



## TRENDS IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE MUSEUM TOURISM SUPPLY OF BUCHAREST’S SECTOR 1

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**Abstract** Leisure activities have become an increasingly debated topic given the stressful daily life. Therefore, entertainment is vital for any tourist attraction, taking into account consumer profiles and their own lifestyle preferences. Because technology is constantly advancing and is pervasive in the life of modern society, museums must also keep up with visitor expectations and meet a wide range of needs and preferences of the modern consumer. To this extent, museums must correlate their lines of action both in the scientific and/or cultural area and in the tourism area with the new visitation trends. This is essential for an efficient and cost-effective management, with the constant aim of attracting as many visitors as possible.

**Key words:**  
Museum tourism,  
Cultural supply,  
Tourist demand,  
Evolution trends,  
Holistic accessibility

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Museums offer space for education, stimulating experience and creativity. They are places for relaxation, entertainment and spending time with family and friends. They represent local communities and could lead to local development and cultural regeneration. (Zbucnea, 2015)

Modern society puts an increasing demand on museums to meet other functions as well - complementary to conservation, in order to successfully address this new concept of holistic accessibility. Functions such as offering entertainment and recreation and approaching visitors of all ages in an interactive manner by employing digital and cognitive accessibility

become a key asset in diversifying cultural supply and increasing tourist demand. Nowadays, museums must be perceived by both visitors and managers not only as traditional cultural landmarks, but as cultural tourism attractions capable of satisfying various needs of the modern consumer.

The modern museums of Bucharest’s Sector 1 include the Village Museum, “Grigore Antipa” Museum of Natural History, the National Museum of Art, and the Romanian Peasant Museum. These museums employ a holistic or multidimensional accessibility defined as a set of facilities that allow all types of visitors both physical access and access to knowledge, entertainment and technology. The present study will address

these modern trends in connection to the current museum tourism supply and to the new trends in its evolution.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural tourism is the second most practiced type of tourism in Bucharest and in Sector 1, surpassed only by business tourism. As noted in the OECD report (The Impact of Culture on Tourism, 2009), cultural tourism accounted for 40% of all tourism worldwide in the year 2007. Even if the analysts forecast global cultural tourism market to decline at a CAGR of (35.55%) during the period 2017-2021 (Patwardhan, 2018), tourists in this category are estimated to spend, on average, one third more than other tourists. (Richards, 2010)

Museum tourism is an essential integral part of cultural tourism. Certain authors approach museum tourism from the visitor psychology standpoint and connect museum supply with current tourist demand according to the five key types of visitors - explorers, facilitators, professional/hobbyists, experience seekers and rechargers (Falk, 2013). Other authors integrate museums into summer tourism and view events such as The Night of Museums as a vibrant way of exploring and socializing (Bjeljac, Brankov, & Lucic, 2011, Gordin & Dedova, 2014, Schaller, Harvey & Elsweller, 2012). Such events can prolong the tourist season, generate income for communities and have a positive effect on the local economy. (Dumbrăveanu, Tudoricu, & Crăciun, 2014)

Looking at the literature on museum management and marketing, most of the work focuses on strategic issues, such as facilities and activities planning, management and marketing services, fundraising and establishing numerous partnerships with scientific institutions and national and international research institutes (Friedman, 2007, McLean, 2012, Tien. 2008). Education is becoming increasingly important in museums around the world (...). Museums have fundamentally changed in recent decades and have also shaped their audience and relationships. However, in most cases, a museum's main functions are conservation, research, and education. (Zbucea, 2013)

Holistic accessibility is multidimensional and involves a physical, emotional, mental and spiritual approach as a whole. Tourism accessibility has multiple aspects and is supported worldwide by the World Tourism Organization through a resolution aptly named accessible tourism for all, adopted in 1991 and later reformulated in 2005 and 2013. The resolution particularly refers, but is not limited, to people with disabilities embracing the pattern of holistic accessibility that encourages the participation of all categories of people to leisure activities, regardless of physical defects or social and professional status (Lequeux-Dincă, 2017).

When preparing an exhibition for the public, the curator should collaborate with a whole team of professionals, including a marketer or at least one communication specialist. A marketing strategy can be assigned to an exhibition. This can help achieve a clearer definition of the target group

and therefore decide on the most appropriate approach (Zbucea, 2015). The Museum of Natural History is a good example of developing a section specializing in marketing, networking and educational programs inside its organizational chart. This particular topic will be addressed later in this paper.

### 3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The case study we propose addresses the trends of tourist demand for the tourism supply of the "Grigore Antipa" National Museum of Natural History in Bucharest, in the context of holistic accessibility.

Given the current visitation trends, tourism management is an extremely useful tool for a modern museum to employ in designing innovative ways for the public to interact with the exhibition. Therefore, the opinion of the most representative stakeholder in this field is considered a benchmark in shaping the holistic image of the studied museum, GANMNH.

In order to confirm the aforementioned theory related to the marketing approach that will streamline visitation, we used the questionnaire table – an analysis tool we applied to the head of the Department of Public Relations, Marketing and Educational Programs of GANMNH – Purdescu Florentina.

The questionnaire table was developed by Associate Professor Lequeux-Dincă, PhD. The theme of the questionnaire focused on the trends of tourist demand. As for the research methods, the summarizing questionnaire table was filled out by the stakeholder using statistical data to serve the quantitative study, as well as personal impressions and expectations to serve the qualitative study.

The table is divided into four columns targeting visitors according to several criteria (age, group size, motivation, disability, means of travel, place of origin and prior knowledge about the attraction), followed by the quantitative evaluation expressed through the current level and the currently desired level (0 = zero; 1 = low; 2 = high; 3 = very high), and by the qualitative assessment identified in the table as the desired future trend, which in this case relates to the respondent's expectations regarding the museum.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Antipa Museum is the only natural history museum in Bucharest, the first museum to exhibit its collections in dioramas – a relatively new concept, and inhabits a building that was specially designed as its headquarters, all of which are valid bases for its unique, valuable, and eccentric status. Consequently, its visitors have correspondingly high expectations. Therefore, it is desirable to maintain high qualitative standards by developing new forms of efficient and appropriate management of collections, as well as attracting more visitors by establishing partnerships and organizing various educational programs and cultural events alongside the International Congress of Zoology of the "Grigore Antipa" Museum.

By capitalizing on the features mentioned above – uniqueness, cultural value and a good downtown location, but also by allowing a qualified stakeholder to employ them in an appropriate marketing approach, a holistic accessibility can be managed to motivate tourist demand.

The questionnaire table below quantitatively and qualitatively summarizes tourist

activity statistics to facilitate the evaluation of  
 tourist demand for GANMNH.

*Table 1. Evaluation of tourism demand for GANMNH*

Visitors by	Current level	Currently desired level	Desired future trend
	0 – zero; 1 – low; 2 – high; 3 – very high		
<b>Age</b>			
< 6 yo (eg families with children)	2	3	Grow
6 – 13 yo	2	3	Grow
14 – 21 yo	1	2	Grow
22 – 65 yo (eg families with children)	2	3	Grow
> 65 yo	1	2	-
<b>Group size</b>			
One person or small group (< 5 visitors)	3	3	Remain stable
Medium (6 – 12 persons)	2	2	Grow
Large (> 13, eg bus)	2	2	Grow
<b>Motivation</b>			
Transit tourism (by car or bus)	2		
Short walks (1 – 2 hours)	1		
Long walks /Trip (½ day / 1 day > 1 day)	1		
Sport tourism	0		
Business tourism	1		
Other: cultural tourism	2		
<b>Disability</b>			
Mobility impairments	1	2	Grow
Wheelchair users	1	2	Grow
Visual disabilities	1	2	Grow
Hearing disabilities	1	2	Grow
<b>Means of travel</b>			
Car	1	2	Grow
Public transport	2	3	Grow
On foot (nearby)	0	1	Grow
<b>Place of origin</b>			
Locals	3	3	Remain stable
Day visitors from the surrounding region	1	2	Grow
Domestic tourists	3	3	Grow
Foreign tourists	1	2	Grow
<b>Prior knowledge about the attraction</b>			
Never heard of it before	0	-	
People who are already interested and informed	3	3	Grow
Professionals / Experts	1	2	Grow

The above assessments show that the current level of the number of visitors is high for the age groups of <6 years old, 6-13 and 22-65 years old, and low for the age groups of 14-21 years old and <65 years old. The desired level is high and the desired future trend for these age groups is growth. Seniors often visit in large and medium groups, especially foreign tourists (for example, many groups from Bulgaria, Greece, Israel, Hungary). Children under and over the age of 6 are numerous due to the entry fee benefits offered to them by the Antipa Museum, namely free entrance for preschool children and children up to 18 years old during school holidays. The Antipa Museum motivates student visits most by offering a substantial entry fee discount. It also encourages higher education in connected fields to the Natural History Museum – Biology, Fine Arts, Architecture, Human and Veterinary Medicine, Agronomy and Forestry students are allowed free access to the museum's permanent exhibition.

When analysing group size, we see that the number of individual visits is currently very high, followed by that of groups of 5 or less people; the number of visits is also high for medium and large groups. The desired future trend is for the number of small groups to remain stable and for the number of medium and large groups to grow.

Leisure and cultural tourism prevail as visitor motivation, with a fairly high level, while short walks and business tourism are situated on a low level. The Bucharest City Tour and the Museums Bus Line are tourist routes which include this

museum. Therefore, visitor motivation often comes from leisure or cultural tourism.

With regard to disabled visitors, their current level is low, but the desired future trend is growth. There is only one wheelchair ramp, at the entrance of the museum, so people with mobility impairments can only visit the exhibition on the ground floor.

Looking at means of travel, public transport shows a very high current level, followed by car travel, while the current level of visitors travelling on foot from the nearby area is zero. The museum is very close to the subway and bus stations thanks to its convenient central location.

Analysing places of origin, locals and domestic tourists show a very high current level, while day visitors from the surrounding region and foreign tourists show a low current level. Therefore, the desired future trend is for the number of local tourists to remain high and for all other categories to grow.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Museums are cultural attractions with a complex function; in recent years, they have evolved at a rapid pace and have transformed the concept of collection-focused cultural landmark with a role of conservation and research, and turned themselves in dynamic, visitor-focused cultural and tourism organisations.

In the study conducted for "Grigore Antipa" National Museum of Natural History in Bucharest I wanted to illustrate the current concept of a modern

museum, looking both at its ability to satisfy a vast consumer audience and meet the above requirements, and at its dimension of holistic accessibility. This new concept was defined in the present paper as a set of facilities that allow all types of visitors both physical access and access to knowledge, entertainment, and technology.

In conclusion, in order for a museum to get ahead in the cultural tourism industry, it must manifest itself to the public by following an innovative vision, different than the one already all too well known; it must show that it is not enough to capture interest based only on its function as a museum, but also based on its cultural and touristic functions.

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