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'PLAZA'MUSEUM

'Plaza'Museum (Piazza) refers to a communal exhibition space, which encourages simple leisure time in the everyday through the admiration of the authentic artefacts while separating itself from the general information-focused museum trends of continuous dialog, ideologies, and teaching. It helps connecting the local community by intriguing them, thus creating a more appealing museum sphere for a wider audience.



A SPECIAL CASE

Case nr.0 was excluded from the general analysis because the participant had marked her age (14-15), which was not within the researched age-groups. However her answers fall within the general trend of other participants. For Q5 she wrote: "...that you can observe the little details on the scale-models. The whole mood was good". Such responses and the **43% frequency of the "uniqueness of objects"** answers are clear indication that artefacts hold an overwhelming **authority over other aspects** of museum exhibits, the "overall mood" coming at second (22%).

THEORY RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

The idea of "plazamuseum" comes from the emergence of the 19th century **common parks** (e.g. volksgarten) which main function was to offer activity on open air, in order to retire from the daily burden and spending time leisurely. The other effect of 'Volksgarten' was that it **taught the basics of social interaction and etiquette** among the separate classes and the positive discourse between social groups as they enjoyed the beauties of nature together.

Museums in their early creation were places where the "disappearing" culture was saved into. The treasures which they held were **remnants of a long lost past** or something that was bound to become forgotten. The theory draws its essence from these two concepts and the notion that artefacts of a past way of life can still teach the morals and ideas of another time even without a context given by contemporary researchers.

In order to prove and reinforce the theory, a self-filled **questionnaire was spread in several regional and local museums** from 27th May – 1st August 2019. Appraisable results came from four museums (Helikon Castle Museum, DBSL Museum, Pitverszer Open-air Museum and Nádasdy Ferenc Museum). Control questions included sex, age, qualification and distance. Four questions were simple choice questions (e.g. Q5 "What did you like the most?"). **Q3: "What do you like to do in a museum?"** included 10 aspects (rated 1-5 from "not at all" to "completely true") like 'observing objects', 'cruising leisurely' or 'using interactive elements'.¹

DATA CONSIDERATIONS

A larger quantity of the analyzed data is from Helikon Castle Museum, so it can have some impact on the answers given. A continued research would give a clearer picture about separate institutions and their unique characteristics. Insufficiently filled cases were excluded from the analysis (e.g. If five aspects from Q3 were not answered or if all aspects of Q3 were marked with the same) resulting 777 valid cases from the total of 1143.

RESULTS

Q3 answers indicate that a vast majority of visitors prefer **cruising, looking at pictures and objects/artefacts** over trying interactive or digital elements or watching videos. Aside from these latter three, other aspects received high scores (5+4) at **more than 60% frequency** (Fig.1 and Fig.2).

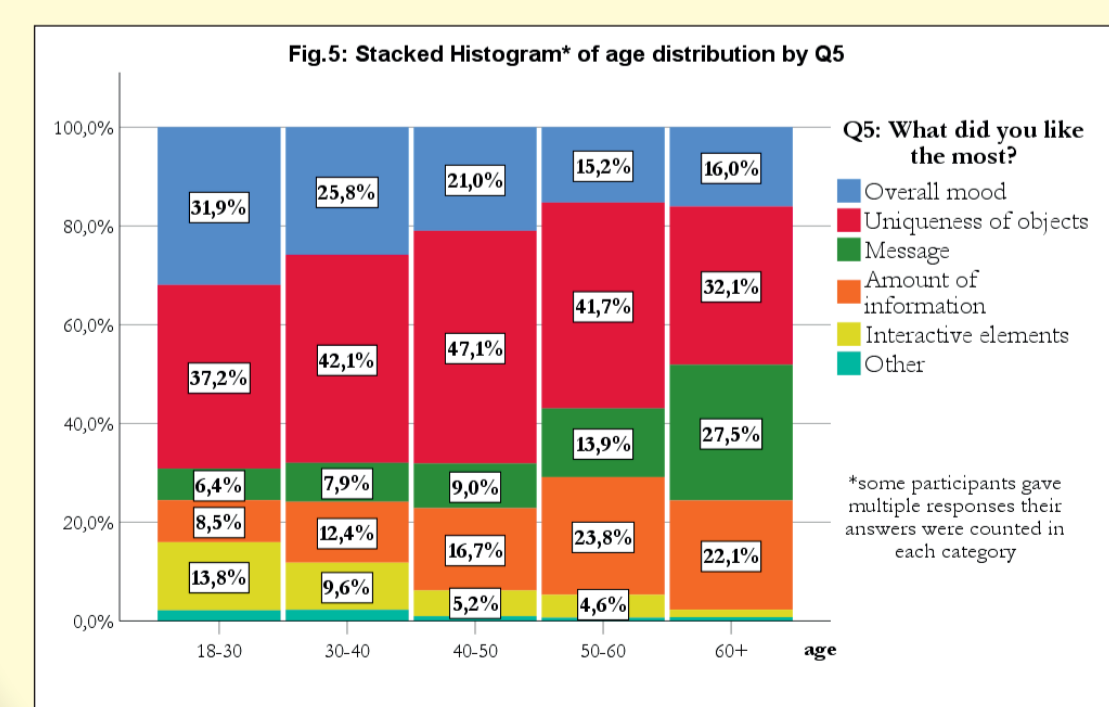
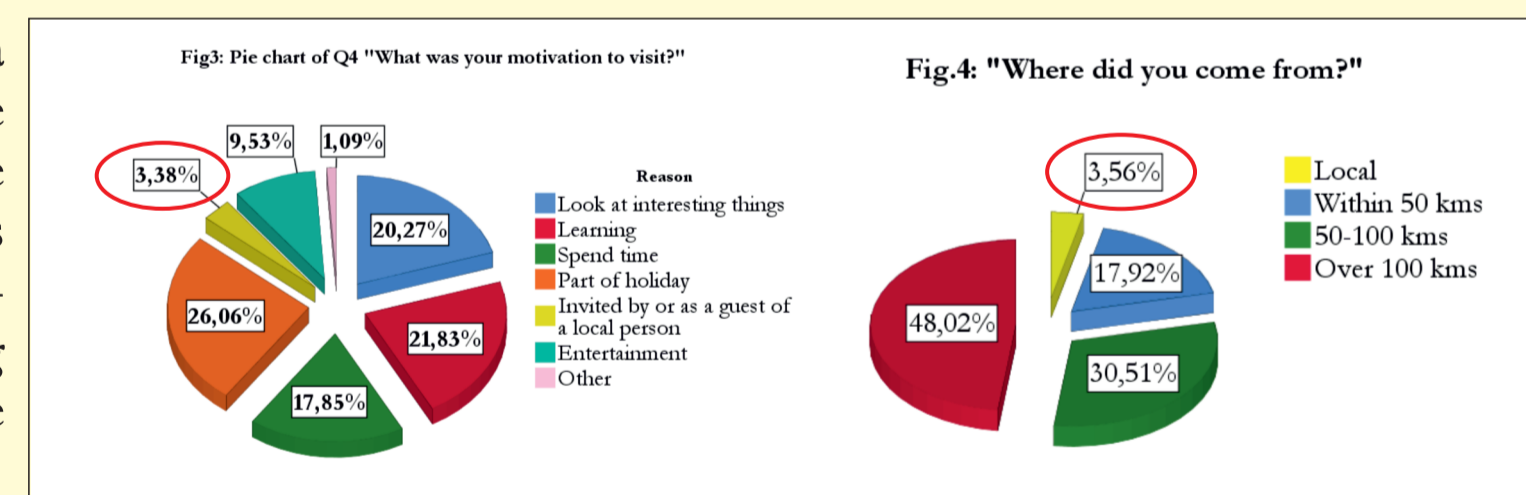
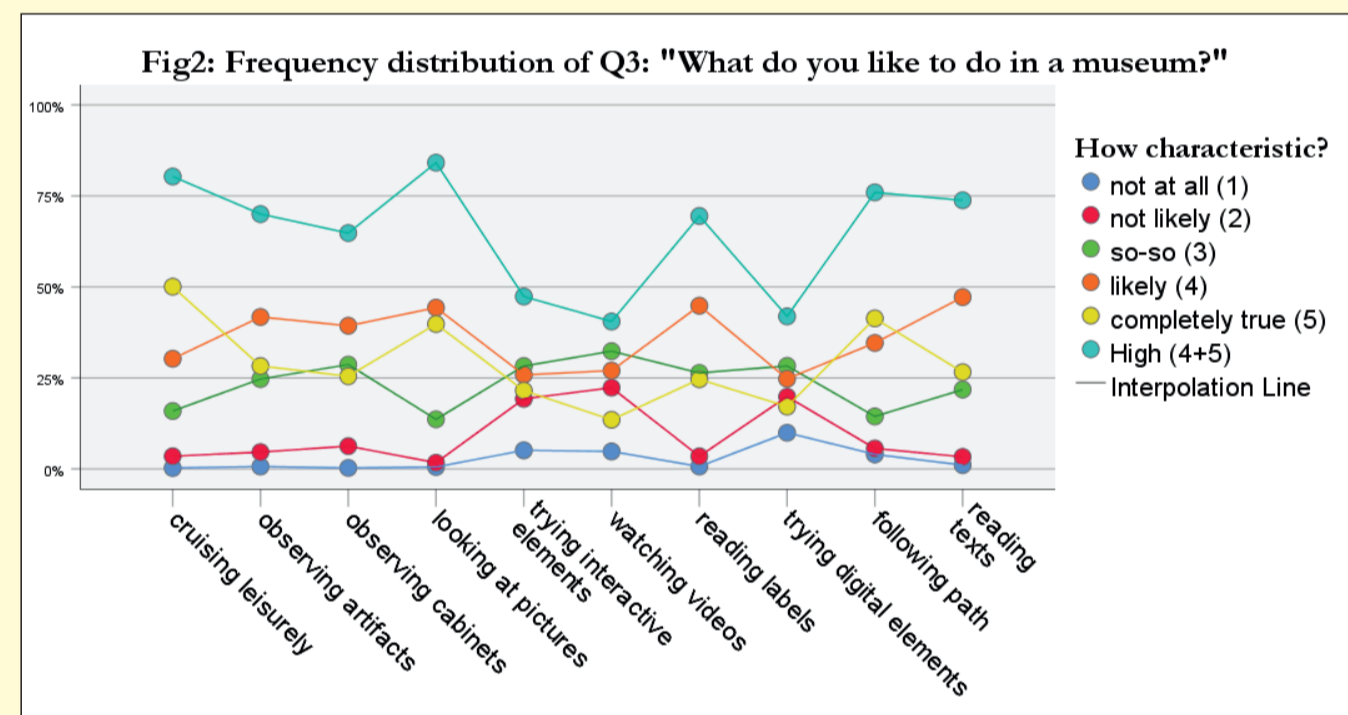
Adversely high values never reach 50% and low values are all above 20% on the same three. **Digital elements has a 29,9% low rate** and the highest (10%) of "not at all". The frequency rate of high value "follow path" answers could be explained by the nature of the exhibitions which follows a room-to-room path.

Fig.3 shows that **only a fragment** of the visitors came to an invitation by someone local. This result correlates with the very low rate percentage of **people visiting from local** or relatively close distance (Fig.4).

Fig.1: Frequency table of Q3 aspects¹ and sum of higher and lower values

	completely true	likely	so-so	not likely	not at all	high (5+4)	low (2+1)
cruising leisurely	50,0%	30,4%	15,8%	3,5%	0,3%	80,4%	3,8%
observing objects	28,4%	41,5%	24,8%	4,6%	0,7%	69,9%	5,3%
observing cabinets	25,6%	39,4%	28,5%	6,3%	0,3%	64,9%	6,6%
looking at pictures	39,8%	44,4%	13,5%	1,7%	0,5%	84,2%	2,3%
trying interactive elements	21,5%	25,8%	28,2%	19,3%	5,1%	47,3%	24,5%
watch videos	13,3%	27,0%	32,5%	22,4%	4,8%	40,3%	27,2%
read labels	24,6%	44,9%	26,3%	3,5%	0,7%	69,5%	4,2%
trying digital elements	17,1%	24,7%	28,3%	19,9%	10,0%	41,8%	29,9%
follow path	41,4%	34,6%	14,5%	5,5%	4,0%	76,0%	9,5%
read texts	26,6%	47,1%	21,9%	3,3%	1,1%	73,7%	4,4%

¹ The researched aspects here were inspired by the work Selene Frascella as well



Q5 answers show, that **participants prefer artefacts, the overall mood, the information given compared to interactive elements or message**. This phenomenon is not limited to older generations. Though interest for interactive is considerably higher (13%), **age group 18-30 still prefers artefacts (34%) and overall mood (36%)** three times over. It is also necessary to consider that age groups 30-60 are represented in greater numbers than the other two which makes it even more significant.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The data shows, that a **large number of the visitors are coming to museums to see artefacts**, aim to learn about them through conventional means and enjoy just being there. The use of **digital and interactive elements** is **insignificant** in comparison, filling only a supportive role rather than a necessary attraction.

The uniqueness of **museums** is that they **hold and preserve invaluable artefacts** of the past. In order to remain "hubs of culture" they have to embrace and strengthen this original concept. They should not challenge huge entertainment complexes like cinemas, theme parks, shopping malls. Instead **they can offer a space (Piazza)**, an opportunity to visit and **admire** the pure existence of **authentic treasures** at their place: a "sacred ground" for the artefacts of the past.

Another conclusion is that locals (aside from special-day events) are scarcely represented. **If museums are trying to become an impact on the community** in which they are embedded into – as "hubs of culture" – they need to focus to **invite the locals in** so they do not go away for attractions. To involve them, museums, especially smaller ones should focus more on becoming a part of the 'daily' life; not as an entertainment centre, but **as a place of everyday leisure time**; where people can enter without the need for active entertainment, or seeking knowledge; **where meditation self-reflection and the silent-dialog happen with the artefacts themselves**. This would help making a deeper emotional connection thus causing a stronger local identity. As a result locals would proudly present their own treasures to outsiders ultimately creating an even wider audience for the museum itself.

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