

Museum Marketing Management: A Sampling of Non- and Recent-Visitors across Place and Group

Khoon Koh
Central Connecticut State University
New Britain, Connecticut, USA
KohK@mail.ccsu.edu

Pei-Ti Chen
Chung Hua University
Hsinchu, Taiwan
pchen@chu.edu.tw

Ei-Leen Yeoh
University Malaysia
Sabah, Malaysia
yeoh.eileen@gmail.com

Abstract

When museums are teeming with visitors (especially non-residents), they are community assets. But when they are silent places, they are community white elephants. To contribute to the marketing management of museum visitors, two types of leisure consumers (non-visitors and recent-visitors) were sampled across three countries, each representing a different level of economic development (USA, Taiwan, and Malaysia); and two group types were compared (public samples versus university student samples). The results indicated that (a) there is no significant difference between non-visitors and recent-visitors in their demographic profile across place; (b) shared reasons for not visiting museums across place were: other leisure interest, lack of time, and types of exhibits; (c) shared museum attributes that significantly determined revisit consideration across place were: quality of exhibits, ambiance of museums, interactive exhibits, special events, and layout of exhibits; and (d) public samples and university student samples differ significantly in both non-visit and recent-visit responses across place.

Introduction

Museums as leisure places date back to the mid-19th C, and early museum administrators were more concerned about their “Wunderkammer” (cabinet of curiosities) than the interests and experiences of their visitors (Reussner 2003:102). However, faced with declining attendance, diminishing fiscal resources, increasing competition from other leisure products, and more sophisticated leisure providers, museum administrators realized that they could no longer ignore the value and enjoyment of their visitors. Accordingly, many museums began to conduct market research (Hume 2011; Kotler 1999; Paswan and Troy 2004). But as Rentschler and Reussner (2002) commented, most of the museum research completed in the last twenty years had been conducted not for achieving marketing advantage but often for other organizational reasons.

Thus the authors urged museum researchers to move beyond building demographic profiles of visitors and towards collecting psychographic and attitudinal measures. Kelly's (2004) analysis of museum research also noted that the bulk of museum research had been evaluation rather than research. To Kelly, evaluation is based within a practice, being practical, fast and outcomes-based whereas research is based within a theory of practice with an underlying set of guiding principles. Thus Kelly opined, "...museums need to move beyond an evaluative culture to a research one that focuses on visitor experiences and learning" (p. 62). To this end, Reussner (2003) urged the inclusion of non-visitor research, "...non-visitor research provides insight in motives and particularly in barriers for a museum visit that need to be overcome to really open the museum to a broad public (p. 105)." Davies (2005) also commented that "museum research tends to focus on users rather than non-users" (p. 96).

Granted, most museums were launched not as commercial enterprises or to attract tourists but to collect, preserve, catalog, and educate visitors about their artifacts. Yet without a critical mass of visitors, their intrinsic and extrinsic values diminished. Even the opulent Guggenheim Museum in Las Vegas had to shut down (Schemelagian 2004) while a living history museum in Massachusetts (the Old Sturbridge Village) "had to sell 826 acres of land amid financial troubles caused by falling attendance" to remain operational (The Associated Press 2011). The American Association of Museums reported that in 2009, "23 museums closed their doors, and many others had to cut staff, programming or hours to keep their doors open" (CBS News 2010). And in October 2010, after 31 years, the Liberace Museum in Las Vegas shut down due to "lack of revenue and attendance" (The Post Chronicle, Oct-19, 2010).

To help museums achieve the 3Rs of marketing management (recruit new visitors, retain existing visitors, and promote referral of new visitors by existing visitors), this study sought to determine significant variables that inhibit and promote museum visits. Specifically, to sample two types of leisure consumers (public non-visitors and public recent-visitors) over three countries each representing a different level of per capita income (high income area: USA, medium income area: Taiwan, and low income area: Malaysia); and to compare the responses between public samples and university student samples.

The research questions are:

1. Between public non-visitors (PNV) and public recent-visitors (PRV):
Is there significant difference in demographic profile for each study area?
2. PNV samples: What are the main reasons for not visiting a museum for each study area?
3. PNV samples: What are the shared reasons for not visiting museums across place?
4. PRV samples: What are the museum attributes that are significant in revisit consideration for each study area?
5. PRV samples: What are the shared attributes of museums that influence revisit consideration across place?
6. Between PNV and SNV (student non-visitors) samples: Is there significant difference in the responses between the two groups in each study area?
7. Between PRV and SRV (student recent-visitors) samples: Is there significant difference in the responses between the two groups in each study area?

Value of This Study

As noted by Reussner (2003), most museum studies focused on museum visitors (their profile, motivation, benefits sought, satisfaction, segmentation, etc...) but few studies investigated non-visitors. In this vein, Jackson (2000) stated, "Access to and enjoyment of leisure are central to a high quality of life for individuals, and indirectly to the quality of the society as a whole..." (p. 63). Thus if museums could alleviate constraints that are within their purview, they may be able to attract more visitors, and serve a public good. Two, if museum administrators have contemporary empirical data pertaining to non-visitors and recent-visitors' behavior, data based interventions could be initiated to attract and retain museum visitors instead of relying on managerial discretionary judgment. Three, by comparing public and university student responses, if there is no significant difference between the two groups then academic researchers could conveniently and confidently use university student samples as surrogate samples for future museum studies. On the latter, the museum research literature indicated that museum visitors tend to be better educated than non-visitors (Davies 2005; Falk and Dierking 2000; Nyaupane and Andereck 2008; Simpson 2006; Youcelt 2000). Since university students are better educated, thus they constitute a valuable study sample. Further, the likelihood that most will become successful citizens and parents is high they are high potential museum visitors and/or donors. For these reasons, this study's findings would be a contribution to the museum marketing management literature.

Literature Review

This section is organized into two categories: (a) empirical research on why people do not visit museums, and (b) empirical research on which museum attributes are imperative to promote revisits to museums.

Reasons for Not Visiting Museums

Prentice's (1994) face-to-face interview with 1,959 non-visitors in three British cities (Swansea, Durham, and Edinburgh) reported four perceptual constraints to visiting museums: museums are boring places, museums are expensive places, museums lack attractions to keep children interested, and museums are mainly places to visit when on vacation. Prentice thus urged museums to develop new products, and to revise their pricing and promotional policies, including "hands-on" initiatives targeted at children (p. 272).

Tian, Crompton, and Witt (1996) sought to answer three questions: (a) what were the major constraints that inhibited museum-goers from visiting museum attractions in Galveston, Texas, USA? (b) What benefits did museum-goers seek from their visits? (c) Can these constraints and benefits be meaningfully interpreted to identify target groups that are likely to be either more or less responsive to marketing efforts directed at them? Their study from a sample of 1083 responses obtained from six museums found: (a) six major constraints: cost, time, difficulty of access, repetition, product failings, and lack of interest; (b) five major benefits sought by museum attendees: socialization/bonding, relaxation, social recognition, self-esteem, and

educational entertainment; and (c) four target groups: child-centered adults who are committed locals, child-centered adults who are unconstrained mature enthusiasts, extensive-benefit seekers who are committed locals, and extensive-benefit seekers who are cost conscious visitors.

Kirchberg's study (1996) of non-visitors in Germany based on a random-quota sample of 31,000 households reported that the non-visitor "is more often a blue-collar worker, unemployed or not in the paid labor force" (p. 239). And they tend to live in small towns of between 5,000 and 20,000 inhabitants (p. 256). However, Kirchberg did not report their reasons for not visiting museums.

Jackson's (2000) review of the research literature on leisure constraint studies conducted on North American samples reported that there are three basic types of leisure constraints: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. These typically included cost of participation, time commitment, the availability and quality of facilities, demographics, and lack of partners. However, no constraint is experienced with equal intensity by everyone. Jackson's meta-analysis was subsequently confirmed by Nyaupane and Andereck's study in 2008.

Davies' (2005) analysis of museum visits' trends in the UK wrote, "The story of the last 10 years has not been one to give comfort to current policy makers. The volume of visits has barely increased; the number of people going regularly (at least once a year) has actually declined..." (p. 101). Seven reasons were cited: lack of awareness, lack of interest, relevance, lack of time, accessibility and transport, age and health, and admission charges (p. 95). Davies also cited technology as another reason for low museum visit trend, "It is the fact that over these last 10 years technology has challenged the very ground upon which museums are built. Digital technology and the growth of the Internet has permitted remote access to images of almost anything anywhere. This undermines the monopoly of museums on visual experiences within their own walls" (p. 71). Nonetheless Davis urged museums to adopt a more market oriented modus operandi --- the need to practice target marketing (three types of markets were identified: heritage, leisure, and education) and change their products and programming if they seek to remain sustainable.

Lin's study (2006) of low income non-visitors in Taiwan using the snowball sampling technique found the top ten reasons for not visiting museums were: lack of interest, lack of time, museums offer nothing enticing, museums are boring places, lack of transport, age/health reasons, high admission charges, feel out of place, lack of awareness, and crowdedness especially student and children groups. It was also reported that non-visitors suggested better cafes/restaurants, more attractive shops, more inviting exhibitions, workshop offerings, interactive activities, special events, and more friendly staff. The author concluded "that respondents would like museums to function more obviously as leisure venues" (p. 314).

Kassim, Scarlat, and Nor (2007) reported that most Malaysians lack awareness of their museums, and Malaysian museums lack the urgency and/or interest to market to its domestic market. To attract and retain more domestic visitors, Kassim, Scarlat, and Nor (p. 408) urged Malaysian museums to change their mindset from one of "an extension of the government" to one of a marketing culture. To build a museum marketing culture, Khalife (2007) called for the engagement of four activities: (a) awareness and desire to increase market share; (b) establish a

marketing department to tackle planning and implementation of marketing initiatives; (c) design a marketing-public relations plan; and (d) implement each chosen marketing strategy consistently and with commitment.

Burton, Louviere and Young's study (2009) in Australia using depth interview with forty participants found four basic constraints to museum visits: logistics (travel, transportation and parking), finite time, cost, and offering of museums. The authors thus suggested museums to practice target marketing, bundling of offerings, horizontal and vertical integration, revised pricing mix, and better packaging of their products and services.

Museum Attributes that Influence Revisits to Museums

Harrison's (1997) quantitative and qualitative study of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum in Hawaii concluded that the primary reason its visitors frequented the museum was it was a good local place: the museum strongly reflected the "localness" of Hawaii's nature, character, and history. Thus Harrison stated that, "This should be the model for all museums (p. 36)" and "If museums are seeking to attract new audiences, they must increase their attractivity, and their greatest potential attractivity is rooted in strongly expressing their sense of distinctive localness, in all of its dimensions" (p. 37).

Prideaux and Kininmont (1999)'s study of three rural museums in Queensland, Australia sought (a) to identify the types of information sources used by drive tourists, (b) to determine drive tourists' preferred types of communication mix, and (c) to develop a checklist for rural museums to formulate their marketing activities. From a sample of 293, they found: (a) the three main sources of information used by drive tourists were: word-of-mouth (43%), chance sighting (17%), and brochure (13%); (b) the preferred types of communication mix were: outdoor media and brochures; and (c) their suggested promotional activities included placing marketing materials along highways, near the museum, and cross-advertising with other tourist-related businesses.

Goulding's (2000) study of visitors to the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in England concluded that museums need to address these four dimensions holistically if they seek to improve their marketing effectiveness: socio-cultural, cognitive, psychological, and environmental (p. 274). The socio-cultural dimension referred to cultural identification, continuity of theme and story, conversation and story building from evaluation of stimulus, variation of stimulus, and social interaction. The cognitive dimension covered the creation of mindful activity, involvement and engagement, inner reflection and imagination, variation of stimulus to create a meaningful whole and perceived authenticity. As for the psychological dimension, it included scene setters, and routing and mapping. Finally, the environmental dimension referred to crowding, seats, and noise.

Yucelt's (2000) survey of visitors to 24 museums and historical sites in Pennsylvania reported that visitors' satisfaction is a function of six factors: Quality of staff personnel and tour guides; Museum's collections and offerings; Quality of physical structure and related amenities; Distance to travel; Demographic factors; and Number of visits. Yucelt thus urged museum

administrators to diligently address their exhibits (variety, quantity, and quality), parking and seating facilities, employee hiring and training practices, and their auxiliary services.

Simpson's (2000) survey of 141 visitors to a rural museum in New Zealand reported five primary reasons for visiting the museum: recommended by friends (49.7%), followed the road signage (18.9%), recommended in travel guides (17%), read about it in travel brochures (6.7%), and other reasons (7.7%). Interestingly, although the overall mean satisfaction score was 6.03/7.00 scale, only 39% of the sample said that they would return within the next two years. But 82% said that they would recommend the museum to others. Thus the author cautioned museum administrators not to uncritically accept the adage that satisfied customers are more likely to return.

Tyne's (2001) depth interviews with 18 visitors at the Otago Museum in New Zealand reported five major reasons people visited the museum: learning & education; social bonding; recreation & entertainment; sense of accomplishment & productivity; and feeling of connection with a place. In another New Zealand study, Todd and Lawson (2001) using mail survey identified seven clusters of museum visitors (n = 3,773): active family values people, conservative quiet lifers, educated liberals, accepting mid-lifers, success-driven extroverts, pragmatic strugglers, and social strivers. Of the seven clusters, the "educated liberals" were the most frequent visitors while the "conservative quiet lifers" were the least likely to visit. Gender and level of education were found to be the best predictors of visits versus non-visits.

Caldwell (2002) stated that "if museums and galleries are to be successful in growing visitor numbers and developing greater access, they must learn more about the factors that are important to visitors' evaluation of service quality" (p. 161). Accordingly, his repertory grid analysis of 144 visitor-respondents (obtained from eleven prominent London museums in England) found these factors to be statistically significant in determining visitors' choice of museum: quality of exhibits; to do with history; interesting; classification; known to visitor, educational; enjoyable; modern or old; and a place to take children to.

Debenedetti's study (2003) of twenty-four semi-directed interviews conducted with art museum visitors in Paris, France, found that people's motives to visit museums included the availability of others, and that the quality of their interactions had a significant effect on their visit's satisfaction, namely: mutual enrichment, recreation, reassurance, prestige, and transmission of knowledge. In the words of Debenedetti, "A visit to a museum is too often perceived as an occasion for solitary, introspective meditation, despite the fact that only a minority of visitors are interested in this kind of visit; for most, the visit is intrinsically sociable" (p. 60). Thus, she suggested emphasizing fusion visits (visiting with others) in museum advertising messages, revising pricing practices, operational hours, types of organized activities, and spatial design.

Harrison and Shaw (2004) tested a conceptual model of the relationship among service elements (facilities, service, and experience), satisfaction and future behavior intentions (likelihood of revisit and recommending others) via structural equation modeling. From a sample of 184 visitors to a metropolitan museum in Melbourne, Australia, they found: (a) a statistically significant but weak inverse relationship between satisfaction and intention to return (meaning: visitors may not return unless the product changes substantially); (b) a moderate positive

relationship between satisfaction and intention to recommend; (c) a relationship between satisfaction and elements of the museum experience; (d) a relationship between high levels of satisfaction and subsequent intentions; and (e) demographics such as age, education and gender act as moderators in relation to satisfaction and subsequent intentions.

Paswan and Troy (2004) sought to (a) identify the motivational dimensions of membership in an art museum context, (b) investigate the impact of the motivational dimensions on different membership levels, and (c) explore the relationship between key demographic variables and both membership motivations and membership levels. From a sample of 524 visitors to a metropolitan museum in North Texas, USA, they found museum membership motivation is a multidimensional construct including philanthropy, preservation of art, social recognition, children's benefits, tangible benefits, and hedonic dimensions. Thus, they urged non-profit museums to incorporate these findings in their target marketing and positioning decisions.

Geissler, Rucks, and Edison (2006) conducted four focus group studies to determine what services were important to art museum visitors in southeastern USA. Their major findings: word-of-mouth was the most influential form of communication in determining choice of visit decisions; a museum's offering (permanent collection and changing exhibits) including types of special events; range of amenities; price; brand image, and transactional convenience (location, hours of operation, and visit options) were significant decision factors. Since the study's findings were based on input from current museum visitors, the researchers thus suggested future studies to include non-customers and lapsed customers (those who stopped going to museums).

Chan and Yeoh (2007) sought to determine the key experiential dimensions of museum visitors using the profile accumulation technique. From a convenience sample of 53 museum visitors in Malaysia, they identified four types of experiences as significant in explaining museum visitors' satisfaction: object experiences, cognitive experiences, introspective experiences, and social experiences. Thus they urged museums to "focus on the visitors in terms of their behavior and service experience encounters" if they hope to re-attract visitors (p. 142).

Amenta's evaluation (2010) of museum marketing performance in Italy reported that museums should improve their marketing mix if they hope to better retain and re-attract visitors. In particular, accessibility, amenities, staff, availability of audio guides, special programs, advertising, image building, and pricing practices.

Raajpoot et al (2010) contributed by developing a museum visit satisfaction scale using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. They found six dimensions to be significant determinants of museum visit experience: employee courtesy, museum layout, ambiance, education, self-actualization, and visitor compatibility.

Hume's (2011) study of museum visitor's revisit intention with an Australian sample found service quality to be a significant predictor of revisit intention. Results from a structural equation model indicated that visitors' revisit intention was more based on the quality dimensions (core and augmented services) of the visit experience and perceived value for time and money rather than satisfaction: "It is the quality of the ease of interaction, the performance of the amenities, and features of the museum that they value that predict their likelihood to return" (p. 87).

Study Methodology

Two questionnaires were developed: the non-visitor questionnaire (NVQ) was designed for those who had not visited a museum in the past 12 months, the recent-visitor questionnaire (RVQ) was for those who had visited at least one museum within the past 12 months. Items for the two questionnaires were drawn from the extant research literature and findings from small group discussions conducted with university students at the principal author's university. Both questionnaires used the 5-point ordinal scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree. The draft questionnaires were first vetted by two seasoned social science researchers for face validity, clarity, brevity, flow, and visual appeal; and were then pilot tested with undergrads and their family members to identify possible response errors and weaknesses.

The three study areas were: the State of Connecticut, USA (high income area), State of Hsinchu, Taiwan (medium income area), and State of Negri Sembilan, Malaysia (low income area). The study areas were chosen based primarily on accessibility --- each author's place of employment. For public samples, research assistants randomly solicited at public places and places of employment (their own, of their parents, relatives, and friends). For student samples, research assistants solicited students in classes and in heavy traffic areas on their respective campuses. Participants who agreed to respond to the survey were either given the NVQ or RVQ based on the screening question of whether he/she had visited/not visited a museum in the past twelve months. In the case of Taiwan and Malaysia, the questionnaires were not translated into local languages as it was felt that translation of the instruments may result in inconsistency and inaccuracy. Further, since English is a widely spoken language and both questionnaires contain no jargon both instruments were administered as designed. However, all research assistants (local university students) were carefully trained to respond to any possible queries regarding the two questionnaires.

As to the questionnaires' reliability, pilot tests indicated Cronbach alphas of .86 and .88 respectively. From the field data, the Cronbach alphas were:

- PNV: USA = .86, Taiwan = .84, and Malaysia = .78
- PRV: USA = .93, Taiwan = .91, and Malaysia = .81
- SNV: USA = .84, Taiwan = .85, and Malaysia = .80
- SRV: USA = .81, Taiwan = .91, and Malaysia = .92

Findings

The total number of usable responses for the USA samples: 739 public respondents (384 PNV and 355 PRV), and 440 student respondents (215 SNV and 225 SRV). For the Taiwan samples, there were 457 public respondents (298 PNV and 159 PRV) and 409 student respondents (261 SNV and 148 SRV). As for the Malaysia samples, there were 467 public respondents (221 PNV, and 246 PRV) and 441 student respondents (208 SNV and 233 SRV).

Since the underlying goal of this study was to collect empirical data for museum marketing management actions, public sample representativeness for the three countries were checked. Using these five demographic variables: race, gender, age group, education level, and marital

status: the Connecticut samples exhibited good representativeness in both the non-visitor and recent-visitor samples at the national level; the Taiwan samples showed a moderate level of representativeness in both groups of respondents; the Negri Sembilan samples were however less representative of its population (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
Public Sample Representativeness for each Study Area

<u>USA Samples</u>	<u>Pop (%)</u>	<u>PNV (%)</u>	<u>PRV (%)</u>
1. Dominant race: whites	79.9	61.3	70.4
2. Dominant gender: female	50.0	46.4	51.5
3. Dominant age group: 20s	14.1	18.3	17.0
4. Dominant education level: HS/less	72.5	57.6	39.5
5. Dominant marital group: married	57.3	49.0	58.8
<u>Taiwan Samples</u>			
1. Dominant race: Chinese	98.3	94.6	90.6
2. Dominant gender: male	51.3	32.6	39.0
3. Dominant age group: 40s	16.2	24.0	22.6
4. Dominant education level: HS/less	63.9	21.7	14.5
5. Dominant marital group: married	54.6	58.2	73.6
<u>Malaysia Samples</u>			
1. Dominant race: Malay	50.4	21.7	29.6
2. Dominant gender: male	50.2	47.1	41.3
3. Dominant age group: 20s	20.8	13.2	19.8
4. Dominant education level: HS/less	79.1	68.3	41.7
5. Dominant marital group: married	54.4	52.2	67.2
<u>Legend</u>			
Pop	population		
PNV	public non-visitor samples		
PRV	public recent-visitor samples		

Research Question #1

Between public non-visitors (PNV) and public recent-visitors (PRV): Is there significant difference in their profile for each study area? Chi-square statistics at the .05 level (*) indicated that there is no significant difference in the demographic profile of public non-visitors versus public recent-visitors for each study area (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
Comparative Demographics of Study Samples

<u>Areas</u>	<u>PNV</u>	<u>PRV</u>	<u>SNV</u>	<u>SRV</u>
USA	White	White	White	White
	Female	Female	Male	Female
	20s	30s	20s	20s
	HS/less*	Above HS*	NA	NA
	Work FT	Work FT	Work PT	Work PT
	MWC	MWC	SNC	SNC
Taiwan	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
	Female	Female	Female	Female
	30s	30s	20s	20s
	Above HS	Above HS	NA	NA
	Work FT	Work FT	Not working	Not working
	MWC	MWC	SNC	SNC
Malaysia	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
	Female	Female	Female	Female
	20s	20s	under 20s	20s
	HS/less*	Above HS*	NA	NA
	Work FT	Work FT	Not working	Not working
	SNC	SNC	SNC	SNC
<u>Legend</u>				
HS	high school	NA	not applicable	
SNC	single with no children	SWC	single with children	
MNO	married with no children	MWC	married with children	
PNV	public non visitors	PRV	public recent visitors	
SNV	student non visitors	SRV	student recent visitors	

Research Question #2

PNV samples: What are the main reasons for not visiting a museum for each study area? Using a mean score of 3.0 (on a 5-point ordinal scale) as the threshold point, the results indicated six reasons for the USA sample and eleven reasons each for the Taiwan and Malaysia samples. (see Table 3).

TABLE 3
Significant Reasons for Not Visiting Museums across Place

<u>USA sample (n = 384)</u>			
Reasons	Mean	SD	95% CI
1. Other leisure interest	3.63	1.03	3.53 - 3.74
2. Lack of interest in museums	3.61	1.03	3.51 - 3.71
3. Lack of time	3.55	1.26	3.43 - 3.68
4. Types of exhibits	3.35	1.15	3.24 - 3.47
5. Seasonality	3.05	1.17	2.93 - 3.17
6. Admission price	3.02	0.99	2.92 - 3.12
<u>Taiwan sample (n = 298)</u>			
1. Distance	3.76	1.01	3.64 - 3.87
2. Other leisure interests	3.72	0.97	3.61 - 3.84
3. Lack of time	3.55	1.14	3.42 - 3.68
4. Low recommendation	3.52	0.96	3.41 - 3.63
5. Types of exhibits	3.50	0.88	3.40 - 3.60
6. Health/life's situation	3.45	0.87	3.35 - 3.55
7. Transportation	3.37	1.06	3.25 - 3.49
8. Lack of companion	3.20	1.11	3.07 - 3.33
9. Admission price	3.12	0.90	3.01 - 3.23
10. Parking	3.11	0.90	3.01 - 3.21
11. Operating days/time	3.07	0.86	2.97 - 3.17
<u>Malaysian sample (n=221)</u>			
1. Lack of companion	3.85	1.05	3.71 - 3.99
2. Lack of time	3.75	1.11	3.60 - 3.90
3. Lack of interest	3.53	1.15	3.38 - 3.69
4. Distance	3.42	1.06	3.28 - 3.56
5. Life/health situation	3.33	1.25	3.17 - 3.50
6. Lack of awareness	3.32	1.29	3.15 - 3.49
7. Low recommendation	3.20	1.17	3.04 - 3.36
8. Other leisure interest	3.15	1.13	3.00 - 3.30
9. Past experience	3.13	1.16	2.98 - 3.29
10. Types of exhibits	3.09	0.84	2.97 - 3.20
11. Transportation	3.08	0.95	2.96 - 3.21

Research Question #3

PNV samples: What are the shared reasons for not visiting museums across place?
Concordance analysis and Sheffe tests at the 0.05 level of significance indicated:

- Unranked Shared Reasons (all three areas)
 1. Other leisure interest
 2. Lack of time
 3. Types of exhibits

- Unranked Shared Reasons (two areas)
 1. Lack of interest in museums
 2. Lack of recommendation
 3. Lack of companion
 4. Admission price
 5. Distance
 6. Transportation
 7. Life/health situation

When all PNV responses were pooled ($n = 903$), and the 21 reasons factor analyzed, Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation indicated 54.72% of the total variance could be explained by these five factors with $\alpha = .81$:

Factor 1: Personal factor (21.94%)

- Lack of interest
- Lack of time
- Other leisure interest
- Health/life situation

Factor 2: Museum factor (10.23%)

- Admission price
- Museum operating day/time
- Parking
- Seasonality
- Types of exhibits

Factor 3: Experience factor (8.45%)

- Ambiance of museum
- Amenities of museum
- Low recommendation
- Past experience

Factor 4: Resource factor (7.81%)

- Lack of money
- Distance
- Transportation

Factor 5: People factor (6.31%)

- Lack of companion
- Museum employees

Research Question #4

PRV samples: What are the main attributes of museums that influence revisit consideration for each study area? Using the same decision criteria adopted for research question #2 (mean score of 3.0 or higher) the USA sample indicated eight attributes as important. As for the Taiwan and Malaysian samples, all the variables scored higher than 3.0. Hence, only the top ten museum attributes are reported here (see Table 4).

TABLE 4
Significant Museum Attributes in Museum Revisit Consideration across Place

<u>USA sample (n = 355)</u>			
Museum Attributes	Mean	SD	95% CI
1. Quality of exhibits	4.09	0.83	4.00 – 4.17
2. Ambiance of museums	3.43	1.05	3.31 – 3.54
3. Information on exhibits	3.41	1.02	3.30 – 3.52
4. Interactive exhibits	3.17	1.18	3.04 – 3.29
5. Interior air quality	3.14	1.24	3.01 – 3.27
6. Special events	3.14	0.92	3.04 – 3.23
7. Layout of exhibits	3.13	1.25	3.00 – 3.26
8. Quantity of exhibits	3.09	1.10	2.97 – 3.20
<u>Taiwan sample (n = 159)</u>			
1. Quality of exhibits	4.40	0.78	4.28 – 4.52
2. Interior cleanliness	4.31	0.76	4.19 – 4.43
3. Interior air quality	4.28	0.82	4.15 – 4.41
4. Layout of exhibits	4.26	0.80	4.13 – 4.38
5. Interactive exhibits	4.25	0.73	4.14 – 4.37
6. Special events	4.23	0.92	4.08 – 4.37
7. Ambiance of museums	4.22	0.79	4.10 – 4.34
8. Interior temperature	4.22	0.76	4.10 – 4.34
9. Operating days/time	4.13	0.79	4.01 – 4.26
10. Crowdedness	4.10	0.86	3.97 – 4.24
<u>Malaysia sample (n = 246)</u>			
1. Interactive exhibits	4.13	1.08	4.00 – 4.27
2. Quality of exhibits	4.13	1.11	3.99 – 4.27
3. Information on exhibits	4.07	1.13	3.93 – 4.22
4. Quantity of exhibits	3.96	1.17	3.82 – 4.11
5. Interior cleanliness	3.83	1.14	3.68 – 3.97
6. Layout of exhibits	3.80	1.05	3.67 – 3.93
7. Special events	3.79	1.16	3.65 – 3.94
8. Operating days/time	3.70	1.06	3.56 – 3.83
9. Ambiance of museums	3.64	1.17	3.49 – 3.79
10. Availability of guided tours	3.54	1.09	3.41 – 3.68

Research Question #5

PRV samples: What are the shared attributes of museums that influence revisit consideration across place? Concordance analysis and Sheffe tests at the 0.05 level of significance indicated:

- Unranked Shared Museum Attributes (all three areas)
 1. Quality of exhibits
 2. Ambiance of museums
 3. Interactive exhibits

4. Special events
5. Layout of exhibits
- Unranked Shared Museum Attributes (two areas)
 1. Information on exhibits
 2. Interior air quality
 3. Quantity of exhibits
 4. Operating day/time

When all PRV responses were pooled ($n = 760$), and the 32 museum attributes factor analyzed, Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation indicated 59.22% of the total variance could be explained by these six factors with $\alpha = .92$:

Factor 1: Museum offering (30.63%)

- Quality of exhibits
- Information on exhibits
- Interactive exhibits
- Special events
- Self-guided tour equipment
- Souvenir store

Factor 2: Internal Appeal (10.77%)

- Ambiance
- Air quality
- Temperature
- Cleanliness
- Bathroom

Factor 3: Visitor Service (5.24%)

- Visible presence of employees
- Behavior of employees
- Visitor literature
- Help desk
- Visitor storage

Factor 4: External appeal (4.35%)

- Directional signs to museums
- Exterior cleanliness
- Building appearance

Factor 5: Operation (4.12%)

- Admission price
- Operating day/time

Factor 6: Auxiliary (4.11%)

- Areas for rest/solitude
- Safety & security
- Parking

Research Question #6

Between PNV and SNV samples: Is there significant difference in the responses between the two groups in each study area? T-test at the 0.05 level of significance indicated:

- USA samples: the two groups differed significantly in 15 (71.43%) of the 21 reasons.
- Taiwan samples: the two groups differed significantly in 12 (57.14%) of the 21 reasons.
- Malaysia samples: the two groups differed significantly in 11 (52.38%) of the 21 reasons.

Research Question #7

Between PRV and SRV samples: is there significant difference in the responses between the two groups in each study area? T-test at the 0.05 level indicated:

- USA Samples: the two groups differed significantly in all 32 (100%) variables.
- Taiwan Samples: the two groups differed significantly in 19 (59.38%) of the 32 variables.
- Malaysia Samples: the two groups differed significantly in 24(75.00%) of the 32 variables.

Discussion & Implications

The motivation that prompted this study arose from the first author's community service experience with museums in Connecticut, USA over the last five years. The recurring request by museum administrators was, "How could we better attract new visitors and re-attract past visitors?" This challenge was already addressed by Weil (1999) who urged museums to change their management paradigm from "being about something to being for somebody" if they hope to remain relevant and sustainable. Kotler (1999), too, urged museums to shift their operational paradigm from that of collection-centered to education-centered, and ultimately, experience-centered places. As experience-centered places, museums' offerings should be as expansive as possible: offering opportunities for visceral, emotional, and cognitive stimuli including opportunities for visitors "taking time out to sit and relax, dine, or shop" (p.32). Reussner (2003) expounded, "To achieve visitor-related goals in a competitive environment, museums need to pay attention to two dimensions of visitor-orientation: (a) from an external perspective, museums need to develop attracting power, in order to enable access and cultural participation and to cope with competition, (b) from an internal perspective, museums need to ensure that their services are appropriate to visitors, in order to enable an enjoyable and educational museum experience" (p. 102).

To this end, Wilson (1988) explained that museum marketing is not about fund raising, making a profit, or turning them into amusement centers but "... involves finding out what the consumer wants, and then producing that product, or altering and packaging an existing product to fit better with the consumer's desires, or attempting to alter the consumer's views by persuasion" (p. 98). Tobelem (1997) agreed, "...only precise knowledge of the expectations and perceptions of visitors will allow museums to achieve this effectively" (p. 353).

Accordingly, this study sought to determine the set of inhibiting and promoting variables for museum intervention. Based on the findings reported in research questions #3 and #5, the following suggestions are offered.

One, target regional markets: as explained by Reussner (2003), "...the demand for broad cultural participation not only requires an increase in visitor numbers, but also an increased variety of museum audiences." (p. 97). Thus, museums should target regional markets. When museums are popular regional attractions, foreign visitors are more likely to visit, too. How many of us travel overseas to visit popular local places? In this vein, cluster analysis indicated that for USA museums: strive to attract these population segments: females (50.7%), households with children (55.7%), the less educated (57.6%), and the 20s age group (36.2%). For Taiwan museums: seek to attract females (66.7%), households with children (51.2%), and the unmarried (37.2%). As for Malaysia museums: appeal to females (52.5%), the less educated (68.3%), unmarried (66%), and the 20s age group (46.6%).

Two, reposition the museum product: when one is interested in a particular activity, one tries to find time for it. Thus museums must build interest in targeted leisure consumers by repositioning themselves from places of "serious leisure" to places of "edutainment" (Stebbins 1999). If museums continue to hold steadfastly to serving only "those in search of high cultural consumption and education" (Burton et al 2009: 21) with passive exhibits, then they will remain marginal leisure attractions. Further as Davis (2005) stated:

"For many people, museums have a respected but fairly low key place in the community. Most hold the view that nothing much changes at museums and there is no incentive to repeat visit or even go at all. There is no sense of event about a visit, no urgency, a feeling that can postpone the visit indefinitely and it will still be there. Initiatives are needed that stimulate visits and create a higher profile for the venue, and good temporary exhibitions are one example of this" (p. 99).

Thus, museums should offer more interactive exhibits, stage more special events, and make information on exhibits more interesting (especially for children and the less educated). In this context, King (1991) suggested the adoption of some theme park practices introduced by Disneyland and Disneyworld: "the crossover of art and science to create Disney experiences." However, King cautioned the effect of "art shock" --- the sensation of being overwhelmed including the problem of over-choice often resulting in visitors leaving after less than an hour or so, exhausted and unfulfilled. To minimize "art shock," King proposed the concept of "museumettes" --- the creation of mini museums (within a museum) where each has its own theme and routing systems but is cohesively linked to the others. Such a concept would let visitors who are more interested in certain themes spend more time at their preferred mini museums thereby reducing over-crowding, information overload, and when properly designed, leave visitors with a yearning to return to see the other mini museums that they did not get to see in one visit. In short, each visit is a complete visit in itself but each visit is also a step towards experiencing the whole.

Three, enhance the museum product. The types of exhibits including variety, quality, and quantity are the very reasons people visit, don't visit, and/or re-visit museums regardless of admission cost. As Davis (2005) stated, "The product has to change if you expect or want the audience to change" (p.102). Indeed, if the targeted markets are regional communities as suggested above (in which distance becomes a lesser constraint), then the need to change exhibits periodically becomes more imperative. What is the likelihood of one going to the movie theater if the same movie is played week after week? Museums must therefore strategically

review and invest in their product mix to better appeal to non and recent visitors instead of maintaining the attitude that “this is what we have” or “we know what needs to be done but we just don’t have the money!” Such operational mindsets will not keep their museums sustainable but lead to museum atrophy.

Four, offer peripheral services to attract the unmarried segments: beyond transforming from class to mass leisure places, museums could also become places for socialization and dating to entice single non-visitors and those who lack a companion to visit (factor #6). One program offered by a grocery store in Connecticut illustrates the idea. The grocery store hosts a weekly Saturday evening program whereby singles convene in an area in the grocery store to learn about nutrition, international cuisines, food selection, cooking, and smart grocery shopping practices. Their approach achieves three goals: attract people to the store, sell their products, and provide a meet up place for singles. Museums could definitely adopt this approach to attract/re-attract visitors. In addition to organizing special events for singles, museums could also offer “tour partners.” That is, recruit and train “attractive” volunteers to act as “tour guides” for those who don’t want to visit a museum alone. This way, “single non-visitors” may be more motivated to visit/revisit.

Five, entice people to visit museums. To attract those who live farther away or who have never visited a museum, museums could launch museum mobiles (buses set up as mini museums with on-site promotional activities) to selected areas, such as targeted market residential areas, work areas, shopping areas, and recreational areas. If people could more easily see what museums offer, they may be roused to visit the actual museums.

Six, address the ambiance factor. This topic has been well addressed under a variety of names, such as physical evidence, atmospherics, servicescape, and service quality including safety-security (Bitner 1992; Hume 2011 and 2008; Kaltcheva and Weitz 2006; Kottasz 2006; Leach 2007; Lindstrom 2005; Lovelock and Wirtz 2007; McLean 1993; Morrin and Chebat 2005; Turley and Milliman 2000; Wakefield and Blodgett 1994). Hence it is unnecessary to discuss it further except to remind that leisure consumers (especially females, young singles, and those with children) are unlikely to visit museums if they feel museums are visually and/or atmospherically uninviting places. Once again, museums need to spend money (view it as an investment rather than an expenditure) to create a more inviting place before they can hope to attract and re-attract visitors. One Malaysian respondent in this study wrote (in verbatim): *“I don’t know if we have any nice museums. The one that I visited with my family last year was not a nice place and boring. Nothing much to see in there. The place was not clean and outside the museum, there were beggars, hawkers, and creepy people. I prefer shopping or going to the cinemas with my friends than visiting a museum!”*

Finally, since the responses of public and university student samples differed significantly in non-visitor and recent-visitor groups (research questions #6 and #7 respectively), museum marketing management actions should not be based on a sampling of university students as typically reported in the research literature unless they are the target market.

Weaknesses & Future Direction

Despite careful planning and execution, there were a few problems and weaknesses:

- Data collection --- the study would have been more valuable if longitudinal and more cross sectional data were collected. But securing dedicated co-authors in other countries was difficult.
- Data collectors --- we used our students as data collectors and they tended to solicit from respondents within their age group and circle of acquaintances. As such, true randomness might have been compromised. If this study were to be replicated, we would adopt a 50-50 quota format to ensure better representation. That is, for every familiar respondent solicited, one non familiar respondent should also be solicited.
- Items in the questionnaires were primarily based on North American research literature thus may be less applicable to non-North America areas.
- The questionnaire was written in American English. Although the questionnaires were written in non-technical language and our overseas student collectors were instructed to offer translation and explanation whenever necessary, each data collector's communication skill, vocabulary, and experience posed questionable accuracy. Thus researchers who seek to replicate this study should translate the questionnaires to native languages.
- Frame of reference --- museums come in all shapes, forms, and sizes. When respondents are free to use their own referenced museum(s), levels of response variability increase. If this study were to be replicated, this frame of reference issue would need to be resolved.

Conclusion

It is doubtful that there are museum administrators who do not care if their museum's annual visitor trend is favorable or unfavorable. To help museums achieve the 3Rs of marketing management (recruit new visitors, retain existing visitors, and promote referral of new visitors by existing visitors), this study sought to determine significant variables that inhibit and promote museum visits. The findings indicated that only a limited number of variables were invariant across place and group in both queries. When the variables for the two challenges were juxtaposed, two basic issues emerged for action: the need to increase the core appeal (make museums more appealing places among leisure choices), and the peripheral appeal (make museum operational practices more visitor-oriented). To improve the core appeal, actions such as improving exhibits (quality, quantity, type, and layout); opportunity for socialization; and the staging of special events would seem judicious. As for peripheral appeal, improving visitor access; museum ambiance; cleanliness and various auxiliary visitor services would be prudent. By taking this dual appeal strategy, museums may be better able to entice non-visitors to visit, excite lapsed visitors to become frequent visitors, and convert enthusiasts to lifelong advocates, sponsors, and donors.

As with most social studies especially across differing geographical and cultural areas, we acknowledged weaknesses in this study design. Nevertheless, it was felt that the findings here were of value for reasons stated previously including the possible spurring of other researchers to use more sophisticated designs and data treatment techniques in future studies. However, no museum studies should be based solely on university students' samples since the findings here

indicated that their responses do not approximate those of public samples in both non-visit and recent visit responses.

References

- Amenta, C. (2010). Exploring Museum Marketing Performance: A Case Study from Italy. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*, 2(1): 24-35.
- Bitner, M.A. (1992). Servicescapes: the impact of physical surroundings on customers and employees. *Journal of Marketing*, 56:57-71.
- Burton, C., Louviere, J., and Young, L. (2009). Retaining the Visitor, Enhancing the Experience: Identifying Attributes of Choice in Repeat Museum Visitation. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 14: 21-34.
- CBS News (2010). www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/02/25
- Caldwell, N. (2002). Rethinking the Measurement of Service Quality in Museums and Galleries. *International Journal of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 7 (2): 161-171.
- Chan, J.K.L, and Yeoh, E.L. (2007). Into the tourists' mind: an exploratory study on the experiential dimensions of museum experiences. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Tourism and Hospitality, Putrajaya, Malaysia*, pp. 138-144.
- Davis, S. (2005). Still Popular: Museums and their Visitors 1994-2004. *Cultural Trends*, 14 (1): 67-105.
- Debenedetti, S. (2003). Investigating the Role of Companions in the Art Museum Experience. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 5 (3): 52-63.
- Falk, J. and Dierking, L. (2000). *Learning from Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press.
- Geissler, G.L., Rucks, C. T., and Edison, S.W. (2006). Understanding the Role of Service Convenience in Art Museum Marketing: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, 14 (4): 69-87.
- Goulding, C. (2000). "The Museum Environment and the Visitor Experience." *European Journal of Marketing*, 34 (3/4): 261-278.
- Harrison, J. (1997). Museums and Touristic Expectations. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24 (1): 23-40.
- Harrison, P., and Shaw, R. (2004). Consumer Satisfaction and Post-Purchase Intentions: An Exploratory Study of Museum Visitors, *International Journal of Arts Management*, 6 (2): 23-32.
- Hume, M. (2011). How do we keep them coming? Examining museum experiences using a services marketing paradigm. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 23(1): 771- 94.
- (2008). Understanding core and peripheral service quality in customer repurchase of the performing arts. *Managing Service Quality*, 18: 349 - 369.
- Jackson, E.L. (2000). Will Research on Leisure Constraints Still be Relevant in the Twenty-first Century? *Journal of Leisure Research*, 32 (1): 62-68
- Kaltcheva, V.D., and Weitz, B.A. (2006). When should a retailer create an exciting store environment? *Journal of Marketing*, 70: 107-118.
- Kasim, A., Scarlat, C., and Nor, N.A.M. (2007). Museum Marketing: Lessons for Museums in Emerging Economies. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Tourism & Hospitality, Putrajaya, Malaysia*, pp. 401-412.

- Kelly, L. (2004). Evaluation, Research and Communities of Practice: Program Evaluation in Museums. *Archival Science*, 4: 45-69.
- Khalife, K. (2007). What is Marketing? Is your museum's definition inside out? http://museummarketingtips.com/articles/marketing_what.html
- King, M.J. (1991). The Theme Park Experience: What Museums Can Learn from Mickey Mouse. *The Futurist*, November-December, pp. 24-31.
- Kirchberg, V. (1996). Museum visitors and non-visitors in Germany: a representative survey. *Poetics* 24: 239-258.
- Kotler, Neil, G. (1999). Delivering Experience: Marketing the Museum's Full Range of Assets. *Museum News*, May/June: 30 – 39 and 58.
- Kottasz, R. (2006). Understanding the Influences of Atmospheric Cues on the Emotional Responses and Behaviors of Museum Visitors. 16 (1/2): 95-121.
- Leach, D.B. (2007). Dynamic Museum Place: Exploring the Multi-dimensional Museum Environment. *Journal of Museum Education*, 32(3): 197-207.
- Lin, Y.N. (2006). Leisure --- a function of museums? The Taiwan perspective. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 21(4): 302-316.
- Lovelock, C. and Wirtz, J. (2007). *Services Marketing: People, Technology, Strategy*. Prentice Hall, Boston.
- McLean, F.C. (1993). Marketing in Museums: A Contextual Analysis. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 12: 11-27.
- Morrin, M. and Chebat, J.C. (2005). Person-place congruency: the interactive effects of shopper style and atmospherics on consumer expenditures. *Journal of Service Research*, 8 (2): 181-191.
- Nyaupane, G.P. and Andereck, K.L. (2008). Understanding Travel Constraints: Application and Extension of a Leisure Constraints Model. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46: 433-439.
- Paswan, A.K. and Troy, L.C. (2004). Non-Profit Organization and Membership Motivation: An Exploration in the Museum Industry. *Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice*, Spring, pp. 1-15.
- Prentice, R. (1994). Perceptual deterrents to visiting museums and other heritage attractions. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 13 (3): 264-279.
- Prideaux, B.R., and Kininmont, L.J. (1999). Tourism and Heritage are not Strangers: A Study of Opportunities for Rural Heritage Museums to Maximize Tourism Visitation. *Journal of Travel Research*, 37: 299-303.
- Raajpoot, N., Koh, K., and Jackson, A. (2010). Developing a scale to measure service quality: an exploratory study. *International Journal of Arts Management*, 12(3): 54-69.
- Reussner, E.M. (2003). Strategic management for visitor-oriented museums: a change of focus. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 9(1): 95-108.
- Schemeligan, B. (2004). A Work in Progress. *Casino Journal*, 17(2): 22.
- Simpson, K. (2006). Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions in a Rural Community Museum Environment. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 1(3): 1-28.
- Tian, S., Crompton, J.L., and Witt, P.A. (1996). Integrating constraints and benefits to identify responsive target markets for museum attractions. *Journal of Travel Research*, 35(2): 34-45.
- The Associated Press (2011). Old Sturbridge Village Attendance Surges. <http://blog.masslive.com/breakingnews/print/print.html?entry=/2011/03/attendance>

- The Post Chronicle (2010). Liberace Museum In Vegas Closes.
http://www.postchronicle.com/news/entertainment/article_212328122.shtml
- Tobelem, J.M. (1997). The Marketing Approach in Museums. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 16(4): 337-354.
- Thyne, M. (2001). The Importance of Values Research for Nonprofit Organizations: The Motivation-Based Values of Museum Visitors. *International Journal of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 6 (2): 116-130.
- Turley, L.W. and Milliman, R. (2000). Atmospheric effects on shopping behavior: a review of the experimental literature. *Journal of Business Research*, 49:193-211.
- Wakefield, K.L. and Blodgett, J.G. (1994). The importance of servicescapes in leisure service settings. *Journal of services marketing*, 8(3):66-76.
- Weil, S. (1999). From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum. *Daedalus*, 128: 229-258.
- Wilson, G. (1988). Marketing and Self Promotion in Museums. *Museums Journal*, 88 (2): 97-100.
- Yucelt, U. (2000). Marketing Museums: An Empirical Investigation among Museum Visitors. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing*, 8 (3): 3-13.

Biographies



Khoon Koh is a professor in the Dept. of Marketing at Central Connecticut State University. His doctorate was earned at Texas A&M University, his master's at Temple University, and his baccalaureate from the University of Alberta, Canada. His research interests: tourism marketing, tourism entrepreneurship, and service marketing management.



Dr. Chen is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Leisure and Recreation Management, Chung-Hua University, Taiwan. She received her Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. Her research interests include economic impacts, festivals, and medical tourism.



Ei-Leen Yeoh is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in tourism marketing at the University Malaysia Sabah, Malaysia. She received her MBA in Strategic Marketing from the University of Hull, UK, and her Bachelor of Management (Hons) from the Science University of Malaysia. Her research interests include perceived value and customer satisfaction.