Identifying motivations of young consumers for visiting art museums

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Abstract

Museum experience in recent times needs to be enhanced because of its changing structure and environment. Visitors change their attitude from passive consumption to active one. This requires profound analysis of reasons why visitors of arts act in such a way and which kind of behavior pulls them towards consumption. The goal of the current master thesis is to examine the motivations, which affect consumers when visiting art galleries/museums. Based on previous literature a model has been developed, which embraces various possible drivers of consumer behavior. This model will be tested through an internet-based questionnaire, analyzed through statistical software methods. This work aims to enrich the knowledge in the field of consumer motivations, since previous research has been scarce. Moreover, an analysis of the impact of environmental cues will be applied to the examined motivations, in order to enhance the global perspective of consumer behavior when attending arts. The results will add clarity to consumers’ leading and mostly significant motivations, which will enable arts managers to apply appropriate tools in order to address these motivations.
Museums and art venues are challenged through major changes in this sector. Economic shocks have forced governments to restrict their fundings and dotations towards arts, which established the need of new marketing and management tools to be applied in these venues (Lee, 2005; Scheff & Kotler, 1996; Williams, 2011). It is stated that art has been used for corporate sponsorships and it is perceived as a whole industry by the business (Schiller, 1989, p.93). Art is struggling between its own existences and becoming commercial. There is usually a conflict arising among the artists and the purposes of marketing. The vision of the artists and their works usually make the end-product inseparable and most of the time not understandable for marketers (Butler, 2000, p. 348).

Art works are not typical consumer goods. Although it has been proven that visitors do indeed act as consumers and some marketing tools for retaining visitors have been suggested, further research needs to be conducted in order to fully understand the specificities of art works (Hand, 2011). As stated by Butler (2000), art has been changing and it resulted in the establishment of “high culture”, also named fine art, which is targeting the “cultural elite” and “low culture”, appealing towards the masses (p. 347). This separation shows the growing diversity and different interests of the various existing audiences, which also has resulted in growing diversity among museum categories. Nevertheless, museums still exist for the same reasons and they have not lost their main purpose – to educate visitors (Scheff & Kotler, 1996, p.35). They have been funded by the governments in order to reach various audiences and to educate them. For example, Swedish government has instructed museums of reaching six target groups, which are usually hard to reach without incentives, namely less educated people, disabled persons, young people etc. This policy is typical for various Western countries (Lampi & Orth, 2009). Targeting audiences and growing necessity for appropriate marketing tools define the need for understanding consumer behavior in the arts sector.

Initially, the focus has been set towards personal and socio-cultural factors, which affect visitors, but a need for understanding their motivations is currently emerging (Slater, 2007). A more global picture and more precise awareness would help marketing specialists set the right tasks in order to achieve the required goals. Valuable information, extracted from the consumers themselves, would allow a better comprehension and would enhance the knowledge for marketers in the field, when defining the appropriate tools for encouraging visits.
Problem statement and purpose of analysis

Accordingly, the problem, set to be clarified in the current thesis, is related to identifying consumer motivations when visiting art organizations. The method, chosen to fulfill it, embraces directly asking consumers how they feel about art works and what drives them to visit such venues. The questionnaire, which will be spread, will embrace younger consumers, aged from 18 to 29. It has already been pointed out in the literature, that younger visitors are a statistical minority (Goulding, 1999; Goulding, 2000; Lampi & Orth, 2009). This statement has been argued by Slater (2007), but since the opposite has been stated in larger number of articles, I will adhere to these first findings. According to Lampi and Orth (2009) and Hayes and Slater (2002) young consumers are one of the target groups, which has been prioritized by the government because of being infrequent visitors. Moreover, Kottasz (2006) found out that young people are interested in the social aspect of museum exhibitions and managers need to be aware of how to treat such a changing behavior. In my study I would like to prove whether these statements are valid for the sample I will gather. The main result to be obtained is to identify these consumers’ motivations to visit art museums. A model is developed, which addresses the main motivations which may arise as possible answers. They will be analyzed and compared to previous theoretical frameworks. Moreover, consumers will be asked to determine themselves as one of the 16 personality types, related to Myers-Briggs type indicator (MBTI). Carskadon and Cook (as cited in Carlson, 1985) have proven in their study that individuals are generally able to describe their own type and to recognize themselves in the provided descriptions. To my knowledge a correlation between MBTI and motivations for visiting art venues has not yet been applied and it will be interesting to find out whether the type of personality is associated with visitors’ motivations.

Hypotheses and research area

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the motivations of younger consumers when visiting art museums or galleries. In order to do that, extensive previous literature has been reviewed with the aim of developing a model, which can test the following hypotheses:

- H1: Consumers are affected by the motivations, indicated in the developed model.
- H2: Escapism is the main motivator for visiting art venues.
- H3: Motivations are affected by environmental cues.
Hypothesis 1 derives from various previous academic articles, which state the motivations in the developed model. The model has been elaborated on the following basis: Pine and Gilmore (1999) are pioneers in the field of experiential marketing and the use the following four dimensions: entertainment, education, aesthetic and escapism have been adapted to fit the model for the needs of visitors of art venues. Caldwell (2011) investigates consumers’ sense making in attending performing arts. By using Holt’s (1995) model for baseball performances observation, the author adapts it for performing arts and offers extensive range of buying-consuming motivations. This model partially includes the cues, which have been used by Pine and Gilmore (1999). A motivational cue by Kottasz and Benett (2006) has been added, which represents the driver of ethnocentrism. In their work the authors have stated that some cultures are more affected by ethnocentrism than others. Moreover, for some of the examined respondents, ethnocentrism has played major role for the decision to visit an art exhibition. Slater (2007) underlines the importance of social and family interaction, learning and escapism, which have already been included in the model. Hypothesis 2 has been formulated namely on the basis of Slater’s (2007) article. The author discovers that although learning has been considered to be the main motivator for visiting museums and galleries, escapism turned out to be more important for visitors. The developed model in the current paper includes both cues – learning and escapism, which will enable to test Slater’s (2007) statement. Hypothesis 3 has been established on the basis of Kottasz’s (2006) findings, which highlight the impact of atmospheric cues on emotional responses and behaviors in a museum environment. By summarizing the results of Mehrabian and Russel (1974), Baker (1987), Kaplan (1987) Foxall (1997), Berman and Evans (1995) and Turley and Milliman (2000), Kottasz (2006) concluded the following environmental cues: exterior; interior; layout/design; decoration; human factors, complexity, mystery, novelty and spaciousness.

Their importance has been proven to be significant in the author’s work. Hypothesis 4 has been based on findings by Goulding, (1999), Goulding (2000), Lampi and Orth (2009), who indicated that young consumers are less attracted to visit art venues and are one of the target groups, which needs to be additionally stimulated. Hypothesis 5 derives from the Myers-Briggs type indicator,
which has been applied for analyzing correlations between personality and various fields (education, training, work development etc.) as stated in The Myers & Briggs foundation. Different personality type suggests different behavior, which could be a reason for different motivations behind one’s decision. To my knowledge this indicator has not been used for analyzing art visitors’ motivations, but the hypothesis suggestion is based on the satisfactory validity and reliability of the indicator (Carlson, 1985). Moreover, this indicator is extensively used even nowadays, which justifies my decision to use it in my work.

Table 1
Developed model for identifying consumers’ motivations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Emotional motivations</th>
<th>Social interaction</th>
<th>Self-perception</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual enrichment (learning)</td>
<td>Affective stimulation (aesthetics, hedonism)</td>
<td>Unity (ethnocentrism vs. xenocentrism)</td>
<td>Self-actualization</td>
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<td>Famous artists attachment</td>
<td>Tranquility/Solitude</td>
<td>Friendship/family attachment</td>
<td>Social status</td>
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<td>Escapism</td>
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### Literature review

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<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Field of research and general assumptions</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hayes, D. and Slater, A. (2002). ‘Rethinking the missionary position’ – the quest for sustainable audience development strategies. Managing leisure, 7 (1), 1-17. doi: 10.1080/13606710110079882</td>
<td>Holistic approach: &quot;Static map of six audience typologies&quot;, based on behavioural and attitudinal loyalty (Hill and O'Sullivan, 1995; Kotler &amp; Kotler, 1998) and model's further development by the authors, resulting in &quot;Map of audience development potential&quot;. Strategic focus and audience development methodology (Rogers, 1998)</td>
<td>Need for balance of the missionary and mainstream audience portfolio in order to gain long-term results. Strategies should include reactivation of ‘intenders’, attracting ‘switchers’, maintaining loyalty of ‘attenders’, converging indifferent and reversing hostiles</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Caldwell, M. (2001). Applying general living systems theory to learn consumers’ sense making in attending performing arts. Psychology &amp; Marketing, 18(5), 497–511. doi: 10.1002/mar.1018</td>
<td>Application of &quot;General living systems theory&quot; (Miller, 1978)</td>
<td>Discussion of interpersonal, intrapersonal, product and situational factors impact. Observation of various motives, varying in intensity and valence, which influence the buying-consuming experience. Proposition that buying-consuming activities display functional, aesthetic, cultural and/or compensatory complementarity. Assertion that buying-consuming activities are related to status. Assumption that rational and experiential information processing can affect buying-experiences. These experiences are influenced by explicit and implicit memories.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Chen, Y. (2009). Possession and access: consumer desires and value perceptions regarding contemporary art collection and exhibit visits. Journal of Consumer Research, 35, 925-940. doi:10.1086/593699</td>
<td>Investigation of desires and perceived values of two groups of art consumers - contemporary art collectors and exhibition visitors. This study challenges studies, stating that possession is the ultimate reflection of consumer desire. Explicit distinguish between access and possession.</td>
<td>116 in-depth interviews in Paris and Geneva</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Goulding, Ch. (1999). Contemporary museum culture and consumer behaviour. Journal of Marketing Management, 15, 647-671. doi:10.1362/026725799785037003</td>
<td>Analysis of the nature of the experiences, acquired by visiting contemporary museums. The study is due to controversial opinions of scholars. The consumers themselves are involved in the analysis</td>
<td>Application of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1992). Qualitative method: Twenty tape-recorded, semi-structured in-depth interviews with visitors of Blists Hill museum; focus group interviews with 33 participants.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Hand, Ch. (2011). Do arts audiences act like consumers? Managing leisure, 16, 88-97. doi:10.1080/13606719.2011.559088</td>
<td>Three research questions, pointed out by the author: (1) To what extent do UK arts audiences engage in repertoire buying? (2) Does double jeopardy apply also for arts? (3) Does the duplication of the purchase ‘law’ hold for the arts? If so, how clearly is the arts audience partitioned?</td>
<td>The analysis examines the validity of established empirical ‘laws’ of consumer behavior: repertoire buying, double jeopardy and duplication of purchase regarding arts audiences. The data is extracted between 2005 and 2006 through a survey, conducted by a market research company. The sample consists of 28,117 randomly selected respondents from the UK. According to the findings, arts audiences act like consumers indeed. The level of loyalty depends on the size and specificity of the art form, which has been already proven for regular customers in previous research. In order to increase attendance levels, the author exhibits the following strategies: increasing the penetration level, increasing purchase frequency or by doing both.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Slater, A. (2007). 'Escaping to the gallery': understanding the motivations of visitors to galleries. International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing, 12, 149-162. doi:10.1002/nvsm.282</td>
<td>The research questions embrace the following area: Examining the audience profile for different kinds of events; Testing new motivational scale; Finding out which motivations do the audiences have to visit an art gallery; Comparing the motivations of first time visitors, returning visitors; alone visitors, group visitors; spontaneous visitors, pre-planning visitors.</td>
<td>The survey is based on motivational items from leisure motivational scale. (Beard and Ragheb, 1983). The study was influenced by three motivational factors: social and family interaction, learning and escapism. The sample embraced 241 questionnaires. In contrast to previous studies, this article indicates that escapism is the main motivation for visiting art gallery, shifting learning to the second position.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Kottasz, R., Benett, R. (2006). Ethnocentric tendencies amongst arts audiences. International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector, 11, 303-317. doi:10.1002/nvsm.286</td>
<td>The study defines several hypotheses, which check how the level of ethnocentrism affects the perceptions towards pieces of art, the intentions for visits and the perceived quality of art works. The authors also argue that the level of involvement in the arts can mitigate the effect of the ethnocentrism. According to the hypotheses, the factors, which influence the ethnocentrism, are indicated to be on the individual or socio-demographic level.</td>
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<td>According to the findings ethnocentrism has indeed been indicated in the arts sector, predominantly in the Hungarian sample. Ethnocentrism was most commonly specified in young and relatively well-educated Hungarians who are financially stable. Ethnocentrism in both countries indicated emotional liking of home country artworks. In the Hungarian sample the perceived quality of the pieces of art of a culturally dissimilar country was affected by ethnocentrism, which also influenced the intention to visit.</td>
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<td>Investigate the profile of visitors and non-visitors in arts galleries/museums. The research focus of the article is to find out how museum and art gallery visits fit in with other aspects of the visitors’ life.</td>
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<td>Integration of lifestyle segmentation, analyzed through data, embracing 3,773 New Zealander survey participants.</td>
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<td>The following segments have been identified after the analysis: Active ‘family values’ people, Conservative quiet lifers, Educated liberals, Accepting mid-lifers, Success-driven extroverts, Pragmatic strugglers and Social strivers. Some of them are attenders, others are potential visitors and a sizeable part of the segments is unlikely ever to visit a museum or gallery.</td>
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<td>Challenge the traditional methods of measuring customers' perception of quality by emphasizing intrinsic benefits, which help developing a new Arts Audience Experience Index. Grounded on the hypothesis that audiences would re-attend and perceive the quality, if a self-actualization need has been met during the arts experience.</td>
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<td>Comparing previous research on intrinsic benefits with findings from focus groups. Developing the Arts Audience Experience Index and testing it by: an audience survey in a performing arts venue and a “deep feedback” focus group with subscribers at another theatre.</td>
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<td>The Arts Audience Experience Index is considered as a qualitative tool to measure perceived quality by deep audience feedback. Four elements of the audience experience have been found out: knowledge, risk, authenticity and collective engagement.</td>
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<td>The article researches not only the logical processes inside the human being, but also gives insights of the unconscious abstract processes when coming into contact with arts work. The factors, which have been examined, clarify the links between embodiment, movement, and multisensory experience.</td>
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<td>Conducting qualitative interviews and observations. Interviews were held with four curators, six non-professional art lovers and twenty volunteers, varying by socio-demographical characteristics. The analysis has been guided by three theories: Merleau-Ponty's (1962) existential phenomenology, Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) theory of image schemata and Fauconnier and Tumer's (2002) theory of conceptual blending.</td>
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<td>According to the findings perception and imagination are connected. The multisensory analysis showed that according to the stimuli participants tend to engage not only the primary senses when getting into contact with arts. This adds dimensionality to already existing research. The exhibited metaphorical projections are related to emotions. The study gives outlines for understanding consumers' sense and practices of embodiment.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Goulding, Ch. (2000). The museum environment and the visitor experience. European Journal of Marketing, 34(3), 261-278. Retrieved from <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/030090560010311849">http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/030090560010311849</a></td>
<td>The objectives behind the field research were to identify the nature of the visitor experience at a city museum, based on three theoretical assumptions (Falk et al., 1985): the nature of the exhibition is the main motivator; visitors come prepared and knowledgeable; social, psychological and environmental factors may influence the arts experience.</td>
<td>The data collection method is observation with 112 observation sheets completed in the Birmingham museum and art gallery.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Kottasz, R. (2006). Understanding the influences of atmospheric cues on the emotional responses and behaviours of museum visitors. Journal of Nonprofit &amp; Public Sector Marketing, 16(1-2), 95-121. doi:10.1300/J054v16n01_06</td>
<td>This study examines the importance of atmospherics in the museum environment, grounding on the pleasure, arousal and dominance (PAD) variables (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974).</td>
<td>Development of a conceptual model, based on theories regarding atmospherics. The model has been tested through 140 completed questionnaires.</td>
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<td>Page</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Research objectives:</td>
<td>Two surveys have been conducted - one before and one after the fee has been applied, including also a question about visitors' willingness to pay</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Lampi, E., Orth, M. (2009). Who visits the museums? A comparison between stated preferences and observed effects of entrance fees. Kyklos 62(1), 85-102. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6435.2009.00425.x</td>
<td>Research objectives: To find out whether a museum is able to attract the requested from the government audiences after introducing a fee; To examine to changes after the fee has been imposed; To test the validity of the Contingent Valuation (CV) model.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Pine, J., Gilmore, J. (1999, July/August). Welcome to the experience economy. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from <a href="http://rushkolnik.ru/tw_files/4995/d-4994348/7z-docs/4.pdf">http://rushkolnik.ru/tw_files/4995/d-4994348/7z-docs/4.pdf</a></td>
<td>Assumption that economy has changed from service to experience economy</td>
<td>Examples of case studies to confirm the theory</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Methodology

The data is going to be gathered through a questionnaire, spread in Internet. Since the target group of my study embraces younger people, it is more likely that they are going to use new and modern technologies and social media (Eurostat, 2008). By using quantitative techniques and the appropriate software tools, the data is going to be analyzed, thus conclusions can be made. The sought results would indicate the drivers of consumption and the level of interests of young visitors. Cross-tabulations can be implemented in order to find out what the correlations between personality types, motivations and environmental cues are. These findings can be further compared to the existing literature in order to get a more complete overview of consumer behavior and, more specifically, motivations. The questionnaire would include questions which will be aimed at finding out the motivations, indicated in the research model (E.g. I go to the gallery, because I want to avoid daily routine, tested through Likert scale, which points to escapism). Naturally, a basic question of whether the interviewee is actually visiting art venues will be set in the first place. Moreover, several demographical questions will be included, intended for discovering the age, gender, level of education and occupation of respondents.

Overview of chapters

1. Introduction
   1.1. Topic background 
   1.2. Topic relevance
2. Theoretical framing
   2.1. Role of motivations in consumer behavior when visiting art museums
   2.2. Discussion of the importance of environmental cues
   2.2. Relevance of Myers-Briggs type indicator
3. Research design
   3.1. Problem statement and purpose
   3.2. Research area and hypotheses
   3.3. Methodology
4. Analysis of questionnaire results
   4.1. Data description
4.2. Results analysis

5. Implications
   5.1. Practitioners’ implications
   5.2. Theoretical implications

6. Conclusions and Limitations

7. References

Plan of work

Until end of December – completion of Chapter 2
Until end of December – completion of the questionnaire
Until 15th January – Analysis of results
Until date of intermediate report – Working on remaining theory
From February on – Chapter 4, 5
References


Goulding, Ch. (1999). Contemporary museum culture and consumer behaviour. *Journal of*
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*International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing, 10*, 151-164. doi: 10.1002/nvsm.9


*Social Indicators Research, 89*(2), 193-258. doi: 10.1007/s11205-007-9236-x.


Slater, A. (2007). 'Escaping to the gallery': understanding the motivations of visitors to galleries.


doi:10.1002/nvsm.282


doi:10.1002/nvsm.152


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