THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AS PROMOTION STRATEGIES FOR MADEIRA'S MUSEUMS

A IMPORTÂNCIA DOS SERVIÇOS EDUCACIONAIS COMO ESTRATÉGIAS DE PROMOÇÃO PARA OS MUSEUS DA MADEIRA

LA IMPORTANCIA DE LOS SERVICIOS EDUCATIVOS COMO ESTRATEGIAS DE PROMOCIÓN PARA LOS MUSEOS DE MADEIRA

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ABSTRACT

This paper emphasizes the importance of adopting strategies to attract and retain audiences within cultural organizations, more precisely in museums. Gradually, cultural institutions evolved from product-driven to consumer-driven organisations, seeking to attract and serve different groups with appropriate offers. In this sense, museums turn to marketing to expand their audiences, as well as to create and maintain long-lasting relationships. In order to identify the strategies that are put into practice in Madeira's museums, a sample of local museums was selected. Afterwards, open-ended questionnaires were created for later interviews with directors and visitors of these museums. The results show that educational services play a key role in attracting and managing the relationship with the local community, mainly with the school audiences. However, there is a weak promotion of the offer within the tourist audiences.

Keywords: tourism; cultural organizations; museums; marketing; educational services.

RESUMO

Este artigo enfatiza a importância de adotar estratégias para atrair e reter público nas organizações culturais, mais precisamente nos museus. Gradualmente, as instituições culturais evoluíram de organizações voltadas para produtos para organizações direcionadas a consumidores, buscando atrair e atender diferentes grupos com ofertas apropriadas. Os museus recorrem ao marketing para expandir seus públicos, bem como para

criar e manter relacionamentos duradouros. Portanto, este estudo analisa uma amostra constituída pelos Museus da Madeira (em Portugal) para identificar as estratégias de marketing aplicadas. Criaram-se questionários abertos para entrevistas com diretores e visitantes desses museus. Os resultados mostram que os serviços educacionais desempenham um papel fundamental na atração e gestão do relacionamento com a comunidade local, principalmente com o público escolar. No entanto, a promoção da oferta entre turistas ainda é fraca.

Palavras-chave: turismo; organizações culturais; museus; marketing; serviços educacionais.

RESUMEN

Este artículo resalta la importancia de adoptar estrategias para atraer y retener público en organizaciones culturales, más precisamente en museos. Gradualmente, las instituciones culturales evolucionaron de organizaciones orientadas al producto para organizaciones dirigidas al consumidor, con el objetivo de atraer y servir a diferentes grupos con ofertas apropiadas. Los museos recurren al marketing para expandir sus públicos, así como para crear y mantener relaciones duraderas. Por lo tanto, este estudio examina una muestra compuesta por los Museos de Madeira (en Portugal), para identificar las estrategias de marketing aplicadas. Se crearon cuestionarios abiertos para entrevistas con directores y visitantes de estos museos. Los resultados muestran que los servicios educativos tienen un papel fundamental en la atracción y gestión de la relación con la comunidad local, especialmente con el público escolar. Sin embargo, la divulgación de la oferta entre el público turístico es débil.

Palabras-clave: turismo; organizaciones culturales; museos; marketing; servicios educativos.

INTRODUCTION

The topic chosen for this study is justified by arts organisations' need to establish long-term relationships with their audiences. In order to be successful, these organisations should not focus only on attracting new audiences, but also on retaining them (CURVELO, 2009; HILL *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, this research intends to present strategies to be embraced by cultural organisations, mainly by the local museums, in order to attract and retain audiences.

The choice of this topic is also supported by the increasingly key role that marketing is playing within the communication strategies of the Portuguese arts organisations (CURVELO, 2009). In fact, marketing is a tool that is increasingly attracting the non-profit organisations, as it is extremely important for the variety of problems and challenges that they face (KOTLER, 1998). Even though marketing was not easily accepted within this sector and, more precisely, within the arts sector, the arts industry has long recognised the importance of learning how to market effectively the experiences offered to the audiences (DIGGLE, 1994; HILL *et al.*, 2017). With the decrease of financial resources and the rapid changes in the consumers' attitude, the non-profit organisations gradually embraced the

concepts, tools and models that have been effective in the profit-making sector (HILL *et al.*, 2017; KOTLER; KOTLER; KOTLER, 2016; KOTLER, 1998). Similarly, the literature that discusses marketing started to recognise a broader scope of its potential in areas such as health, education and arts (HILL *et al.*, 2017).

Nowadays, the audience has many leisure options, but little free time. Bearing in mind the substantial competition in the leisure market, museums turn to marketing to enlarge their audiences, build relationships, and increase the revenue streams.

Gradually, cultural institutions evolved from product-driven to consumer-driven organisations, seeking to attract and serve different groups with appropriate offers (KOTLER; KOTLER; KOTLER, 2016). In this way, it is important to mention that the constant renewal of the offer is essential for cultural organisations to ensure the visitors' return (CURVELO, 2009).

In the 1990s, relationship marketing offered a new model on which to base marketing thinking in the arts. Rather than limiting itself to tactical selling or promotional activity to increase or maintain a pattern of purchase, arts marketing needs to focus on building long-lasting relationships with customers (HILL *et al.*, 2017; RECUERO *et al.*, 2019). To create these relationships, museums convert infrequent visitors into frequent ones, visitors into members and members into volunteers and donors (KOTLER; KOTLER; KOTLER, 2016).

CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES USED TO ATTRACT AUDIENCES

This research aims at identifying the concepts and strategies used to attract and retain audiences that are addressed in the literature review and put into practice in Madeira's museums, in order to relate the theoretical analysis to the empirical one. For this purpose, visitors and directors of a sample of local museums were interviewed.

Therefore, this study intends to answer the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1. Who are the target audiences identified by museums?

RQ2. How is the museums' offer promoted?

RQ3. How do museums manage the communication process and the relationship with their audiences?

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Manuel Bairrão Oleiro, director of the Department of Museums, Conservation and Accreditation of the Direcção-Geral do Patrimônio Cultural (DGPC) [Directorate-General for Cultural Heritage], there has been a change in the way that museums are perceived nowadays (BAIRRÃO OLEIRO, 2017). Oleiro considers that "museums are increasingly open spaces for reflection, questioning, cultural production and research and, for this reason, for promotion extended to non-specialist audiences" (CURVELO, 2009, p. 103).

It is contemporary museums' main goal to obtain a wider dissemination of their collections among the non-specialist audiences, different from the traditional more informed cultural elites. This greater openness to audiences is only possible because "information is made available to a broader spectrum of audiences", which makes the contact with the work of art more accessible and perceptible for the less informed audiences (CURVELO, 2009, p. 104). In this sense, marketing plays a key role in carrying out these tasks.

In the museum context, marketing aims at spreading knowledge and appreciation of art, science, history and the environment to the largest number of people (KOTLER; KOTLER; KOTLER, 2016). Diggle (1994) emphasises that there are fundamental differences between common marketing and arts marketing, in what concerns its objective and philosophy. The aim of marketing in an area such as the artistic one, normally a non-profit area, embraces the social purpose of arts organisations, which is to bring art to the general public and, therefore, the author defines arts marketing as such:

> The aim of *arts* marketing is to bring an appropriate number of people, drawn from the widest possible range of social background, economic condition and age, into an appropriate form of contact with the artist and, in so doing, to arrive at the best financial outcome that is compatible with the achievement of that aim (DIGGLE, 1994, p. 25).

According to Curvelo (2009), the segmentation criteria in cultural marketing are useful to seek the best audience or market segments for a specific work of art, "the one who can appreciate it better, that can give it the greatest value", since that in a cultural organisation, the product or service already exist "for enjoyment of a specific audience that should be found" (CURVELO, 2009, p. 19).

Thus, with the cultural or arts marketing literature, it is possible to lay the theoretical basis necessary to answer the defined research questions:

MUSEUMS' TARGET AUDIENCE: SEARCH PROCESS, ANALYSIS AND DESCRIPTION

According to Hill *et al.* (2017), a market segment is made up of buyers with similar needs and wants and the market segmentation process starts from four bases: the geographic, the demographic, the behavioural and the psychographic segmentation.

In the geographic segmentation, arts organisations need to identify their catchment area and divide the audiences in accordance with the place where they live (HILL *et al.*, 2017). Curvelo (2009) argues that, first of all, the organisation has to engage the local community, since their members are or should be the first and the most frequent customers of the institution, and only then the rest of the country and the foreign tourists. Nevertheless, there is an increasing cultural tourism that need to be considered (MORAIS, 2013).

In what concerns the demographic segmentation, according to Hill *et al.* (2017), some demographic factors are good indicators of the audience's preferences and influence their participation in arts organisations. The benefits that participants from different age, racial, gender, income and educational groups obtain from the museum can vary widely and, therefore, different approaches can be necessary to attract them and to meet their needs, as some studies specifically focused on this topic demonstrate (COELHO *et al.*, 2016).

In the behavioural segmentation, the organisation should approach the frequent participants differently from the ones that only visit it occasionally. The irregular participants are more challenging targets, as they do not actively look for information

about arts events (HILL *et al.*, 2017). Lastly, in the psychographic segmentation, the organisation's audiences are segmented in accordance with their psychological characteristics. The attitude groupings are very important within these psychographic segments. Diggle (1984) suggests that potential audiences include attenders, intenders, the indifferent and the hostile. Attenders are those with very positive attitudes towards the arts, translated into attendance in arts organisations, either just occasionally or on a regular basis, whereas the hostile have no intention of participating in these organisations (HILL *et al.*, 2017).

Once target groups are defined, the organisation develops programmes and services that meet the consumers' needs (KOTLER; KOTLER; KOTLER, 2016). Since many consumers are reducing their expenses on nonessential goods, finding new ways to attract visitors becomes central (GOFMAN; MOSKOWITZ; METS, 2011). To achieve this goal, museums should focus more on visitors, by trying to better identify their preferences and offering value and distinct benefits, compatible with the different audiences' needs (GOFMAN; MOSKOWITZ; METS, 2011; KOTLER; KOTLER; KOTLER, 2016).

As a matter of fact, only a small part of museum visitors presents high levels of loyalty (BARBOSA; BRITO, 2012; RECUERO VIRTO *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, what is important for museums is not to increase the number of new visitors that will not repeat the visit, but to maintain the audience's engagement in the long term (BLACK, 2012). Moreover, according to Kotler (1998) and Lindon, Lendrevie and Lévy (2004), it is estimated that the cost of attracting a new customer is five times higher than the cost of keeping an existing one satisfied.

IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTION OF THE MUSEUMS' CATALOGUE AND DISCLOSURE

Curvelo (2009) defends the importance of publications such as the catalogue or the itinerary in the communication of a museum's exhibition. These publications address an audience who wants to obtain more information and extend the visit. The author considers that these and other complementary means of information, such as programmes, should

be distributed and made available in advance, so that the potential visitor has prior information about the exhibition that he or she may visit.

Curvelo (2009) highlights the Internet as one of the fastest and cheapest tools an organisation has to create and maintain a relationship with their audiences and to promote the institution. It is extremely important that the cultural institution has a corporate website with regularly updated information (CURVELO, 2009; LINDON; LENDREVIE; LÉVY, 2004). Besides its reduced costs, the Internet allows for interactivity, as museums can provide feedback to the received e-mails and create discussion forums (KOTLER; KOTLER; KOTLER, 2016; LINDON; LENDREVIE; LÉVY, 2004). E-mail is an important online marketing tool. The majority of marketers use it frequently and very successfully, since this medium enables them to send highly customised messages that help in building a relationship (KOTLER; ARMSTRONG, 2018; KOTLER et al., 2013). Some recent studies, such as Richani, Papaioannou and Banou's (2016), were exclusively focused on the Internet's role in museum marketing.

Moreover, with the increasing use of digital devices, countless social networks emerged, providing consumers with the opportunity to gather, socialise and exchange points of view and information. Nowadays, there are few people who do not use Facebook, Twitter, Google+, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest or Flickr (KOTLER; ARMSTRONG, 2018; KOTLER et al., 2013). More and more, marketing strategy and practice are changing to take advantage of today's technologies (KOTLER; ARMSTRONG, 2018; KOTLER et al., 2013). Therefore, museums should make use of these technologies to increase their number of visitors (CHUNG; MARCKETTI; FIORE, 2014; SUNDJAJA; SIMAMORA, 2015). Hence, museums turn to websites such as Instagram, Facebook, Flickr and YouTube to obtain greater visibility and create their own websites, blogs and virtual exhibitions (KOTLER; KOTLER; KOTLER, 2016).

According to Curvelo (2009) and Lindon, Lendrevie and Lévy (2004), it is important that the organisation makes a wise choice of which media to use, as the use of a single medium has proven to be insufficient. Curvelo (2009) points out that a differentiated communication must be embraced for distinct cultural products, always bearing in mind

who the different recipients of the promotional messages are, since each exhibition or event has its specificities and audiences.

MARKETING AND MUSEUMS' COMMUNICATION WITH THEIR AUDIENCE

Hill *et al.* (2017) state that true success in arts, as well as in other areas, does not lie in individual transactions, but in long-term relationships with customers and that marketing enables the development of such relationships. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2018), a good database can be a powerful tool in the building of long-term relationships. Through databases, the organisations can get to know their audiences in detail and tailor their offers and communications to the preferences and behaviours of target audiences or individuals (KOTLER; ARMSTRONG, 2018).

In accordance with Kotler, Kotler and Kotler (2016), museums are increasingly seeking visitors' opinions about their exhibitions and programmes. To engage them in such a way promotes their inclusion, by showing them that the museum respects and takes into consideration the perceptions of each visitor. Greater dialogue with visitors, greater participation from them and more learning experiences eventually can lead to providing conversations among visitors and museum professionals. In this sense, online reviews on touristic websites play a key role (ZANIBELLATO; ROSIN; CASARIN, 2018).

Attitudes toward art forms change via a long process. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a relationship between the hostile or indifferent audience segments and art, by means of an educational process carried out by arts organisations' Education Offices (DIGGLE, 1994). Diggle (1994) suggests that public relations should divide their target audience into two distinct groups in the community: the school audiences, whom the organisation can communicate directly with, and all the other ones with an indifferent or hostile attitude toward arts.

To cause a change in school audience's attitude, it is necessary that public relations establish a direct communication with schools and teachers. In these services, it is possible and beneficial that children are brought into contact with artists (CURVELO, 2009). It is important that cultural institutions make education programmes available to their visitors,

bearing in mind the importance of these services for the formation of new audiences (CURVELO, 2009).

METHODOLOGY: EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS

This research addresses strategies to attract and retain audiences within museums, by means of an exploratory analysis. This type of analysis usually occurs when one intends to address a relatively new or still not well-known or studied topic (BABBIE, 2012; SAMPIERI; COLLADO; LUCIO, 2006). In this sense, this research intends to explore, by means of qualitative research methods, the subject of study through the contact with Madeira's museums, their directors, human resources and visitors. By doing so, it is possible to obtain a broader understanding of the subject of study. Thus, this research also intends to verify if the strategies addressed in the literature are put into practice in the museums that the sample comprises.

SAMPLE OF THE DATA AVAILABLE ON THE MADEIRA CULTURA WEBSITE

According to the data available on the Madeira Cultura's website, which promotes Madeira's institutions and cultural events and whose contents are published by the *Direção Regional da Cultura* (DRC) [Regional Directorate for Culture], there are fourteen museums and fourteen palaces/foundations/collections subject to visitation/permanent exhibitions in Madeira.[1] A sample of four museums, three of which guarded by the DRC, through the *Direção de Serviços de Museus e Patrimônio Cultural* (DSMPC) [Directorate for Museums and Cultural Heritage Services], was selected from this group.

Geographic location was one of the criteria employed for sample selection. Thus, only museums located in Funchal were selected, since most of Madeira's museums are situated in this city. The number of national and foreign visitors was another sample

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[1] *Madeira Cultura,* Museus. Available at: http://cultura.madeira-edu.pt/museus/Museus/tabid/181/language/pt-PT/Default.aspx. Accessed on: 2 abr. 2023.

selection criteria, having been selected the museums with the greatest total number of visitors.

Therefore, two types of non-probability sampling techniques were employed: convenience or availability sampling and purposive or judgemental sampling. In what concerns the convenience or availability sampling, the sample was selected for being available where the research was taking place (RUBIN; BABBIE, 2017). As for the purposive or judgemental sampling, the units of analysis were selected for being considered appropriate and the most useful or representative ones (BABBIE, 2012).

After having been contacted, the DSMPC provided statistical data which showed that *Quinta das Cruzes* Museum (29,740 visitors), Frederico de Freitas House Museum (12,267 visitors) and the Contemporary Art Museum of Funchal (8,995 visitors) were the three museums guarded by the DRC and located in Funchal with the greatest number of visitors in 2013. On the other hand, a museum guarded by *the Câmara Municipal do Funchal* (CMF) [Funchal City Hall]: Henrique and Francisco Franco Museum was selected.

ANALYTICAL TOOLS: THE RESEARCH METHOD

Open-ended questionnaires were created for later interviews. The questionnaire written for the visitors of the sample museums comprises 9 questions, whereas the one prepared for the directors has 11 questions related to the subject of study. Before beginning the interviews, the sample museums were visited.

In what concerns the respondent's selection criteria, the directors of the sample museums were interviewed because of their experience in the museum field, as well as the fact that they are in charge of the implementation of strategies to attract and retain audiences, subject of this research. The national and foreign visitors of the sample museums were also interviewed.

The answers of the interviewed visitors revealed which factors attracted them to the visited museum and which ones would make them revisit it, as well as the media through which they got to know the museum's offer. For the interviews with the visitors, 5 identifying questions were defined: nationality, age, gender, educational level and

occupation, in order to build their profile. In what concerns the interviews with the museum directors, an open-ended questionnaire with a set of topics to be discussed was created.

In these interviews, directors were asked about the strategies that they embrace to attract and retain audiences in the museums they are in charge of, in order to verify if the strategies addressed by the authors mentioned in the literature review are put into practice in the sample museums.

PROCESS THE DATA COLLECTION

During the two weeks of presence in each museum, visitors were interviewed, whereas the interviews with the directors were scheduled according to their availability. Thus, the data collection process had two stages: the first one began at the end of April and finished at the beginning of July 2022, whereas the second one began in the middle of May and finished at the beginning of June 2022.

Throughout this period, 4 directors and 178 male and female visitors (35 in *Quinta das Cruzes* Museum, 68 in *Frederico de Freitas* House Museum, 31 in the Contemporary Art Museum of Funchal and 44 in Henrique and Francisco Franco Museum), aged between 20 and 83 years, from different nationalities, were interviewed. The respondents were predominantly French, British or Portuguese females, but also German, Belgian, Dutch, Austrian, Russian, Swiss, Hungarian, Swedish, American, Italian, Polish, Brazilian or Spanish visitors.

Therefore, in the interviews with the visitors, the questions were asked in Portuguese, English and French. From the 53 Portuguese visitors who were interviewed, 41 lived in Madeira. The majority of the interviewed visitors were retired, having worked in several professional fields, mostly in the educational one. Some of the visitors worked in the cultural sector as librarians, musicians, restorers or painters. In what concerns the visitors' educational level, most of them attended higher education or completed secondary education.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

RQ1. Who are the target audiences identified by museums?

The findings show that the sample museums identify the (National and foreign) tourist and the local audience as their target groups. For instance, the tourist audience represents approximately 85% of Quinta das Cruzes Museum's visitors. Within the local audience, the school audience, families and the senior audience are the target groups identified by the sample museums. To attract these audiences, museums develop several initiatives. The findings also show that the Educational Service plays a key role in attracting the local audience, mainly the school one.

To reach the school audience, *Quinta das Cruzes* Museum organises guided tours, cultural competitions, projects and workshops. *Frederico de Freitas* House Museum, in turn, organises artistic and recreational activities, as well as guided tours. Primary and secondary school students, who participate in the activities prepared by Henrique and *Francisco Franco* Museum, are its most frequent visitors. Similarly, the Contemporary Art Museum of Funchal promotes guided tours and educational and recreational activities, such as artistic workshops for children, as well as raises awareness at schools.

The Educational Service of the sample museums prepares specific activities to attract the senior audience segment. Henrique and Francisco Franco Museum, for instance, developed the project *Memórias Partilhadas* (Shared Memories), through which visitors share memories that are brought back by Henrique Franco's works of art, whose themes alludes to Madeira. This project's purpose is to attract the senior audience, especially because this segment has more free time, thus can visit the museum more frequently.

Furthermore, to reach local families, it is important to mention educational and recreational activities aimed specifically at this audience, such as the ones that *Quinta das Cruzes* Museum organises monthly, on Saturdays, always exploring different topics.

RQ2. How is the museums' offer promoted?

The findings show that the DRC and the CMF promote the offer of the sample museums in traditional media, whereas these museums make use of digital tools. The

findings also suggest that these organisations fail to promote their offer among the tourist audience. Tourists consider that these institutions should be more publicised in hotels and tourist offices, where they believe that there is little information. For instance, a foreign visitor who has been visiting Madeira for over a decade was not aware of the Frederico de Freitas House Museum's existence, having found it by accident.

Bearing in mind that the sample museums are public bodies, their offer is promoted by the entities that guard them: the DRC of the *Secretaria Regional da Economia, Turismo e Cultura* (SRETC) [Regional Secretariat for Economy, Tourism and Culture] and the CMF. These entities make use of newspapers, magazines, posters, radio, and television. Museums provide them with press releases with the information to be promoted in the media.

In what concerns the traditional media, Henrique and Francisco Franco Museum sends information leaflets to hotels, in order to reach the tourist audience, whereas *Quinta das Cruzes* Museum makes use of leaflets and bulletins (Museum Bulletin and Child's Bulletin). However, *Quinta das Cruzes* Museum director considers that the organisation's promotion needs to be intensified, especially in higher education institutions, in order to achieve a broader audience.

As far as digital tools are concerned, the sample museums are promoted in the institutional websites of the entities who guard them. Moreover, the museums guarded by DRC are also promoted in DSMPC's Facebook page, *Agenda Cultural* (*Cultural Agenda*), which is available in digital and print formats, as well as by means of institutional mailing lists.

Quinta das Cruzes Museum, *Frederico de Freitas* House Museum and the Contemporary Art Museum of Funchal are also publicised in the *Rede Portuguesa de Museus* (RPM) [The Portuguese Museums Network] Facebook page, in the context of the initiative *Museu da Semana* ("Museum of the Week"), which intends to promote the museums of this network, highlighting a different one each week.

Quinta das Cruzes Museum, for instance, has a bilingual website with Portuguese and English contents, since the majority of its visitors is from abroad. *Frederico de Freitas* House Museum, by contrast, does not have an institutional website, so it makes use of its

blog and Facebook page. To communicate with the audience, the Contemporary Art Museum of Funchal and Henrique and Francisco Franco Museum use Facebook and mailing lists very often.

The findings also reveal that the foreign visitors became aware of the existence of the sample museums mainly through travel guides, the Internet, city maps and leaflets. Recommendations from friends, tourists and family members were also important for the promotion of these museums, as well as the information obtained in hotels, tourist offices, travel agencies and other cultural institutions guarded by the DRC.

The local visitors, in turn, keep up with the local museums' offer through television, newspapers, the Internet (Institutional websites and Facebook pages), leaflets, radio, friends and the Agenda Cultural. To keep themselves informed, the younger audience makes use of Facebook. Students and teachers keep up with the activities that the sample museums promote through the e-mail messages that the Educational Service sends to the schools where they study or teach.

RQ3. How do museums manage the communication process and the relationship with their audiences?

The findings demonstrate that the sample museums manage the communication process with their audiences through mailing lists and that the Educational Service of these institutions plays a very important role in managing the relationship with the different audiences, mainly the school ones, in order to retain them. For this purpose, museums frequently promote activities specifically aimed at the different target audiences, as the ones mentioned in the findings for the RQ1.

It is also important to emphasise the fact that tour guides are regarded as a target audience. Considering that many of the tourists that visit *Quinta das Cruzes* Museum are brought by travel agencies, the organisation keeps in touch with these agencies and their tour guides, keeping them informed about any changes in its permanent exhibition or the acquisition of new works of art. The museum has already promoted guided tours specifically intended for tour guides, seeking to build a relationship with this audience.

Similarly, Henrique and Francisco Franco Museum was frequently visited by tour guides in the past. However, the institution has lost touch with this audience.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings for the RQ1 show that the market segmentation process of the sample museums started from two bases: the geographic and the demographic segmentation, since these institutions identify the tourist and the local audience as target groups. In the geographic segmentation, arts organisations need to identify their catchment area and divide the audiences according to the place where they live (HILL *et al.*, 2017).

In the demographic segmentation, in turn, the benefits that participants from different age, racial, gender, income and educational groups seek can vary widely and, therefore, different approaches can be necessary to attract them and to satisfy their needs (HILL *et al.*, 2017). Once target groups are defined, museums focus on developing programmes and services that meet the consumers' needs (KOTLER; KOTLER; KOTLER, 2016).

The findings for the RQ1 also demonstrate that the Educational Service of the sample museums plays an important role in attracting the senior audience, families and, mainly, the school audience within the local community. For the sample museums, these audiences represent three demographic segments.

According to Hill *et al.* (2017), some demographic factors are good indicators of the audience's preferences and influence their participation in arts organisations. However, the authors argue that the demographic segmentation is frequently an incomplete process to segment the arts audiences. In order to be more effective, audiences' attitudes and behaviours should be considered in line with their demographic characteristics. By doing so, the sample museums would be capable of addressing the regular participants differently from those who only visit the institution occasionally (behavioural segmentation). In addition, these museums would embrace a different approach for audiences with positive or negative attitudes toward their offers (psychographic segmentation).

The findings for the RQ2 show that the museums' offer is promoted by the entities that guard them, through newspapers, magazines, radio, television and leaflets. In fact, the media represent an important communication vehicle to any organisation (CURVELO, 2009). Newspapers are the medium of communication which has the broadest impact, whereas magazines are better addressed at specific audiences. However, if there is a communication tool which is particularly necessary nowadays, that is the Internet. Through it, organisations can build and maintain relationships with their audiences and promote themselves (CURVELO, 2009). Bearing in mind the current importance of digital tools, the entities that guard the sample museums make use of their institutional websites, Facebook pages and mailing lists to promote the museums' offer.

Recommendations from friends, family members and other tourists were very important for the promotion of these museums. In addition, the recommendations on TripAdvisor were also mentioned by this market segment. In contrast to the traditional recommendations, which have a limited scope, electronic word of mouth can spread quickly, especially on social networks, thus having a much greater impact in terms of communication, without the geographical distances or time constraints affecting the dissemination of information (HAUSMANN, 2012).

However, the findings suggest that these museums fail to promote their offer among the tourist segment, since a large part of this audience was not aware of these museums' existence. This audience found these museums by accident and not by means of the media used to promote their offer. Moreover, tourists consider that these institutions should be more publicised in hotels and tourist offices, where they believe that there is little information, as some foreign visitors to the *Frederico de Freitas* House Museum point out: "Definitely, they are not promoting what they have here, we didn't even know it [this museum] existed […]. We have been visiting Madeira for over ten years and this is the first time that we come here"; "It's not very well publicised this museum, they should publicise it here in hotels".

The local visitors, in turn, keep up with the museums' offer through newspapers, television, the Internet (Institutional websites and Facebook pages), leaflets, radio and the *Agenda Cultural.* To keep themselves informed, the younger audience makes use of

Facebook. Students and teachers keep up with the activities that are promoted through the e-mail messages that the Educational Service sends to the schools where they study or teach.

The findings for the RQ3 demonstrate that the sample museums manage the relationship with their audiences mainly through the Educational Service, which organises activities for families and the school audience. In fact, the promotion of activities for the families has proven to be effective in attracting new visitors to museums (KOTLER; KOTLER; KOTLER, 2016). These activities aim at reaching the parents, as they are the most difficult audience to reach, bearing in mind that they are the ones who have less free time.

In general, the sample museums keep in touch with their audiences and promote the activities they organise through mailing lists. In their Facebook pages, these museums, with the exception of *Quinta das Cruzes* Museum, promote a two-way communication with their audiences, replying to their questions. In fact, museums are increasingly seeking visitors' opinions and to engage them in such a way promotes their inclusion, showing that museums take into consideration the perceptions of each visitor. Furthermore, greater dialogue with visitors, greater participation and more learning experiences offer interaction and direct contact between visitors and museum professionals, which adds value to the museum-going experience (KOTLER; KOTLER; KOTLER, 2016).

Lastly, it is important to mention that, according to Kotler and Armstrong (2018), a good database can be a powerful tool in the building of long-term relationships with customers, as organisations can get to know their audiences in detail and tailor their offers and communications to the preferences and behaviours of target audiences or individuals (KOTLER; ARMSTRONG, 2018). However, none of the sample museums mentioned making use of this tool.

CONCLUSIONS

This study emphasises the importance of putting into practice strategies to attract and retain audiences in cultural organisations, more precisely in museums. This research shows that children represent an important target audience for the sample museums, who

seek to attract them with a wide range of activities. As this audience grows up, the offer declines, although there is a growing effort to take action and organise activities to include mainly the adults and the elderly.

As it has been pointed out throughout this study, the audiences need to be converted into regular customers. To retain visitors, museums need to renew their offer and organise regular initiatives so that visitors can find reasons to revisit these cultural venues (CURVELO, 2009).

During the data collection, it was found that the acquisition of new works of art, the opening or reopening of the cafeteria, the reconstruction of historical events, the extension of the opening hours, the expansion or renewal of the exhibition space and the organisation of new temporary exhibitions, guided tours in foreign languages, concerts, theatre plays and other events would make the interviewed visitors revisit these cultural institutions.

Moreover, visitors suggest that the sample museums should innovate and make use of the new technologies, introducing interactive games, videos and audio guides. However, the interviews with the museums' directors demonstrate that these organisations lack human and financial resources, thus they cannot organise temporary exhibitions or acquire new works of art more frequently.

As demonstrated in the theoretical and empirical analyses, the Educational Service of the sample museums plays a very important role in attracting and managing the relationship with the local community, mainly the school audience. This service seeks to change less favourable attitudes, in order to create visiting habits. In contrast, the tourist audience needs more information in foreign languages in museums. Moreover, the offer needs to be well publicised in tourist offices and hotels, as suggested in the theoretical analysis.

Although sample museums make use of the traditional media mentioned in the literature review to promote their offer, only one of them created an institutional website, which the authors consider important to reach a wide audience and to encourage the first visit or its repetition. Furthermore, the sample museums only use one social network, even

though the authors mention several networks which cultural institutions could be taking advantage of.

According to the theoretical analysis, a constant renewal of the offer and an investment in the new technologies are necessary to retain visitors. In the empirical analysis, this has proven to be essential for the interviewed visitors to repeat the visit. However, the lack of human and financial resources does not allow such renewal.

Future research should study broader samples, embracing other geographical areas and including private museums. Since the interviews with the visitors aimed at finding out which factors attracted them to the visited museum, it is suggested the development of a study among those who are not visitors, in order to understand the reasons why they do not visit museums. Knowing the barriers between them and the visit to the museum, it is possible to minimise or eliminate these barriers, converting them into visitors. Therefore, this research intends to contribute to broaden the knowledge of strategies to attract and retain audiences in museums.

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