%)	1 (0.03%)	231 (7.5%)	2830 (91.8%)

Note. Numbers represent counts and percentages.

4.1. Effect of Evaluated Quality of Offline Activities on Consideration of the Repeated Visit

The authors found a sound impact of the evaluated quality of offline marketing activities on the decision to visit an object repeatedly, $\chi^2(3) = 4417.6$, $p < 0.001$ (Table 1). In particular, while positive evaluations were associated with a significantly higher chance to visit an object repeatedly, the poor evaluations predicted a significantly higher chance for not visiting an object again, or in other words, the lower probability of visiting an object again (Table 2 and Figure 1).

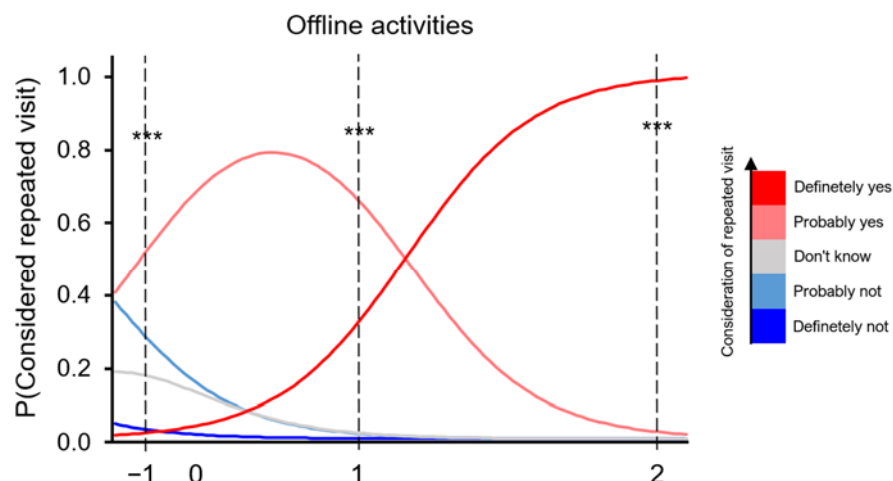


Figure 1. Predicted probabilities for considerations of repeated visit as a function of evaluated quality of offline activities. *** $p < 0.001$ against the reference evaluation (i.e., “Cannot evaluate”).

Based on the findings, we can confirm the hypothesis H1: The perception of the quality of implemented offline marketing communication activities has a significant influence on customer’s interest to visit castle museums repeatedly.

The authors statistically evaluated predicted probabilities of repeated castle museum visits as an estimate of the visit intention $p < 0.001$ against the reference evaluation (Tables 3 and 4)

Table 3. Cumulative link mixed model: Intent of a visit → Repeated visit.

Predictor	Estimates			Analysis of Deviance			
	β	SE β	p	(e^{β}) O-R	χ^2	df	p (χ^2)
Intent of a visit							
Educational program	0.089	0.176	0.612	1.093	725.8	3	<0.001
Exhibition	−0.241	0.136	0.077	0.786			
Event	1.861	0.075	<0.001	6.431			

Note. The unstandardized coefficients (β) are estimated with reference to “Exposure” intent of a visit. SE—standard error of the estimate. O-R—odds ratio.

Table 4. Consideration of repeated visits by visit intention.

Intent of a Visit	Would You Consider Visiting an Object Again?				
	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Don't Know	Probably Yes	Definitely Yes
Exposure	24 (1.2%)	53 (2.6%)	85 (4.2%)	1072 (52.6%)	805 (39.5%)
Exhibition	3 (0.7%)	72 (17.0%)	6 (1.4%)	154 (36.4%)	188 (44.4%)
Educational program	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	90 (51.7%)	2 (1.1%)	82 (47.1%)
Event	0 (0.0%)	127 (4.0%)	2 (0.06%)	647 (20.2%)	2428 (75.8%)

Note. Numbers represent counts and percentages.

4.2. SEffect of Visit Intention on Consideration of Repeated Visits

The intention of the visit had a statistically significant impact on the chance of repeated visits, $\chi^2(3) = 725.8, p < 0.001$ (Table 3). However, only the intention of visiting an object to attend an event was found to be the one significantly associated with higher probabilities of repeated visits to the given castle museum. There was also a small—but not significant—relationship between the intent of visiting to attend an exhibition and smaller probabilities to visit an object again. No other intentions for visiting an investigated objects were associated with higher or lower chances for repeated visits (Table 4 and Figure 2).

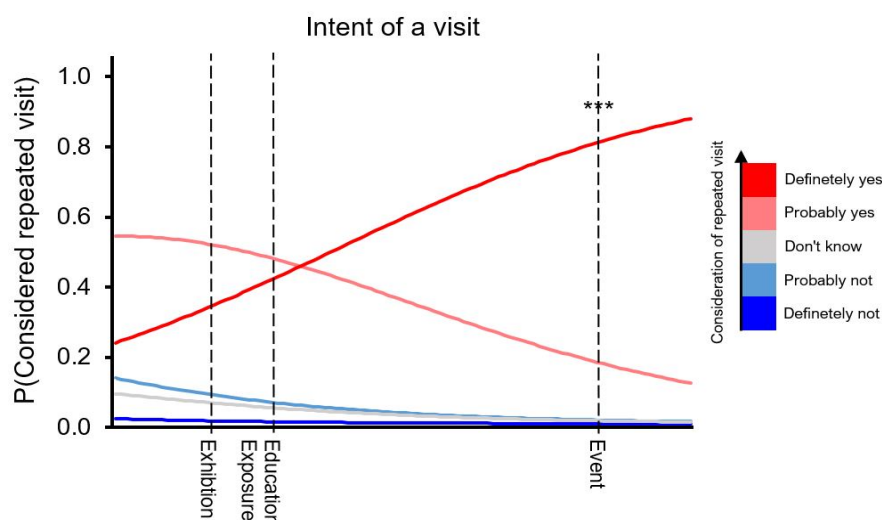


Figure 2. Predicted probabilities for considerations of repeated visits as a function of visit intention. *** $p < 0.001$ against the reference group (i.e., “Visit for exposure”).

Based on the findings, we can confirm the hypothesis H2: The intention of visiting the castle museum itself has a significant influence on customer’s interest to visit the castle museum repeatedly.

5. Discussion

Currently in Slovakia, under the auspices of the Ministry of Transport and Construction, a new strategy for sustainable tourism development is being prepared which should guide a long-term tourism development until 2030 and should consider new ways of coordinating tourism to support SMART solutions as well as the governmental approach, the ways of presenting Slovakia as a tourism destination, promoting the solutions that can support the development of sustainable tourism, the ways of maximizing the protection and preservation of natural and cultural sources in the country, and along with that, supporting the development of the before-mentioned tourism assets [97].

In connection to the achievement of the objectives of the aforesaid strategy, marketing communication plays a key role in the management activities of the castle museums. With marketing communication techniques, not only the sales volume objectives of the museum products can be achieved, but also the level of the awareness of museum image can be improved, and the last might directly increase the museum attendance.

Multiple studies confirm the importance of utilizing marketing activities to ensure or even improve the attendance of cultural heritage-related objects [98–100]. Based on the findings from the study provided by:

- The robust effect of evaluating quality of offline activities on consideration to repeatedly visit an object, $\chi^2(3) = 4417.6, p < 0.001$;
- intent of a visit had statistically significant effect on the consideration to repeatedly visit an object, $\chi^2(3) = 725.8, p < 0.001$,

it can be confirmed that the implementation of offline marketing communication tools in castle museums have impact on the customers' interest in repeated visits to the castle museums, which is the key to long-term sustainability.

Each organization that deals with cultural heritage should have in the context of its marketing concept a carefully planned communication algorithm on the audience development. The main purpose of such an algorithm is the methodology structuring that would help historical sites in setting their message and campaign objectives, verifying the level of interest in the campaign cooperation among site workers and guarantors, creating an action plan with a consequent communication mix, managing communication activities, and overall outcomes. However, the aforementioned actions might be put into effect only after understanding the needs for change and thorough verification of minimum prerequisites for the targeted audience development. Successful campaigns might ensure an increase in visits and the application of a structured methodology for audience development for any targeted visitor segment can be implemented. Figure 3 presents a draft of a systematic, nine-step audience development sequence for castle museums.

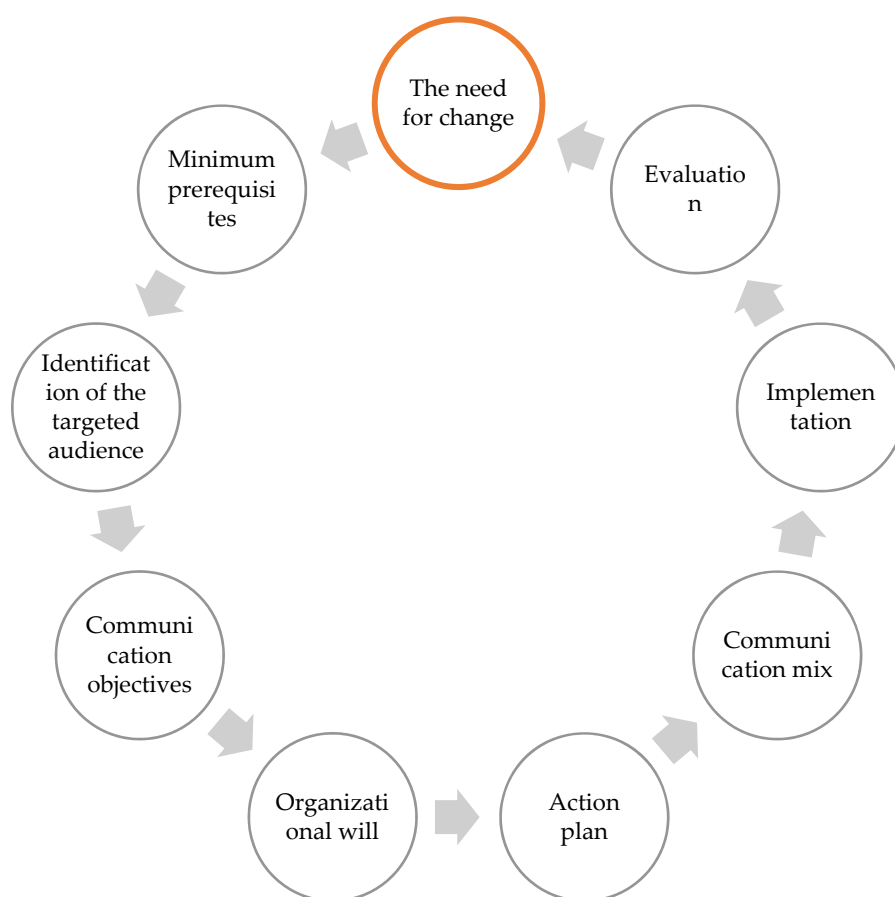


Figure 3. Draft of a communication algorithm on audience development.

The need for change

Castle museum should, at regular intervals, monitor the volume of visits in close interaction with the visitor research activities. Based on such research activities and result indicators, the museum gets a clear picture of the unused capacities for audience development in a particular segment, so it is appropriate to fill in the emerging gap to increase museum attendance, and this is called the need for change.

Minimum prerequisites

At this stage, we should consider at least the minimum prerequisites that might ensure the full development of relations with potential visitors in the castle museums. The

essential preconditions should cover sufficient human capacities to support relationship marketing and creative event organization.

Identification of the targeted audience

The third point covers communication and segmentary targeting, in other words, the targeting of some individuals. Here we are talking about the selective specialization or detailed identification of particular—specific—audience segments that could be confined, in the future, to potential customers. In practice, this means a careful selection of sociodemographic profiles, including definite preferences for the core museum environment.

Communication objectives

Historical sights should set their communication missions, including proper set up objectives. The SMART method might be used for accomplishing this task, and the objectives should be specific, measurable, assignable to the performed task, affordable, realistic, and time bound.

Organizational will

This methodical step might be marked as a turning point. Once the castle museum fails to obtain support from its guarantor, other co-workers, and experts, then the communication algorithm ends. In the case of positive organization will, the algorithm leads us to the further step.

Action plan

The sixth step includes the creation of the action plan where the specific tasks should be established along with precise deadlines, personal responsibilities, expenses, and evaluation prerequisites.

Communication mix

By choosing appropriate communication tools and media, the castle museum creates a communication mix. The marketing department of the historical site, after several meetings on the subject, chooses particular communication tools, which should be aligned with the set objectives, and through the communication tools, the castle museum can communicate its messages to the targeted audience.

Implementation

As the next-to-last step, it is the time to implement all the planned activities, including campaign schedule, personal responsibilities for communication activities, communication infrastructure management, and to stay within the allowed budget.

Evaluation

In the final step, management should evaluate the communication campaign based on the results achieved, which includes the extent verification to which the objectives towards the chosen targeted group were achieved. In case the castle museum management identifies a number of shortcomings, the responsibility must be defined together with the decision on further campaign steps, whether the campaign will be repeated or modified in any possible way. The evaluation process itself depends on museum management, who should decide whether evaluation should take place regularly or at the very end of the campaign.

All in all, the management of the communication algorithm of audience development should base on the objectives set by museum management. Museum management intentions to increase the number of visits might be translated into the creation of an appropriate communication mix, and while creating the communication mix, it is good to keep in mind that the majority of historical sites are under the public sector, and their main objective is not to increase attendance at all costs but to protect and preserve cultural heritage for future generations. Furthermore, one of the public sector objectives for museums as tourist attractions is to be a catalyst for regional development and a tool for improving the image of a particular region.

While creating a marketing strategy, we recommend castle museums to keep in mind four aspects that determine each strategy. These are the exhibitions and historical site missions, customer satisfaction, public benefit, and quality as the objectives. As to the implementation of the strategy, castle museums should pay attention to the balanced position of the exhibition and customers, which means to not focus separately on the exhibitions

and the customers but rather on the synergy between them through marketing and marketing communication. The balanced approach—customer vs. exhibition—is very common among the most famous foreign museums and is widely applied in practice [65,101]. The success of such implementation derives also from the quality of the offered services, which should be one of the objectives of the historical site. Different studies show that the visit intention is an essential criterion for customer choice, whereas the ticket price seems almost irrelevant [100].

6. Conclusions

If castle museums want to become a modern part of society, and not just a place where collections are stored, marketing and communication with the general public should not be of secondary importance. Marketing and communication with the general public should be instead the activities that are incorporated into the entire administration with due respect for the financial provisions and staff capacity.

Based on the results herein can be claimed that new events as a part of provided customer services will not just stabilize and improve the attendance of historical sites but might have a positive impact on the image building. In recent years, various events are particularly popular among castle visitors, but for every individual segment, an appropriate communication approach tied to the overall marketing strategy should be chosen.

Taking into consideration the fact that data acquisition took place before the pandemic as well as taking into consideration the current fast-growing digitalization and the trend of new technology implementation among tourism entities, it is required to recollect the data to identify particular changes brought by the aforementioned trends.

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