Examining the Relationship Between Museum Attendance and Exhibit Type

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Abstract

Museums perform a unique function in our society. Regardless of economic conditions, museums have continued to achieve their purpose: the preservation of the shared past of their communities and the enhancement of knowledge for the general public. In recent years, small rural museums have continued to achieve their purpose: the preservation of the local community’s shared past and the enhancement of knowledge for the community. Regardless of economic conditions, museums have continued to achieve their purpose: the preservation of the local community’s shared past and the enhancement of knowledge for the general public.

Objectives

• The study of the attendance patterns of a sampling of small rural museums.
• Compare attendance patterns with national averages for museum attendance.
• Examine the impact of community-based exhibits and projects on the attendance of small museums.
• Report the opinion of a representative group of the general public on the role and services provided by museums.
• Discuss the relation between apathy, attendance and funding.
• A community-based exhibit will be designed.

Difficulties Faced by Museums

Funding

Funding was named the number one problem experienced in a survey given to the attendees of the Small Museum Administrators’ Conference in 1994 to identify difficulties encountered by museums. There are two types of resources required by museums. Funding for special exhibits and events. Functioning expenses.

Museums have a minute support base experience the most difficulties in supplementing their operational expense funding (Katz, 1995).

Museums receive funds from private donations, corporations, sponsorships, foundations and earned income (Katz, 2012).

“Attendance Disease”

Museums may calculate attendance by the number of people who enter the door, but at historic sites often doors are not present (Katz, 2010).

According to Skinner, Ekeland and Jackson in “Art Museum Attendance, Public Funding and the Business Cycle,” museums suffer from “attendance disease.” This phenomenon exists when the attendance patterns of a museum shows an increase while the institution is experiencing a deficit in reserves.

Method of Contact:

• Phone
• E-mail

Objective of Interview

• Determine attendance
• Discover type of exhibit offered

Research instruments:

• Public opinion survey
• Interview questionnaire

Methods

Use Value

• Visit to museum
• Multicultural exhibits
• Expectation of future services

Institutional Value

• Citizenship
• Interpretation
• Public confidence
• Development of relationships

Public Value

• Public value is enhanced when the relationship between the museum and visitor reaches a reciprocal state. One in which the visitor and museum exchange knowledge in an equitable manner. The changed approach works to return the ownership of the museum to the people, encouraging attendees to add input in the construction of the exhibits (Gracia, 2010).
• The benefits received by a community from museums can be categorized by the following types of value: use value, intrinsic value, and instrumental value (Scott 2007).

Intrinsic Value

• Community Archive
• Lessons of History
• Experience of the past

Collective Experience

• Civic places and spaces

Instrumental Value

• Civic pride
• Social Inclusion
• Engagement opportunities

Cultural Continuity

>Commemorative events
>Meaning

Social Value

>Community Identity

Meaning

>Wonder and awe

Cultural Center

>Exhibition
>Beauty

Belonging

>History
>Tradition
>Art

Historical Value

>Commemoration
>Possession

Exhibit Preference

>Art
>Contemporary Art
>Historical
>National History
>Science
>Military
>National Issues
>Civic places and spaces

Conclusion

• Museums are vital institutions that support their communities in many ways.
• Collecting, storing and interpreting the common history of a community.
• Promoting community cohesion.
• Ways museums promote cohesion.
• The development of a shared identity.
• Presenting community-based exhibits that foster an interactive relationship with community members.
• Partnerships with resident participation in the planning and designing of exhibits.
• Partnerships with community organizations.
• Museums have either increased or maintained their attendance by designing and presenting exhibits and events directed at specific elements of the community.

Cohesion that is the result of a shared history benefits museums.

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Literature Cited