

## Transformation of the Museum in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Baltic States Museums Visitors

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**Abstract.** Audience development in cultural organisations and museums in Lithuania is relevant and not enough explored. While reading different academic literature and research on this topic, the most common issue mentioned is a lack of research about visitors to Lithuanian cultural organisations and museums. Most usually, communication about events and products created for visitors is based on the intuition or opinion of the employees, rather than on analysis of visitor's expectations. Meanwhile, global research is orientated to understand, who is the audience of the organisation and what expectations it has. Those studies show that the audience is expecting to get new emotions, learn new things, new experiences, and increase social connections, to feel welcomed and interested.

**Keywords:** audience development, audience research, museum, visitor's expectations, cultural organisation.

### Introduction

#### *Relevance of article*

Society and its needs changes rapidly, museums must adapt and change as well, if they intend to be interesting and engage visitors more. Society is seeking more experience and emotions in everything it participates in. As various audience research shows that a statistical visitor to an exhibition would like “more information”, “good guidance”, “a higher level of service and more human contact”. Increasingly, visitors expect a wider range of additional “programmes and more services”. Many researchers in the creative sector are analysing the key challenges, which cultural institutions are facing, emphasise the importance of a clear mission and identity, the need to expand audiences and attract new financial resources. One of the most important aspects, which allows shaping a service or product, is the relationship of the art organisation with the audience. The specificity of the audience of an art organisation can be based on the service or product, as it provides long-lasting benefit. An organisation's relationship with the consumer is especially important as maintaining it can lead to the mutual benefits of a long-term relationship for both parties (Gresiene et al., 2019).

#### *Level of problem investigation*

The audience development and audience research are analysed in various articles of different scholars from Lithuania and foreign countries. Most of the research was performed in foreign countries as well as most innovative ideas have been implemented abroad. Lithuanian museums have conducted various surveys of visitors, however, their results are difficult to compare because each survey uses a different age group or different classification of visitors (Běška et al, 2013). Most of the articles of local scholars studied are based on theories and research that were performed in other countries. However, audience development in museums topic has various analysis and interpretation in academic literature.

#### *Scientific problem*

How important it is for a museum to understand audience expectation by doing research when working with audience development?

**Object of the article** – audience development in museums.

**Aim of the article** is to analyse various articles and methods, how museums could engage more and achieve better results in audience development.

#### **Objectives of the article:**

1. To analyse museums challenges and transformations in the modern age.

2. To analyse various studies and research of museums audience and present different types of visitors.
3. Present case study of Baltic museum visitor statistics.

**Methods of the article.** The research of the scientific literature, analysis of different scholar's ideas, highlighting researcher's insights and opinions, systematisation and generalisation. Analysis and comparison of statistical data about the popularity of museums in Baltic countries.

### **Museum challenges and transformations in the modern digitalisation age. Studies of museums and their audiences**

Audience development as a process is widely described and studied in various scientific publications, and there are strategies and methods on how to develop and expand the audience. Meanwhile, only several Lithuanian museums sometimes carry out extensive visitor research, and there has not yet been a formed tradition to do this consistently and on a larger scale. When carrying out audience development studies, scientists select one or several organisations, their case analyses, or carry out mixed-type of studies by using surveying and interview methods.

When analysing the issue of audience development in the museum, the following 3 main aspects that are significant and are discussed by many scholars can be distinguished: the role of the museum as an organisation and its challenges in modern society, types and importance of communication, and visitor studies and their results.

Many researchers in the cultural sector analyse the most important challenges of modern cultural institutions and emphasise the importance of their mission and identity as well as the need to expand the audience and attract new financial resources. The diminishing boundary between culture and commerce promotes the fresh establishment of one's identity and place in society. Growing competition in the field of culture and the necessity to compete in the market of leisure activities force adaptation to the new conditions, rethinking of the structure of an institution, ways to do exhibitions, presentations and accompanying programmes and services. Today museums are especially focused on audiences: exhibits are formed in order to satisfy specific needs of target audiences; publications are created for specific audience segments, and studies encompass both audiences and collections. For instance, the success of museum activities in the U.S. is measured by means of such indexes as the accessibility of a museum for those with low income, attention to education and various groups of minorities as well as an institution's obligation to constantly evaluate its services. The new approach of the Western art institutions shows the attempts to rethink their relationships with society, means of communication, review the concept and significance of education (Citvarienė, 2015). The author's idea that there is a diminishing disjuncture between business and culture allows assuming that cultural organisations should start changing their attitude towards their visitor and their competitors that have not been taken into account before.

Today's museums compete with other leisure institutions that are able to attract visitors more by interesting them in their content or simply selling their services better. If museums used to compete among themselves earlier, now the area of this competition has expanded, which promotes strengthening forces when it comes to not only audience development but also audience maintenance. If museums are not able to adapt to visitor needs, they can lose the interest of society.

The financial aspect is mentioned as well; it triggers thinking about why business leisure organisations expand their audience and increase the accessibility of their services. They are very dependent on the size of the audience and income for organised activities. Meanwhile, Gelūnas claims that as a rule over 90 per cent of the budgets of Lithuanian state museums consist of assignments. In Western countries, this percentage is significantly lower and fluctuates between 60 and 40 per cent (Gelūnas, 2019). Therefore, museums in post-Soviet countries often do not yet know how to coordinate the attraction of finances with the dispersion of culture as there is no need for them to do it as long as support from the government is sufficient. Thus, we can see that all cultural organisations

including museums begin competing with business companies and cannot forget this factor by creating audience development strategies.

Museums face a big challenge in the transformation into the modern museum and look for ways how to replace conventional work principles at the same time attracting new audiences. It is important to note analyses of Mason, McCarthy, Kelpša, Šuminas on necessary changes that museums have to carry out in order to become modern museums and become interesting and engaging.

Kelpša quotes Waidacher (2007) and claims that as societies change, all the institutions and organisations that operate with them change as well. Museums are no exception, as the nature of their activities is directly related to economic, cultural, social or political factors prevailing in society (Kelpša, 2014). In the second half of the 20th century, practical activities of museologists began including the perception of the museum based on the principle of openness, community, engagement, social responsibility and holistic activity. Ongoing attempts to reorganise museums and relate them to societal contexts emphasise the fundamental scientific problem of museology, i.e., perception of the social role of museums (Kelpša, 2014). The changing perception of the role of the museum also creates challenges of how to adapt to the expectations and how to change the image of the museum established in the memory of society.

Today museum is not just a building; it is a building and a website. Traditionally, museums used to work with certain objects and not the online environment. Meanwhile, today many museums enthusiastically take up new media where they increase their popularity and effectiveness instead of remaining unchanged (Mason et al, 2007). We can see that the concept of the museum is changing, and the museum is becoming more than its walls with exhibits on them. Mason and McCarthy carried out a study in their attempts to find out whether museums in New Zealand have adapted their websites for visitors if they are convenient and sufficiently informative (Mason et al, 2007). This shows that museums today are evaluated not only based on their exhibits but also based on how they are able to introduce them to visitors. This is another aspect that shows that museums are awaiting a big change.

Definitions of a museum can be found in different sources. A museum is an institution that gains, stores, studies, promotes and exhibits humankind and environmental tangible and intangible heritage for science, educational and leisure organisation purposes (Šuminas et al, 2013). The Law on Museums of the Republic of Lithuania states that the most important activities of museums are to store, protect, restore, study, exhibit and promote tangible and spiritual cultural values and natural objects (Law on Museums of the Republic of Lithuania, 2010). Even though museums were understood as the collection, conservation and research institutions, the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century gave rise to discussions that museums have to take care of their social function in society as well as their educational and cultural factors.

In 1974, the General Assembly of the International Council of Museums in Copenhagen adopted a resolution that announced that museums must transform and change according to the needs of their communities. In this context, the term of new museology emerged which, according to Peter van Mensch, related to the changing role of a museum in society. All of the attention was diverted from museum objects and collections to museum visitors and communities. Representatives of new museology claim that any museology methodology or conception must first of all start from figuring out the needs of society (Šuminas et al, 2013).

Comparing with the “old”, or traditional, museology that mostly studied the issues of museum object care, museum management and maintenance, new museology is defined as a science that studies the role of the museum in society. Formed as a reaction to the excessively instrumental concept of the museum, the new museum theory began solving ideological, political and cultural aspects of the relationship between the museum and society that inevitably surround both the formation of museum collections and selection as well as an exposition of museum objects (Dovydaitytė, 2013). Even though all the aforementioned authors distinguish different aspects that are necessary for museums in order to become modern museums, they agree on the necessity of the modern museum and its significance in modern society. Also, they emphasise difficulties that classic museums face during the transformation

towards the postmuseum. All of the authors agree that today the role of the museum is rapidly changing and in order to stay interesting, there is a need to look for new ways to attract an audience.

The Law on Museums of the Republic of Lithuania indicates that one of the functions of the museum is to promote cultural values, however, it is not defined which criteria can be used to measure whether museum activities are carried out successfully. Meanwhile, Citvarienė mentions that the success of U.S. museum activities is measured based on the attraction of visitors with the lowest income. As we can see, there are ways which can be used to evaluate the success of museum work not only by assessing the number of visitors. It can be noted that the change of museums is directly related to societal change; in order to stay relevant and carry out their functions, museums will have to find ways how to reach new audiences.

In today's digital world, many activities move to social networks, and organisations implement electronic marketing communication strategies that are becoming a significant factor in museum audience development. Such theories as semiotics, structuralism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, etc., Jacques Derrida's *différance*, Michel Foucault's discourse, Roland Barthes' death of the author concepts, identity politics ideas, etc., have allowed perceiving a museum as a communication system operating under complex conditions of political, economic and cultural interests (Dovydaitytė, 2013).

The rapid development of digital media technologies and online networks at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century created conditions for the emergence of new museology and exhibition organisation ways and encouraged the perception of the museum as media. The invasion of digital media technologies into the museum, adaptation and use of their possibilities can be seen as a logical continuation of the general technological development; however, it is sometimes seen as a threat to the identity of the institution. As museums transfer into the virtual space, they become a real cultural and tourism industry (Gaižutytė-Filipavičienė, 2012). Gaižutytė-Filipavičienė analyses museum websites and draws a conclusion that the situation is not bad compared to other countries; however, there is an insufficient amount of discussions on how digital media technologies can be applied in an actual museum to provide information, educate and expand visitor's experience.

According to the 2010 dictionary of museology terms *Key Concepts of Museology*, it is suggested to think of museum communication by distinguishing the two most general types of communication. The first one is called one-directional, or transmission, communication where the information flow process is defined as follows: sender → message → receiver. The second type of communication is called interactive communication that is based on mutual exchange or the following scheme: sender ↔ message ↔ receiver. It is important to note that in the context of Lithuania, the concept of one-directional communication is followed not only in regulatory documents that regulate museum activities but also in the academic research of museums. Museum theory and practice globally increasingly emphasises the importance of interactive communication (Dovydaitytė, 2013).

Dovydaitytė and Gaižutytė-Filipavičienė discuss the importance of communication and emphasise that the transition to the digital space can threaten the museum's identity, which raises doubt whether museums understand the importance, significance and benefit of the transition to the digital space.

Traditional museum communication was often called one-directional: a museum provided information, and visitors accepted it passively. Communication was based more on the promotion of museum activities and its promotion in the passive audience than the active engagement of the audience into the process of communication. As the role and perception of the museum changed, and as new museology ideas and principles spread, museums began evaluating the significance of communication for their activities as well. Even though museums still actively use one-directional communication methods, the tools of new interactive communication such as various social media channels allow museums to search for new ways how to turn passive audiences into active ones and include them in their process of communication (Šuminas, 2013).

All the aforementioned authors claim that on their way to the transformation into a modern museum, museums have to start thinking about communication, the key aspect of audience development, by using modern technologies. It is also important to emphasise the aforementioned communication methods that are particular to the traditional museum and that will not work with a modern society that has a need to share experience and express its own opinion. Thus, if the relationship between the

museum and the visitor used to be related only to the physical visit of the organisation, now we can see that this can change with the active involvement of social media. They should make it easier for museums to find connection with the new visitor, engage him/her and obtain his/her opinion and insights of what s/he would find interesting and what would motivate him/her to visit the museum more often.

Evaluating the Lithuanian museum communication channels, we see that modern technologies are not completely used, and authors often raise a question of whether this happens because museums that could take up this type of communication still do not see benefits that can be brought by these channels or they lack competence. Foreign scientists such as Falk, Dierking, Kotler, Mason, McCarthy and others have carried out significantly more studies on the topic of audience development and many of the aforementioned Lithuanian authors base their research on these studies. A few of the aforementioned authors studied the use of new technologies and the internet for audience development. According to Bakhsh and Throsby, information and communication technology development has had the most impact on the changes of functioning and operation of art and cultural organisations in today's world by opening new opportunities and inviting to rethink the operation principles of these organisations and their ways to achieve their most important goals (Bakhsh et al, 2009). The development of new technologies has the biggest amount of impact on the relationship of cultural and art institutions with their audience. Both rapid progress of digital technologies, the Internet and the changing consumer behaviour promote art and culture organisations to not only re-evaluate their values but also rethink the principles of strategic planning and operation. Research shows that consumers spend more and more money on their leisure hobbies online. Therefore, it is evident that online communication is becoming a strategically important part of art and cultural organisation marketing, the main channel of societal information dispersion that significantly expands their communication opportunities (Tutlytė, 2014).

Falk and Dierking distinguish principles that can improve the effectiveness of communication with the public. According to them, the first principle shows that each visitor learns differently and interprets information based on personal knowledge, experience and beliefs; therefore, it is important for exhibition organisers to find out what visitors already know (not only what we want him/her to know or experience in the exhibition). This needs conditions that allow visitors to pass from current knowledge and experience to desired knowledge and experience (Falk et al., 1992).

In order to develop an audience and implement communication using new technologies, it is important to get to know which audience is desired to be attracted to and also know the current visitor. One of the ways to do this is studies during which an organisation can get to know its audience more closely. There have not been many more extensive studies like this, therefore, it is important to mention those that exist already.

The first one is the 2003 sociological study by Kubilickienė "Cultural Needs of Inhabitants of Lithuania: Evaluation and Attendance Cultural Institutions". The aim of the study is to describe the particular evaluation and visitation of cultural institutions based on representative and statistically reliable data thus revealing the peculiarities of the cultural needs of Lithuanian inhabitants and their distribution in various social demographic groups of informants. This study shows that cultural activities are an important people's leisure need and is third in Lithuania (after communication with family and friends). According to many Lithuanian residents, celebrations and concerts are the most important cultural events. Evaluating the need for cultural institutions, the second is libraries and theatres, i.e., about half of the respondents pointed out that libraries (51 per cent) and theatres (50 per cent) seemed necessary and suitable for them. Based on the survey, we can conclude that the inhabitants of Lithuania favour and mostly visit such cultural events as celebrations, fairs or concerts. It can be seen that the assessment of the needs of cultural institutions is not always related to their visitation. Also, the dependency of cultural need idiosyncrasy on informants' education, age and place of living is revealed. In this study, only 44 per cent of the respondents evaluate museums as a favoured and necessary institution, and 47 per cent point out that they do not go to museums at all, whereas the remaining 9 per cent call the museum unnecessary (Kubilickienė, 2004). Such results show that visiting museums is not as popular in Lithuania as museums would want and that museums are not able to

adapt to societal changes and attract interest. We can see that the aforementioned authors agree that new technologies change the relationship between the museum and the audience; the most important aspect is how fast museums will be able to understand this truth and create new strategies for audience attraction. Meanwhile, Kublickienė's study confirms the aforementioned thought that museums compete with business and are losing this battle.

Another important study is the 2017 study *Expert Study of Museum and Library Marketing Activities* (Lith. *Muziejų ir bibliotekų rinkodaros veiklos ekspertinis tyrimas*). The aim of the study is to look into and supplement collected information on museum marketing in order to find out the main realities and their impact on marketing activities, most widespread practices and marketing-related needs. The study encompasses 14 museums including national, state and regional museums. The study looks into the marketing aspect in museums which, as it has been mentioned, is important in museum transformation into modern museums. It is important to note that out of the 14 museums that participated in the study, only 4 have marketing or communication departments. Also, the opinion of one of the museum directors is emphasised; it states that there is no point to give such activities a separate person because marketing should be integrated into every employee's head thus making him/her try to attract more visitors. Meanwhile, when analysing the report further, the question on employees' competencies, knowledge and skills in the marketing area shows one of the respondents thought that employees lack knowledge because most of their professions include the study of art, history or they are artists who do not have any foundations of marketing and communication (LCC, 2017). We see that museums not only lack competencies and knowledge on how to purposefully create marketing strategies and implement them, but directors too not always see the need for such activities. This shows that museums are in the stage of transformation where they are still trying to understand how it is necessary to change and how it should be carried out.

Moreover, when it comes to the question about consumer needs, the majority of the museums claimed that they make attempts to get feedback from visitors in some form, some of them carry out regular research; however, the research is often carried out once in several years. Museums that do not carry out such research create conditions for visitors to leave reviews, yet they do not carry out analysis of this information. They usually stop at visitor observation (LCC, 2017). Some of the museums carry out research but we can see that they are not systematic; thus, we cannot say that the information obtained from research is up-to-date or that it reflects visitors' needs.

It is important to mention the existing studies that look into visitors' motivation and habits when visiting cultural organisations. Jurėnienė and Peseckienė carried out a study whose object was the consumers of the M. K. Čiurlionis Art Gallery and Kaunas Picture Gallery. The study consists of two parts; the first one includes surveying visitors of the museum, while the second one includes interviews with the staff, directors, managers, curators, art experts of the museum. One of the main aspects of the first part is to find out visitor motivation to visit the museum as well as their habits. Out of 226 respondents, only 3 per cent had never visited the museum in question, whereas 47 per cent visited it twice a year more. When asked how they found out about the museum, 20 per cent pointed out that they could not answer; 56 per cent pointed many small channels out of which 28 per cent heard about it from family or friends, and the remaining 26 per cent – from various media and advertising (Jurėnienė et al., 2020). Therefore, we can see that recommendations are one of the most popular sources of information dispersion because of which people become interested in cultural organisations just as modern media channels that we have already discussed as a very important aspect in the transformation of the contemporary museum.

In the second part of the study, Jurėnienė and Peseckienė interviewed employees of the organisation on the importance of audience research. Even though all of the experts that participated in the study admitted that such research was significant and important, they had never raised the question of its necessity in their institution. Having analysed the answers, it can be concluded that such research in this organisation was not carried out or carried out without the initiative of the employees and it was very fragmented. As the authors suggest, visual art experts do not carry out systematic audience research that would help to understand visitors' needs and expectations (Jurėnienė et al., 2020). Having analysed the data of the aforementioned studies, we can see that the experts of the cultural field agree

that it is important to carry out audience research; unfortunately, there are very few initiatives like these, and if they are implemented, they lack systemic nature. We also see that the information on an organisation reaches visitors via various channels, and it can be concluded that museums that do not focus enough on marketing and communication will not be able to reach their desired audience.

Business organisations often carry out various research during which they aim at finding out client needs, experiences, whether the services are satisfactory and, based on the results, changing, adapting and sometimes even creating new products. Meanwhile, if we look for information on such research in cultural organisations, we see that there is a lack of them. The study carried out by Citvarienė in an art organisation shows that employees are more and more inclined to trust their personal insights on visitor needs and effectiveness of communication rather than carrying out research. Even though directors emphasise that their exhibitions aim at diverse audiences, this usually shows poor effort to get to know the existing or potential audience. Employees, curators and art critics themselves often guess what their audience wants thus including a new activity (Citvarienė, 2015).

With the lack of audience research, there is a lack of understanding of what audience come to a cultural organisation, what audience is missing, and what the audience expects from this institution. Without the understanding of the audience, communication of art institutions is usually random, and communication activities are not coordinated. However, it has to become the focus of the communication solutions oriented towards the market and the segments that comprise it. It is very important to create the main image of an organisation that would determine the content of the message used in all advertising (Citvarienė, 2015).

Many of the studies are based on demographic indexes such as age, race, gender, social class, but currently, it is often claimed that these indexes do not necessarily help to understand what a visitor is. Many of the studies carried out in the recent decades in Western and Southern Europe, the USA and Australia were based on demographic indexes based on which a conclusion was drawn that the average visitor of a museum is an older, educated female with higher income. Such a definition of the museum visitor does not say much about the person who is hiding behind it, it does not say whether the person will come to a museum or what his/her experience is after a visit (Jurėnienė et al., 2020). We can see that in order to know the audience, it is necessary to carry out more thorough research that would help to know their own visitors and respond to their needs, increase interest and make them constant visitors of an institution. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of such research for every cultural organisation to have their target marketing strategy on the question of audience development. As we can see, museums not only compete with the business for the visitor but in this case, it develops products and services without understanding what a visitor wants or expects. As a consequence, the visitor in many cases can be surprised by coming to a museum and finding what s/he did not expect. Meanwhile, going to a fair or cinema, the visitor knows what to expect as these services are usually adapted to demand.

### **Audience types, expectations and motivation**

In order to create effective communication, attract new audiences or simply understand why a certain organisation receives more visitors than others, it is important to not only get to know the visitor but also understand which type the visitor belongs to. It is important to know what the visitor expects from the visit and what motivates him/her to come, whether s/he tends to visit with a group of people, etc. For this purpose, several studies have been carried out and reveal the following main 3 aspects: types of audience, expectations and motivation to visit a cultural or art organisation.

Museum audience research shows that when choosing the leisure place and form, the following criteria are the most important: being with other people and social interaction, meaningful activities, feeling good in the environment, challenge for new experiences, opportunity to learn something, active participation. These factors can be divided into emotional (opportunity to feel good), rational (opportunity to learn something) and sensory (new experiences). The studies also show that constant visitors value the opportunity to learn and experience something new, they have a desire for interaction and entertainment. This group looks for a comfortable environment and communication with others. Family-oriented activities are more important to them than those that are directed towards learning new things or sensory experiences (Citvarienė, 2015).

Meanwhile, museum management specialists Kotler, N. G., Kotler, Ph. And Kotler, W. I. distinguish the following several types of museum visiting experiences: *recreation*; it is enjoying leisure and activities such as a careless walk. *Trying out interactive tasks*; this includes eating out at a restaurant, shopping in a museum shop. *Sociability*: this includes the aim for communication, spectating and being with others, participation in common public activities such as exhibition with a group, having lunch with others or visitor observation. *Learning experience* that joins collection and acquisition of information, satisfaction of curiosity, contemplation and reflection, practising cognitive skills by observing new forms of art, reading labels, etc. *Aesthetic experience*: such experiences are usually offered by galleries and art museums where engagement into various sensory experiences and activities, sense of satisfaction, euphoria are important as well as sometimes the sense of anxiety created by an exhibition, focusing on their beauty rather than a benefit. *“Honouring” experience*; this is closely related to the memory of a leader, event, group, honouring an organisation; sharing achievement, connection with the past, perception of history and continuity of time is also very important. The last type is a problem-oriented experience that aims at engaging in modern problems that can have an impact on local and wider communities, e.g., an exhibition on the topic of global warming (Kotler et al., 2008).

When going to a museum, visitors may have very different expectations and if a museum is ready to welcome only one type that probably likes to visit with a company that aims at different experiences, it may seem uninteresting, and, probably, none of them will come to the museum choosing a cultural place that will meet everyone’s needs. Seeing how many different needs an audience may have, we understand that the task of a museum to create a strategy that will attract everyone or at least the majority is not easy. This task can be made easier by finding out which type of audience is already visiting the museum and which type needs more work. Knowledge would make work easier and would save time and resources.

Research by Falck (2009) shows that it is possible to study five different types of museum visitors with a different motivation. One of the types includes explorers, or *curious people*, for whom the content of museum exhibits is the most important. They expect to find something that would attract their attention and arouse learning. Moreover, they enjoy remembering how they used to study and refresh the feeling of discovery. *Facilitators* are socially motivated. They usually go to a museum with a group, often organise the group and encourage others to experience and learn. These are often parents or grandparents who bring their children or grandchildren, teachers with a class, or activists who have organised a group of colleagues and friends. *Professionals and amateurs* (those who have hobbies, collectors) have a close connection with a museum collection because they are professionals in that area or because they are interested in this area due to their hobby. Another group is called *seekers of experiences*; they are motivated by the fact that they see a museum as an important object to visit. Their satisfaction is first of all related to the ability to say, “I was there and I did this”. If you have been to Rome, how can you not have visited the Vatican museums or the Sistine Chapel? It is like putting check marks on a list. And the last group are *spiritual pilgrims* who primarily aim for a contemplative, spiritual and refreshing experience. They go to a museum in order to run away from their working routine (Falk, 2009). Having distinguished the types of visitors, there are differences among visitors as all of them have some needs that they wish to satisfy when coming to a museum. Falck’s study is often used when expanding the audience. There are other scholars who carried out similar studies including Packer and Ballantine.

Packer and Ballantine carried out studies in three institutions, i.e., museum (nature and culture), art gallery (permanent Australian and foreign painting, sculpture, graphics, applied art exhibit) and aquarium. The questionnaire of the reasons for visiting was comprised of 40 questions that were generalised in the following five categories:

1. Learning and discovering (the need to discover new things, expand the area of knowledge, be better informed, experience something new or unusual).
2. Passive satisfaction (wish to experience joy, spend good time, feel happy and satisfied).
3. Recuperation (the need to relax physically and mentally, experience a change from one’s routine, relax from tension and stress).

4. Social interaction (the need to spend time with friends and family, communicate, make connections).

5. Self-expression, self-awareness (the need to make things more meaningful, challenge one's own abilities, experience the sense of achievement, educate self-awareness and self-image) (Packer, Ballantyne, 2002).

The studies carried out and discussed reveal visitor expectations, types and motivation to visit a museum or another cultural organisation. If museums carried out this research more, they would find it easier to create strategies, communication plans, because work would be purposeful. Without a sufficient amount of time or resources, the focus can be directed to the attraction of only one type of audience which can be easily accessible or which a museum lacks the most. It is important to note that without knowing what to attract, it is difficult to achieve any goals.

#### Case study of Baltic museum visitor statistics

Having analysed the most important aspects of the transformation of the museum into a contemporary museum and discussed what types of audience, motivation and expectation when visiting museums there are, it is interesting to know the statistics and the situation in Lithuanian museums. According to Statistics Lithuania, Lithuania had 107 operating museums in 2019 including national, municipality and private museums. This analysis does not focus on their differences because the issue of audience development does not distinguish that different theories should be applied to different museums. Also, based on the information found, it can be said that in 2019, museums brought 5,589,000 visitors, 4,037,749 of which were tourists. It is important to note that the aforementioned concept of tourists includes both local and foreign tourists.

The table below presents the distribution of museums and visitors in 3 major Lithuanian cities and remaining Lithuanian regions.

Table 1

#### Distribution of Lithuanian museums and visitors

	Population, %	Museums, %	Visitors, %	Tourists, %
Vilnius	29	30	42	40
Kaunas	20	19	22	16
Klaipėda	11	11	18	20
Rest of Lithuania	40	40	18	24
Total	100	100	100	100

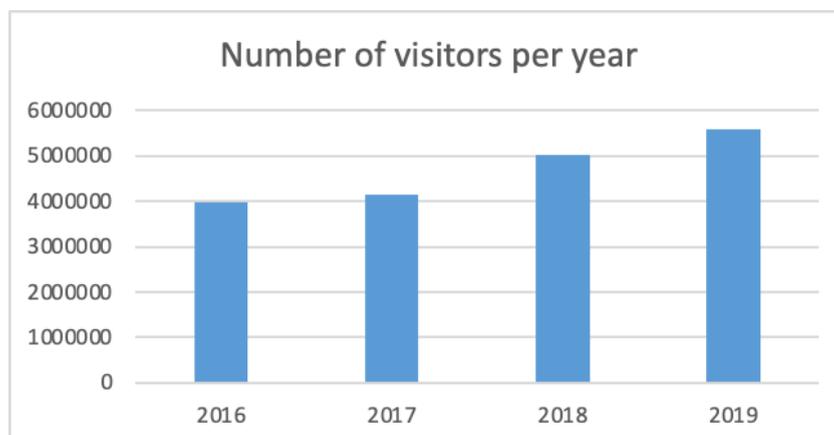
Source: Lithuanian Department of Statistics, Number of local tourists, <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=91fa411f-af8c-43cf-b99f-3e8cf23ef630#/>; Lithuanian Department of Statistics, Number of foreign tourists, <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=6150b98e-b59d-415c-90f1-d46e74f0b93d#/>; Statistics of number of museums and visitor, <http://statistika.lrkmlt/muzieju-veiklos-statistika/pradzia/17>

It can be seen that the number of museums in the capital is the highest, which naturally dictates the highest number of visitors as well. The numbers in other cities are very similar and not significantly different. It is important to emphasise that the number of museums in Klaipėda and Kaunas is different, however, the number of visitors is similar. This, of course, can be dictated by the fact that Klaipėda and the surrounding areas are among the most visited ones by local and foreign tourists in the summer. Furthermore, one of the 12 museums in Klaipėda gathers around 80 per cent of all museum visitors, and this is the Lithuanian Sea Museum.

Analysing various aforementioned studies carried out in museums, it was difficult to understand what tendencies of visiting museums prevail in Lithuania, and whether the numbers of visitors in museums are increasing, decreasing or remain unchanged. Thus, the following table shows the change of visitors in 4 years. It is good to see increasing numbers of museum visitors.

Table 2

**Statistics of museum visitor numbers in 2016–2019**



Source: Lithuanian education, culture and sports (2020) <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/lietuvos-svietimas-kultura-ir-sportas-2020/kulturos-istaigu-veikla>

Looking at the statistics of Lithuanian museums, it can be said that both inhabitants and guests from abroad like and visit museums, which shows a positive tendency, growth in the number of museum visitors; this allows assuming that museums are becoming more and more interesting to society, yet we cannot tell why. There can be several different reasons, one of which is the fact that the society is becoming more interested in culture, the economic situation is becoming better, which enables travelling; this has an impact on museum visits or museums are starting to work on audience development issues, which shows results.

Having analysed the statistics in Lithuania, it is interesting to compare it to other countries. This is best carried out with countries that have similar history and are of similar size; the closest to Lithuania in terms of their cultural and historical experiences are Estonia and Latvia. Below is the information collected based on EGMUS (European Group on Museums Statistics, 2018) data. The 2018 data was used as this period was the last one provided by all the aforementioned countries. Even though the data is not most up to date, it reflects certain tendencies.

Table 3 presents the general number of population in the selected countries, the number of museums per 100,000 inhabitants, and the number of visits per 100,000 inhabitants. As it can be seen, Lithuania shows the lowest number of visitors per 100,000 inhabitants, and comparing the 100,000 inhabitants, a Lithuanian on average visits a museum twice. Meanwhile, the situation in Estonia is different as the number of museums and visits there is higher. The difference in the number of visits is not very significant but we should not forget that Estonia's population is lower than that of Lithuania. In Latvia, the situation is slightly better than in Lithuania.

Table 3

**Museum visitors in the Baltic States (2018)**

Country	Population	Museums per 100,000 inhabitants	Visitors per 100,000 inhabitants
Lithuania	2,808,901	4	200,013
Latvia	1,919,968	8	193,356
Estonia	1,321,977	19	256,005

Source: European Group on Museums Statistics, 2018, [https://www.egmus.eu/nc/sl/statistics/complete\\_data/](https://www.egmus.eu/nc/sl/statistics/complete_data/)

In Estonia and Latvia, both the number of museums per 100,000 inhabitants and the number of visits is higher than in Lithuania. Due to various factors, one cannot assume why this situation is so different. Even though museum visits are increasing, from the experience of the neighbouring countries we can say that museums in Lithuania can become more popular.

Table 4 presents the general number of museums in each of the countries and shows the distribution among the museums that are under state ownership, self-government or other public institutions, as well as the number of private museums. As we can see, Estonia has the largest number of museums and one-third of the museums are private. Comparing the numbers of museums, it is important to note the number of employees in a museum. Even though the number of museums is the lowest in Lithuania, the number of employees is different from other countries. Estonia has 97 museums more than Latvia, however, Estonia has only 334 employees more. Meanwhile, Lithuania has 146 museums less than Estonia but 1,023 employees more. We should not forget the fact that Estonia has quite many private museums that are possibly able to carry out activities in a more optimal way, with fewer employees in order to achieve better financial indexes.

Table 4.

**Baltic States museums analysis**

Country	Number of museums	Staff	Public museums (state-owned, local, regional, etc.)	Private museums
Lithuania	104	3404	96	8
Latvia	153	2047	147	6
Estonia	250	2,381	162	88

Source: European Group on Museums Statistics, 2018, [https://www.egmus.eu/nc/sl/statistics/complete\\_data/](https://www.egmus.eu/nc/sl/statistics/complete_data/)

Having analysed statistical data it can be concluded that the number of visits to museums during the recent year in Lithuania is growing; however, the comparative statistical analysis of the three Baltic countries shows that Lithuania is behind the neighbours in terms of the number of museum visits and effective museum management.

**Conclusions**

Having analysed the ideas of various authors and studies related to museum transformation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is a clear idea that all of the aforementioned authors agree on that museums are very closely related to society and their existence and changes are dictated by how society is changing and based on cultural, economic and political aspects. Since currently, society is rapidly moving along the path of digitalisation, scholars see the future of museum going the same way if they want to remain relevant for the audience. A few of the aforementioned authors claim that museums are currently undergoing transformation and are not only searching for ways to do it but also to understand that this is the future of the modern museum, which is clearly revealed in the plethora of scientific literature on the topic of museum transformation and audience development; however, there are not enough practical examples of museum activities on how they are moving in this direction. Speaking of museum visitors, the studies distinguish them into several different groups based on motivation and expectations, and it is claimed that museum marketing should be based on visitor knowing studies in order for the products created to be successful and increase the field of audience. However, having analysed studies carried out in Lithuania, their lack is evident; and there is no formed tradition to carry them out, even though a few of the interviewed representatives of the cultural sector claimed to see the benefit of such studies. It can be concluded that the lack of studies prevents Lithuanian museums from creating successful strategies when it comes to audience development. One study reveals that museums are not able to create operating audience development strategies not only because of the absent audience studies but also because of gaps in employees' marketing competencies.

The article provides museum visiting statistics in Lithuania that reveals positive museum visiting tendencies; this number is increasing every year, which shows that the interest of society in museums is growing. Meanwhile, the comparative analysis of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia shows that the neighbouring countries are in front of Lithuania based on both the number of museums and the number of visitors per 100,000 inhabitants. This can be influenced by various factors including cultural, political or economic, and there is a lack of museum activeness or not yet perceived new museology theories and practices. Another aspect that is very exceptional in this analysis is the fact that Lithuania,

having the lowest number of museums, has the largest number of employees. Such differences can be impacted by the fact that the largest number of museums are managed within the public sector; however, seeing examples in the neighbouring countries, we can conclude that Lithuanian museums are still on their way to changes and they can achieve a greater number of visitors and more optimal museum management results.

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