

THE ANALYSIS OF UTENA DISTRICT RESIDENTS' OPINION OF UTENA LOCAL LORE MUSEUM ACTIVITY

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Abstract. *In the article, the authors analyze the Utena district residents' opinion of Utena Local Lore Museum activity. The purpose of the research is to analyze the Utena district residents' opinion of Utena Local Lore museum activities and to present proposals for improving Utena Local Lore Museum activity. During the research, a questionnaire survey was conducted. Data collection methods - analysis of scientific literature and sources, quantitative research (questionnaire survey). The article analyzes Utena district residents' opinion of Utena Local Lore Museum activity from a theoretical point of view and presents the results of the conducted research. It is concluded that according to the results of the conducted research, visiting the Utena Local Lore Museum is encouraged by various entertainments, exhibitions, events and education, but, according to the respondents, all this should be related to the Utena region and its history. Repeated visits of the respondents to the museum would be determined by updated expositions, offered entertainment, and interesting presentations.*

Keywords: *museum activity, residents' opinion, Utena Local Lore museum.*

Introduction

Relevance of the topic. Museums have long been one of the institutions most associated with tourism. Museums are understood as a part of recreation or entertainment, a non-main, but inseparable place for vacations and excursions. According to UNESCO, there are a little bit more than 103 thousand museums in the whole world. Most of them are located in Europe. As stated on the website of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, in 2021 more than 100 museums were operating in Lithuania. Most of them are municipal. Despite the numbers, museums around the world are facing all kinds of problems these days. Everyone cares about how to attract more visitors, how to receive them properly, what can be offered in the current age of consumerism. In Lithuania, museums are the sector that maintains the most stable number of visitors. However, if this number is to increase, it is important to find out who and why is currently encouraging or discouraging museum attendance.

The novelty of the topic is that the role of museums changes over time, museums "evolve", but at the same time retain their essential functions. Museum visitors are also changing: if a traditional museum with regular exhibitions was enough for previous generations, visitors of modern generations (Generation Y and Z) tend to use various technologies and media in order to learn as much as possible about the museum and its offers, so museum staff need to find new ways of communication and measures. The topic is new and little researched.

The main problem of the research is the improvement of activities and services provided by the Utena Local Lore Museum, finding motives and reasons for visitors to visit the museum again and again.

The object of the research is the opinion of Utena district residents to Utena Local Lore Museum activity.

The aim of the research is to analyze the opinion of Utena district residents to Utena Local Lore museum activity and to present suggestions for improving the Utena Local Lore Museum activity.

Research tasks:

1. To analyze the role of museums in the tourism business from a theoretical perspective.
2. To analyze the Utena district resident's opinions to the Utena Local Lore Museum activity.

Characteristics of empirical research. In order to find out and analyze the opinion of Utena district residents to the Utena Local Lore Museum activity, a quantitative study was conducted - an anonymous questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was placed on the website (www.apklausa.lt). The link to the questionnaire survey was distributed in Utena University of Applied Sciences, among the participants of Utena Third Age University (Utena TAU), distributed in Utena's A. and M. Miškiniai library, Utena city gymnasiums, etc. 270 respondents were interviewed.

Analysis of the role of museums in the tourism business from a theoretical perspective

All over the world, there are museums of various fields that meet the needs of different visitors. However, perhaps the most important thing remains to preserve history, exhibit it, adapt it for today and maintain it for the future - all of this significantly contributes to a successful tourism system. Museums, like various heritage objects, are one of the most important parts of cultural tourism, which, through cooperation, trying to reach the widest possible audience of tourists and "invite" them, becomes beneficial for both sides - the mission of the museum is consistently carried out and the needs of tourists are met.

According to Folga-Januszewska (2020), in 1911 the Scottish historian and pedagogue Lindsay wrote in his articles in the ninth edition of the British

Encyclopedia (Encyclopaedia Britannica) at the time: "the modern museum should work for the benefit of the public, be a rich source of curiosity and knowledge for the whole society". This social mission of the museum was understood as the essence of the new, then modern museum. Various previous museum activities and works led to the fact that in 1946 The International Council of Museums (hereinafter ICOM) was founded, which, during its first conference, determined the definition of a museum. However, the definition evolved over the years, adapting until finally, in 2022. In Prague, the ICOM Extraordinary General Assembly approved the proposed latest definition of a museum: "a museum is a non-profit, permanent, public-serving institution that studies, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open, accessible and inclusive museums promote diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate in an ethical, professional and participatory manner, offering a range of experiences for learning, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing" (ICOM, 2022). In a modern museum, you can not only look at exhibits, but also learn something, get to know history in an experiential way, with the help of various modern technologies.

In the current Law on Museums of the Republic of Lithuania (2023), the concept of a museum is defined as "a legal person or a subdivision of a legal person whose main activity is to accumulate, protect, preserve, restore, research and popularize the values of tangible and intangible cultural, historical, natural and technical heritage, in order to provide the public with knowledge, opportunities for education, studies, dissemination of creativity and quality leisure time." (Law on Museums of the Republic of Lithuania, Article 2, 2023). In summary, ICOM and the LR Museum Law describe the concept of a museum very similarly, with the main function being the collection, preservation, research and exhibition of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and its sharing with the public.

Although for a long time museums have been understood as custodians and researchers of museum values, the role of the museum has changed over time, as evidenced by the above-mentioned ICOM museum definition. It is important for the current museum to take care of culture, perform a social function in society, and contribute to its education, now the most important thing is not the museum exhibits, but the museum visitors and the community themselves.

Keršytė (2020) together with the Science and Encyclopedia Publishing Center (hereinafter MELC) states that museums are divided into "history, art, nature, science, technology, mixed, special. There are non-traditional museums: zoos, living history homesteads, heritage interpretation centers and other institutions that partially do the work of museums." Minikevičius (2018) divides museums into art, history and natural history, science, living things (zoology and botany), landscape, work, virtual.

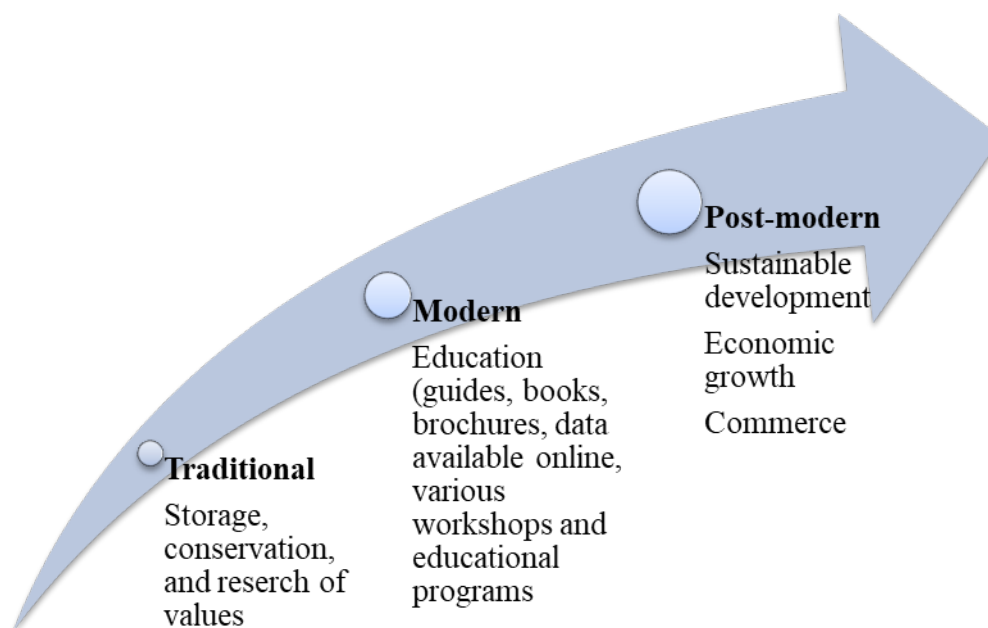
After analyzing the Law on Museums of Lithuania (2023), it is noticeable that the main classification here is somewhat different: in the Republic of Lithuania, the museum system consists of national, state, municipal, other museums and museum competence centers. Klimavičius (2018) classified museums more broadly together with MELC, who, according to the theme, divided Lithuanian museums into: architecture, literature, memorial, museums for the blind, theater, music and cinema, art, nature, history, culinary heritage, science and technology and others.

Over the years, the role of museums in society has changed: once the museum was understood as a custodian of art, history and other values, later, adapting more and more to the needs of visitors, the museum also became a public educator. Museums are no longer just a place to view art and exhibits, they have become communicative and educational institutions. According to Simon (2022), museums are constantly evolving and adapting to the changing needs of visitors. They are no longer just places to see various artifacts and works of art, but become interactive centers where people can learn about the world around them. Museums are places of discovery, community, where people can discover their creativity and imagination, come together to share their common interests and experiences (Simon, 2022).

Pop and Borza (2016) distinguish three stages of museum evolution: traditional, modern and post-modern museum (Figure 1). Traditional - performing traditional functions: collection, conservation and research, later, the functions of a modern museum were supplemented by communication with the public - educational programs, guides, various books and brochures, information stands and workshops. When the museum became post-modern, modern functions were added to the ones already mentioned: the harmonious development of the institution, economic factors and various commerce. According to Citvarienė (2014), "in contrast to a few decades ago, museums in the modern world are not valued for the diversity of their collections, the size of their funding or the modernity of their equipment, but for the significance and benefits they provide to society."

21st century museums have become more accessible than ever before. On educational programs, not only children, but also adults can learn and enjoy learning in various museums. Next to communicating with the public, another important function of the museum is adapting and evolving with technology. As they develop, museums also change, they change their exhibition spaces, they innovatively adapt to the visitor of today. The literature also emphasizes the harmonious development of modern, postmodern museums, their "responsibility". It was described and summarized in detail by Citvarienė (2014), who singled out the features of a modern "responsible" museum: the organization is aimed at the audience; communication with regular and potential audiences;

comprehensive accessibility; learning; innovativeness; preservation of long-term and diverse funding; promotion of professionalism.



*Figure 1 Evolution of museum functions
(compiled by authors based on Pop and Borza, 2016)*

Museum communication is a field that involves working with the public to promote and 'sell' the museum and its services (Simon, 2023). The benefits of communication for museums are undeniable - if the message is well crafted, it will reach a wide audience and receive positive feedback. Nowadays, it is crucial to find ways to communicate the right message using modern technologies, the current basis of which is social media channels. As Liepuonius and Grincevičienė (2020) have argued, in order to adapt to the current challenges and changing needs of the information society, it is important for museums to adapt to an environment in which consumption and new technologies have a strong position (Guidelines for the Modern Museum, 2020, p. 54).

Motivation is the process of encouraging certain behaviours, actions, activities, caused by various motives; a set of motives (Bartoševičienė, VLE, 2019). It is known that different motivations of tourists determine the choice of type of tourism, as well as the type of museum visitors. Different people are motivated by different expectations to visit different museums. Their motivation to visit a museum can be influenced by many things: recommendations, the desire to explore and discover something new, self-fulfilment, professional activities or simply leisure time.

As Liepuonius and Laucė (2020) state, "knowing and being able to manage the factors that determine visitors' satisfaction with museum services is a cornerstone of a successful museum experience" (Guidelines for the Modern Museum, 2020, p. 32).

Methodology of the survey

The purpose of the research: to analyze the Utena district residents' opinion to Utena Local Lore Museum activity and to present proposals for the improvement of the Utena Local Lore museum activity.

Research method: quantitative research - a questionnaire survey was conducted in order to investigate the Utena district residents' opinions to Utena Local Lore Museum activity.

Explanation of the research instrument. In order to conduct an analysis of the Utena district residents' to Utena Local Lore Museum activity, a quantitative research method was used - a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire is intended to analyze the Utena district residents' opinion to Utena Local Lore Museum activity. The questionnaire consisted of 28 questions. The questionnaire consisted of two types of questions: general demographic questions and questions reflecting the research. The questions are of both closed and open type. The age of respondents ranged from 15-18 to 65-74 years. Most respondents are 15-18 years old - 35.6 percent. A total of 71.9 percent answered women and 27 percent men.

The survey sample. The respondents of the questionnaire survey are residents of the Utena district or those who came from another city. The survey was conducted in the cold season, from 2022 November 29 until 2023 April 3. 270 respondents were interviewed. According to the data of the Lithuanian Statistics Department, in 2023 there were 37,555 thousand population in the Utena district. The research sample can be calculated according to Paniotto's formula: $n=1 / (\Delta^2+1/N)$, when:

- n- Sample size;
- Δ - Permissible error;
- N- Population size.

When researching residents of the Utena district, the research sample was calculated according to Paniotto's formula:

$204=1(0.072+1/37\ 555)$, when:

The population of Utena district in 2023 is 37,555;

Population size $N=37,555$

Permissible error $\Delta=0.07$

Study sample $n=204$.

Thus, according to Paniotto's formula, $n = 204$ is a sufficient size to ensure the representativeness of the research sample.

Research ethics. The survey was conducted anonymously, the respondents participated in the survey and interview voluntarily and their personal data was not used. The respondents were first informed about the purpose of the survey and the fact that the answers will be used to write the thesis.

Selection of the place and time of the research. The survey was placed on the website www.apklausa.lt, shared in Utena A. and M. Miškiniai library, among the students of Utena third century university (Utena TAU), Utena University of Applied Sciences, Utena Adolfas Šapoka, Dauniškis and Saulė gymnasiums and social networks. There was no time limit for answering the questionnaire.

Explanation of research data control and processing. During the research, data was collected on the opinion of the Utena district residents' to Utena Local Lore Museum activity. The research results are graphically displayed using the Microsoft Office Excel 2016 computer program. Descriptive statistics - percentage distributions - were used to analyze the data obtained with the help of the questionnaire survey. The questionnaire questions were statically processed by the PSPP 1.6.2 computer program.

Results of survey of Utena district residents' opinion of Utena Local Lore Museum activity

270 residents of the Utena district participated in the survey, 27 percent men and 71.9 percent women, 3 percent gender not specified. The largest number of respondents (35.6 percent) were aged 15-18, having or obtaining secondary education (36.7 percent of respondents). The responses of residents of other ages were similarly distributed, from 6 to 16 percent. Also, a larger part (30.4 percent) of the subjects has a higher university education.

The first part of the questionnaire was aimed at finding out whether the respondent likes to visit museums, whether they know where the museum is, whether they have been to the Utena Local Lore Museum and/or its departments and, if so, how long ago. For those who did not visit the museum, a question was asked to find out the reasons for not visiting. The results of the survey showed that more than half of the respondents - 64.4 percent likes to visit museums. 23.3 percent indicated that they do not like visiting museums. After analyzing the results of the survey, it was noticed, that the answers of women and men to the question of whether you like visiting museums stand out: 12.6 percent men and 51.5 percent women indicated that they like visiting museums. Thus, among the respondents, women like to visit museums much more often than men.

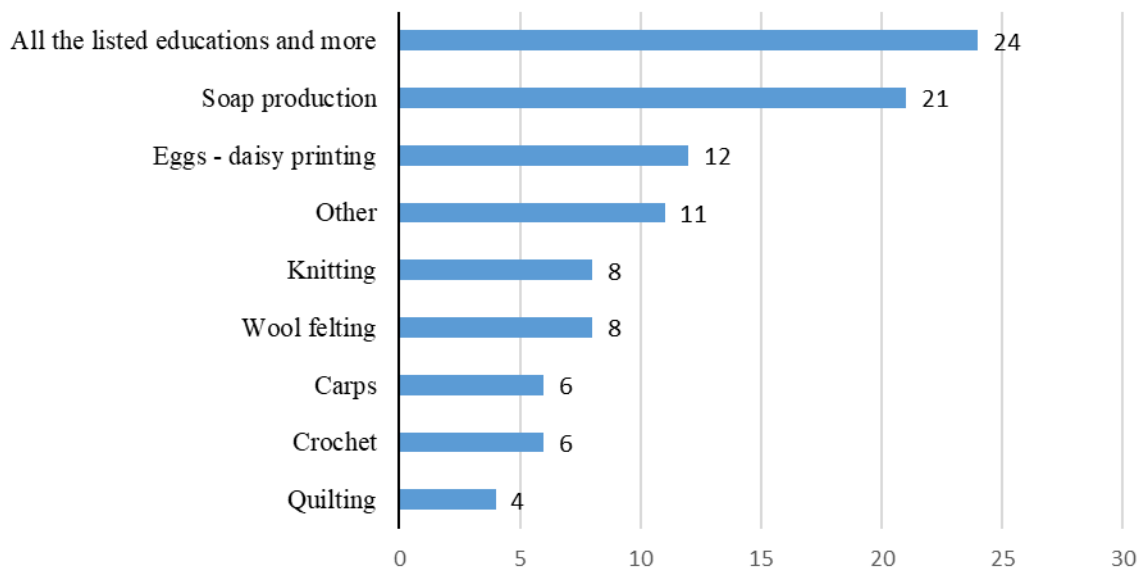
The second part of the questionnaire consisted of questions aimed at finding out the opinion of the research participants about the activities in the Utena Local Lore Museum and the factors that would encourage a visit, return to the museum repeatedly and help popularize the museum among residents and tourists.

Table 1 Percentage distribution of factors encouraging museum visits
(compiled by authors based on research results)

No.	Factors, encouraging museum visits	Percent
1.	Various events are organized	16.7
2.	Meetings with various people are organized	15.2
3.	Modern entertainment is offered	14.3
4.	Various educations are organized	13.0
5.	Constantly updated exhibitions are organized	11.8
6.	All the listed activities	10.1
7.	Lectures on various topics are organized in the museum premises	9.1
8.	Lessons on various topics are organized and conducted in the museum premises	7.9
9.	Other	1.9

Table 1 shows what factors would interest or encourage the respondents to visit the Utena Local Lore Museum. These factors are important in order to find out what has been of recent interest to the residents of the Utena district, in which direction the museum could continue to carry out and develop its activities. The answers were similarly distributed, with no single answer accounting for more than 17 percent of the respondents. Most (16.7 percent) respondents would be interested in organized various events, 15.2 percent – meetings with interesting people are organized and 14.3 percent. would be encouraged to visit the modern entertainment offered in the museum. The least respondents would be motivated to visit the museum by classes organized on various topics (7.9 percent) and lectures (9.1 percent), which would be held in the museum premises, it can be assumed that these are the factors of least interest, since most of the respondents are school-aged Utena residents of the district, who may have already been in the premises of the museum, and have not yet been involved in the lectures for students. In summary, most respondents are interested in organized events, meetings, modern entertainment in the museum, and least interested in lessons and lectures.

Figure 2 shows the answers of the subjects about the educations of interest that would be organized in the museum premises. Most of the respondents indicated that they would be interested in all the listed educations and even more (23.6 percent). It was found that soap production is the most interesting of the listed educations (20.5 percent). It can be assumed that the respondents are interested in a variety of educations, since the choice of other listed educations was similarly distributed. Also, in the answer variant of the question "other", a large part of the population mentioned the importance of linking education with the history of the region, and this was also mentioned in another question about interesting entertainment organized in the museum premises.



*Figure 2 Interesting educational activities organised in the museum's premises (percent).
(compiled by the author based on research results)*

Respondents were asked about what activities would help to popularize Utena Local Lore Museum among residents and tourists. It was possible to choose from 1 to 6 options. The majority of respondents (23.8 percent) would agree with the inclusion of visits to the museum and its departments in the routes organized by the Utena Tourism Information Center (TIC). It can be assumed that the residents have been missing this thing lately. Although in the previously examined answers about the factors that interest and encourage a visit to the museum, a small part was in favor of conducting classes or lectures in the museum premises, but when asked what activities would help popularize Utena Local Lore Museum, the greater part (23.2 percent) would also be in favor of conducting classes on various subjects in the museum. 90 (18.2 percent) respondents agree that all the listed activities would help popularize the museum among residents and tourists. The least (13.7 percent) were in favor of information flyers in mailboxes, on billboards and elsewhere. This can be attributed to the growing public awareness of responsible consumption and environmental damage (advertisement printing, distribution, etc.).

In order to find out the reasons why visitors would return to the museum repeatedly, 9 answer options were provided; the respondent could choose several of them. For all the listed reasons, 13 percent would return to the museum again of the respondents. It was found that the surveyed people are most likely to return due to renewed exposures (19.1 percent). Examining the options recorded by the respondents themselves, a recurring option was noticeable regarding the connection of all the activities offered by the museum with the Utena region, history and craftsmen of this region, one of the answers states: "because of the lectures given by famous historians, art critics, etc., because of the artists who

came from the Utena region, exhibitions". Due to the offered entertainment, almost 4 percent would return to the museum repeatedly fewer respondents than for renewed exposures. This can be attributed to the large number of respondents who have already been to the museum, because after visiting once, they want news for the next time. 14.9 percent of respondents would return to the museum repeatedly if there were interesting presentations/narratives, a similar number (14.1 percent) would return for organized educations. Those surveyed are the least likely to return to the museum repeatedly because of interesting installations (10.2 percent) and because of organized painting exhibitions (9 percent).

Summarizing it can be said that organized events, meetings and modern entertainment would encourage respondents to visit the museum. When choosing the educations and entertainments of interest, the majority of the respondents were in favor of all possible and listed educations and entertainments, so it can be said that the respondents would visit the museum if it offered various educational and entertainment activities. Regarding the popularization of Utena Local Lore Museum among residents and tourists, the respondents mostly supported the idea of including visits to Utena Local Lore Museum and its departments in the routes organized by the Utena Tourism Information Center. After finding out the reasons why the respondents would return to the museum again and again, it is realized that the most desired is the renewal of already seen expositions, entertainment, presentations and stories.

Conclusions

1. Museums are an important part of cultural tourism. For a long time, museums were seen as guardians and explorers of museum treasures, but the role of the museum has changed over time. Today's museums are about cultural, social and educational functions in society, but it is not the museum's exhibits that are most important, it is the visitors and the community. Therefore, it is becoming a critical function of the museum to evolve with technology and innovatively adapt to today's visitor.
2. There are 14 museums operating in the Utena district, which also include learning centers. Museum expositions are in one way or another related to the history, culture, crafts, arts of the region, museums offer education and familiarization with the activities organized by them, visitors are invited to various events. The results of the conducted research showed that visiting the museum is encouraged by various entertainment, exhibitions, events and education. However, according to the respondents' suggestion, all this should be related to the Utena region and its history. Repeated visits of the respondents to the museum would be determined by updated expositions, offered entertainment, and interesting presentations. Respondents indicated that they would like more various presentations and other museum

exhibitions when the museum renews its services, and also agreed that a visit to the museum should be included in the routes and excursions organized by Utena Tourism Information Center (Utena TIC).

Recommendations

1. The education, services and entertainment offered at the Utena Local Lore Museum should be related to the region of Utena and its history.
2. It is proposed that the museum should continuously update its exhibitions, offer interesting presentations and various activities for visitors.
3. The services should be updated and various presentations and exhibitions from other museums should be organised.
4. A visit to the museum should be included in the itineraries and excursions organised by Utena Tourism Information Center (Utena TIC).

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