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2015

Online at <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/68360/>
MPRA Paper No. 68360, posted 13 Dec 2015 22:09 UTC



ISSN 1855-931X

SUSTAINABLE MUSEUMS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The sustainable development of a region depends on the sustainability and measures taken by all the public and private organizations in the respective area. Museums stand out among these organizations due to the controversies arising in connection with the role they have to play in this process of sustainable development. This paper seeks to analyze whether and why museums should become sustainable and provide an overview on the Romanian museums' sustainability. The qualitative research based on semi-structured interviews with five museum experts showed that the sustainable development of Romania through cultural tourism is threatened due to the fact that few museums take steps towards become sustainable. Among the factors that hinder the process of sustainable change in museums can be mentioned the following: the current legislation, the scarcity and poor training of the human resources, but also the some managers' misconception on the notion of sustainable museum and their resistance to change.

Keywords: museums, sustainability, development, entrepreneurship, change

Topic Groups: change management and organizational development, economic growth, humanities and arts and business

JEL Classification: Q01, L26, O10

INTRODUCTION

One of the first definitions of sustainable development is given by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. The Commission defines sustainable development as *"a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*. Several years later sustainable development was seen as *"a requirement for our generation to manage the resource base such that the average quality of life that we ensure ourselves can potentially be shared by all future generations"* (Asheim, 1994). According to this view, sustainability corresponds to a situation where the quality remains the same or increases. If the quality drops, then the system can be regarded as unsustainable (Bell & Morse, 2008, p. 12). It is noteworthy that the quality of life is not limited to *"material consumption"* but includes everything that influences the people's lives, *"like health, culture and nature"* (Asheim, 1994). The same idea is shared by Gawęł (2012) who argues that sustainable development *"can be linked with every aspect of human life"*, and Bell and Morse (2008, p. 5) who use the concept of sustainability in a general way, referring to any noun which works with the adjective "sustainable", like: sustainable agriculture, sustainable areas, sustainable cities, sustainable communities, but also sustainable institutions and organizations.

Thus, in recent years there has been an expansion of the concept of sustainability and sustainable development, which is why sustainability tends to become more and more a "must" for museums as well (Genoways & Ireland, 2003, p. 121). Due to the decrease of global resources, the pressure put on museums to provide value for the funds they receive has increased (Coman & Pop, 2012). On the one hand, sustainability is the way by which museums can use their resources with maximum efficiency so as to thrive even with limited resources (Pop & Borza, 2014). On the other hand, sustainability is closely linked to the museum's mission of contributing to the society development (Lord et al., 2012, p. 6).

Despite the fact that several international organizations have defined sustainability and developed criteria for self assessment in this regard (Pop & Sabou, 2013), the positive effects are yet hard to note in the museum sector. So many museums are closed (Steel, 2012) because they lack the ability to implement managerial changes in order to become sustainable. In an attempt to identify the causes for the poor performance of the Romanian museums, Zbucnea (2013) conducted a qualitative research among visitors, assuming that the experiences they have in museums do not match their expectations. Blagoeva-Yarkova (2012) also argues that museums don't fully use their potential so as to satisfy the demands of the communities they belong to. The next question is why isn't the museums' offer in accordance with the visitors' requirements? In order answer this question, we performed a qualitative research within the museum sector, taking into account Pachucki's recommendation (2012) of using interviews with individuals in order to get an overview of a phenomenon. The purpose of this paper is to identify what museum experts think about sustainability, to what extent Romanian museums are sustainable and which are the factors that affect their sustainability.

The paper starts with a short review of the literature focusing on highlighting the museums' role in the sustainable development process. It continues with the description of the research methodology by referring to the type of interview we used and its administration. Next, the most important findings are summarized, followed by discussions on the sustainability of the Romanian museums and the meaning of a sustainable museum. In the end the paper presents some relevant conclusions but also the limitations of the study and the future research directions.

MUSEUMS AS A WAY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The sectoral strategy in the field of culture and national patrimony for the period 2014-2020 (CCCCDC, 2013) speaks about the necessity of elaborating and applying such new strategies in the cultural institutions as to allow these institutions to contribute to a better quality of life by using the patrimony as a generator of cultural, social and economic value. Also, it emphasizes that *"culture, as the other social and economic sectors, must in its turn seek and establish synergies with the other sectors with a view to achieving a sustainable and integrated development"* (CCCCDC, 2013; Yuqin, 2008). Thus, on the one hand, one of the requirements for the museums is that they should contribute to the sustainable development of a region through the cultural, social and economic benefits they can generate. On the other hand, by adopting an open system, the cultural institutions have to seek their own sustainability, namely to have *"sufficient resources to maintain existence, and fulfill their objectives, into the future"* (Alcaraz et al., 2009).

According to Gawel (2012) the sustainable development involves *"a sustainable society, sustainable environment and sustainable economy (...) achieved by the creation of new value."* If we take into account all the social, cultural, educational and economic benefits which museums have the capacity to generate (Coman & Pop, 2012), we can argue that these institutions play a significant role in what we call sustainable development. This idea is also upheld by the European Council (2008) which attributes to a well-managed cultural patrimony the quality of a *"resource for sustainable development and quality of life in a constantly evolving society"*.

Museums help build a sustainable society

According to the definition given by ICOM (2013), the purpose for which any museum operates is to serve the development of the society by acquiring, conserving, researching, communicating and exhibiting *"the tangible and intangible evidence of people and their environment."* In their mission of serving the society, Yuqin (2008) highlights that museums have to *"undertake a leading role in promoting sustainable social and cultural development."* The cultural patrimony managed by museums represents a way of getting to know the characteristics and the history of a community and improving the understanding of a culture and different lifestyles (Scott, 2007).

Museums help get a sustainable environment

Also, one of the basic functions of a museum is to preserve the cultural resources of a community not only for the current generation, but also for the future generations. Through their function of conservation and preservation of the patrimony in time, museums contribute to assuring the sustainability of both the cultural and the natural environments (Blagoeva-Yarkova, 2012; Yuqin, 2008). Regarding the natural environment, Yuqin (2008) attributes the natural history museums an important role in the promotion of sustainable development. In her view these museums have to be *"a driving force in the protection of local biodiversity"* because *"a museum not only conserves specimens of extinct animals, but it is also a guardian or defender of the biological and cultural diversity of living creatures"* (Yuqin, 2008). Also, due to their educative function, through the exhibitions they organize, museums can promote and attract attention on *"the vital importance of harmony between humanity and its natural environment"* (Yuqin, 2008).

Museums help build a sustainable economy

It has been demonstrated that well managed museums play an important economic role in the tourist development strategies in various urban regions. According to Kotler et al. (2008, p. 13) well-managed museums "*are magnets of economic development*". The quality of the products and services offered by museums directly influence the development of cultural tourism in a certain region. In its turn, "*cultural tourism is a key factor for sustainable development and intercultural dialogue*" (Drăgulănescu et al., 2014). Bilbao, Valencia, Austin, Louisville, Denver, Linz, Newcastle and Gateshead are just a few examples of cities that have successfully used culture and museums as a part of their sustainable development strategy (Plaza & Haarich, 2013; Sacco et al., 2009).

Therefore, worldwide the cultural sector is considered an essential component of the sustainable development process, both from the social and cultural point of view, and that of environmental protection and economic development (due to cultural tourism). Joshi (2012) mentions even the possibility of making a "*strategic alliance between culture and tourism*", where sustainability should be used as a bridge between the two. But, the degree in which museums contribute to the sustainable development depends on their management. It is certain that a museum which is "*shutting itself up in an ivory tower*" (Yuqin, 2008) will not act as an engine, but, on the contrary, as a burden for the sustainable development of a region. In other words, a museum that only consumes resources (in most cases from public funds), without any consideration given to adjusting its products and services to the needs of the society, will hinder or stop sustainable development or even make it to regress.

The research performed on Romanian museums sustainability is scarce. There are just a few scholars who were interested in measuring and analyzing the sustainability of the Romanian museums. However, Pop and Sabou (2013) tried to measure the sustainability of some museums by using an index built on self-financing capacity and cost per visit. Corbos and Popescu (2011, 2012a, 2012b) performed several researches on the competitiveness of the National Museum of Art and National History Museum and recommended Prado Museum as a model for raising the competitiveness of the Romanian cultural organizations, with the purpose of enhancing the museums' contributions to urban sustainable development. Thus, it can be noticed that the analyses performed were predominantly quantitative, while the qualitative analysis focused on a component of the external environment, such as in the study of Zbucea (2013) about how young people visit museums. However, the process of improving an organization's performance requires, besides the analysis of the external environment, a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the internal environment (Janićijević, 2010). By complementing the research conducted so far, the present study seeks to identify the experts' views on the Romanian museums' sustainability.

RESEARCH METODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to identify the current situation in the Romanian museum sector in relationship with sustainability. To this end, we performed a qualitative research based on interviews with experts from the museum sector. As regards the interview type, we used a semi-structured interview. All the participants in the interview received the same main questions, in the same order. Depending on the interviewees' answers, additional questions were asked where we considered that a clarification or a deeper, more detailed elaboration of the items under discussion was required.

Five managers of museums and from the Romanian National Network of Museums (RNNM) were selected to take part in this study. The following leaders answered: the manager of the National Museum of the Romanian Peasant, who is also the president of RNNM, the manager of the Art Museum in Cluj-Napoca, the manager of the «Baia Mare Artistic Centre» County Museum of Art, the executive director of RNNM and a vice-president of RNNM. In order to assure the confidentiality of the answers according to the undertaking upon the development of the interviews, in this paper the five experts are randomly coded with letters from A to E. The interviews were conducted in the period November-December 2014. The average duration of the interviews was 32.33 minutes, but they also included questions which are not the scope of this paper. In order for the answers to be analyzed, all the interviews were transcribed, after which the most important ideas were summarized. These are presented below.

FINDINGS

A sustainable museum

All the participants in the interview consider it is important for the museums to be sustainable. What differs significantly from one of these experts to the another is their views on sustainability. Out of the five interviewed experts, only one identified all the components of sustainability, i.e. the socio-cultural component, the financial component and the natural environment component; two of the experts identified only the cultural and the financial components, whereas the rest associated sustainability only with the existence of the resources necessary for the operation of a museum. For expert A, a sustainable museum is the museum which has:

- a) **The capacity for entrepreneurial administration**, which means finding the most appropriate solutions which could render effective and lead to the organizational development of the museum by means of attracting extra financial resources and generating projects which, in their turn, shall develop into further projects.
- b) **The capacity for adaptation most effective possible consumption of natural resources**, which refers to the intelligent museums or the green museums which consume few resources by using alternative energies, but whose cultural production is very high.

In this expert's opinion, a sustainable museum can be defined as: *"a creative museum, which offers more than the visiting dimension; a museum which offers something concrete for spending the free time and learning in comparison with its competitors, (...) which knows very well its competitive advantages, market section and targets, which it also projects. A sustainable museum becomes an entrepreneurial museum, a museum which must understand very well that its management is not only a purely administrative management corroborated with permanent social assistance (which means receiving money permanently from the state budget), but, on the contrary, it is a permanent struggle to adjust to the needs and lifestyles taking place around us."* Whereas expert A considers that sustainability originates within the museum, expert E expresses a completely opposite opinion, considering that a sustainable museum is a museum which *"can be supported by patrons, by the society, by the community"* and the economic sustainability of a museum must be provided chiefly by the superior authority sponsoring it.

The high dependence of museums on public subventions in correlation with the sub-financing of museums are considered by experts to be the most important reasons for which

these institutions should become sustainable. In order to become financially sustainable, expert A considers that *"museums should do in such a way as to be valid in their relationship with the society and the public"*, which means *"offering to the visitor every service he might need"*, as well as *"those precise things which determine the visitor to remain in the museum, be content with it, have a memorable visiting experience and leave money there."* The same expert believes that culturally a museum must be *"indeed a learning space, providing not a dour, academic learning, but a relaxed, friendly, yet efficient learning."* More precisely, the things people can learn in a museum must be interesting and useful and must complete the visitor's set of values. Expert C emphasizes that the financial sustainability is necessary only in order to maintain the museum's mission and cultural objectives. The same expert expresses the opinion that museums can become sustainable without necessarily receiving a huge financial income, by entering into partnerships and various types of agreements. The advantage of such an approach would be that *"cash does not come into the museum (...), but the museum evidently takes advantage of the competent services provided by professional companies from various fields and then it can implement projects which otherwise it could not."*

MUSEUM SUSTAINABILITY IN ROMANIA

Expert A expresses the opinion that Romanian museums are at an initial stage as regards sustainability. They are at the stage where they are trying to understand the way *"in which sustainability works and what its benefits are"*, therefore they have not reached the point where they begin to apply this concept, but have passed the stage where they completely refuse even the idea of sustainability. Expert B considers that generally nobody in the Romanian museums gives sustainability any consideration. The purpose of the museums is to obtain *"sure financial sources from the public budgets and, obviously, because these are always insufficient, they also try to obtain financing from occasional events, but such events are seldom strictly related to a museum's activity. Generally these include letting out spaces for events that are not connected with the museum's activity."*

Experts A, D and E consider that Romanian museums are taking steps towards becoming sustainable. An example given by expert A is the project initiated by the Astra Museum Complex of Sibiu, which offers its visitors the possibility of designing homes based on the house models exhibited in the Village Museum. This project generates sustainability since through it the museum gets outside its frame, i.e. collaborates intelligently with the society and the public. This project also has a cultural and pedagogic value as it *"offers a system of educating the public in what regards architecture, esthetic details and the way of building intelligently and healthily"*. Another example of a museum that *"thinks in a sustainable key"* is "Casa Mureşenilor" in Braşov, which can be categorized among the museums which *"transform and orient themselves towards the idea of a community museum"*. Expert D gave the example of the Art Museum of Cluj which applied a strategy for diversifying the activities and services it offers to its visitors. The purpose of this strategy was to transform the museum into a *"cultural center"*, that is *"a space where not only activities specific to an art museum, but also other activities interfering with the other artistic genres should be developed."* To this end, the museum thought of hosting conferences, shows, concerts, debates and other educational activities and programmes, through which it tried to cross certain borders *"in connection with the specific of the a museum as an institution."* One concrete example of an action with a positive impact on the museum's sustainability was the establishment in the museum's yard, during the summer, of a cultural café. The social and cultural impact of this café, which hosted musical, operatic and theatrical performances, was

very big. According to expert D's declaration, *"the public came specially for the cultural programme and less for what could be called terrace service."* On the other hand, this cultural café led to a higher economical sustainability of the museum as a result of the increase in the museum's own income. Expert E also mentioned the expansion of the range of products and services as a strategy, but in his opinion the exhibition policy is the most important method for rendering a museum sustainable. The same expert considers that, through its exhibitions, a museum opens to the community, *"somehow reconciling the experts, who know what it is all about, and the public, who should aspire to it"*. As regards the role of a museum in assuring social cohesion, the expert says that *"additional tasks, outside a museum's immediate specificity, but in which of course a museum should take part, are taken from other sectors of the public domain and placed upon the shoulders of the museum"*.

According to expert C, in Romania there are few museums which adopt measures in order to become sustainable, while the majority of the museums are at present in a period of stagnation or even in decline from the point of view of their development. In this expert's opinion, the best development of Romanian museums coincided with the period of economic growth, which occurred from 2006-2007 until about 2010-2011, after which an unfavourable economic and political context, correlated with a certain "fall into routine" of the museums, caused *"their activity to take a downturn rather than develop"*. According to this expert, one of the factors affecting the museum's economic sustainability is the political and legislative environment in our country. Museums cannot report their own income from one year to the next, and an increase in a museum's own income is often correlated with a decrease in the subsidies it receives from the state budget, which means that *"in fact you don't get more money, you only get to work more for the same money"*. As for the social and cultural sustainability, i.e. "a museum's social and cultural impact", 5 years ago there were *"very many projects in museums which had a cultural component and a social component, and also aimed at social education"*. Now these are in a descending period, since the current projects are rather small and *"therefore their impact is probably somehow limited."* Expert E also considers that Romanian museums' sustainability shows a tendency to depreciate due chiefly to human resources. Skilled employees leave the museum sector after they reach retiring age while any new employment in the system has been blocked for a long time and new employees generally have neither the vocation nor the necessary competences.

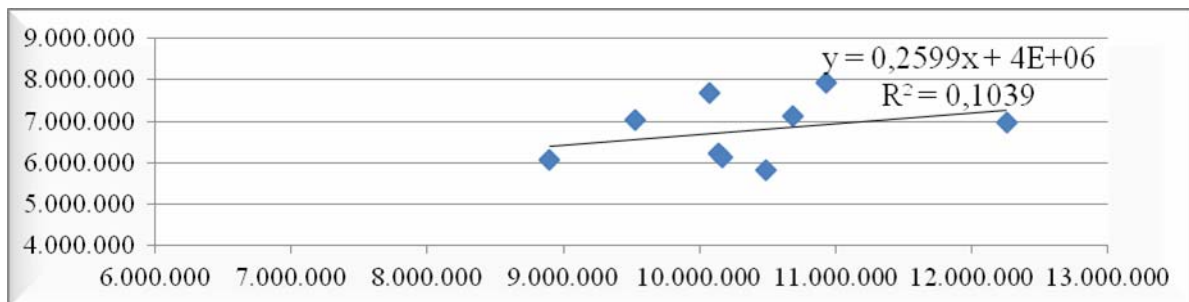
Unfortunately, Romanian museum's lack of sustainability hinders the process of the country's sustainable development through cultural tourism. Unlike other geographic regions, such as the city of Bilbao, Spain (Plaza & Haarich, 2013), in Romania the correlation between the number of tourist arrivals in the accommodation units and the number of museum visitors is almost null. Following the analysis of the information supplied in this respect by the National Institute of Statistics for the period of 2005-2013, we obtained a correlation coefficient of 0.103 (Figure 1), which, according to the interpretation rules (Bowerman et al. 2014, p. 129), shows a non-correlation between the two series of data analyzed (Table 1). The research conducted by Bordean and Borza (2014) confirms the fact that the Romanian hotel industry hardly relies on tourists, their main clients being represented by *"business people, conference participants, government and other public institutions employees and sales representatives"*. In these conditions we can assert that in Romania, with several exceptions, museums do not contribute significantly to the economic development of the regions to which they belong and therefore to the sustainable development of the same regions.

Table 1: The dynamics of the museums visitors and tourists accommodated in Romania (millions people)

Years	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total museum	10.49	10.14	12.26	10.69	10.17	8.90	9.53	10.08	10.93
Total arrivals in tourist	5.81	6.22	6.97	7.13	6.14	6.07	7.03	7.69	7.94

Source: INS Tempo on-line

Figure 1: The relationship between the number of museum visitors and the number of arrivals in tourist accommodation establishments



Source: authors' contribution

Satisfaction of communities' needs by museums

The experts have a common standpoint when it comes to the way a museum can satisfy the needs of a community. In their opinion *"a museum must adapt its programmes to the public's preferences"* and all the activities carried out by a museum must *"meet an immediate public interest"*, be it a conference, a book launch, a debate, an educational programme or an exhibition. Thus, expert A emphasizes that the satisfaction by a museum of the community's needs involves that *"many things, from exhibitions to pedagogical and cultural events"* should be developed *"together with and not for the community."* Expert B expresses the opinion that *"museums should get over the passive role they play in the community, that of providing cultural information and create a cultural event in strict connection with the museum's collection."* This expert gives the example of a history museum which should not *"focus exclusively on presenting the distant local history"*, but *"should take a great interest in what is to happen to the respective locality in the future"*. The reason for this is the fact that museums should take advantage of the people's interest in the development of their localities, since *"through the very nature of their activity, museums have the broadest possibilities of expression"* of all the public cultural institutions in Romania.

All the experts consider that the degree in which Romanian museums satisfy the communities' needs is rather small, since there are very few museums which are able to do this. As positive examples, expert C mentions the Museum of Eastern Carpathians and "Casa Mureşenilor" Museum in Braşov, as well as some museum and memorial houses in Bucharest which were able to do so due to the fact that *"the community came up with project propositions which these museums accepted."* Referring to "Grigore Antipa" Museum of National History, the expert considers that this is *"probably one of the few museums which, once their approach started changing, have remained with a somehow different approach"*.

As for the reasons for which Romanian museums fail to satisfy the needs of their communities sufficiently, the experts' opinions vary. Experts B and E uphold that museums find it difficult to cover the needs of the entire community to which they address due to geographic reasons. More exactly, a local museum must address a local community, a county museum *"must be interested in everything that happens in the respective county, not only in the county's capital city"*, whereas a national museum must address a community made up of the entire country, *"not only the community of the city where this museum is established"*. According to expert E, big national museums manage to cover only the needs of the community from the city where they are established as, *"being, through their status, identity and functions, national museums"*, they must meet the needs of the consumers from the entire country. At the same time expert B considers that the degree in which a museum can satisfy the needs of a community depends largely on the interest and involvement of the museum's manager in the life of the community where his museum is established. Expert C considers that the majority of the Romanian museums *"offer public programs by virtue of a practice, of a routine"*. As they don't *"aim in particular at the community"*, *"the community in its turn does not answer"*, which means that *"the community does not go to the museum and is not interested"*. At the opposite pole, expert E believes that the satisfaction of the community's needs by a museum involves firstly *"that the community must satisfy the museum's primary needs"*, and since the primary needs of Romanian museums are not sufficiently met, it follows automatically that the community's needs are not covered either in most cases. Expert D mentions other two causes for the disparity between a museum's offer and the needs of its community:

1. The dispute between the specialists and the public on the museum's offer: many specialists consider that the public is inclined to more popular activities, with a low qualitative content. In their opinion the public's tastes do not meet the scientific or artistic quality proposed by the museum.
2. The insufficient knowledge of the community's needs: as research has been conducted among only the museums' visitors, not the entire community, such research was too little and insufficiently developed to allow real knowledge of the consumer's needs.

DISCUSSIONS

Although museums' sustainability is a relatively new concept, it has been a topic of debate for many scholars. Worldwide museums' associations have tried to explain this notion, state the actions to be taken by museums so as to become sustainable and, last but not least, stress the intrinsic and extrinsic importance of sustainable transformation of museums. However, many museums seem not to be able to implement this new management philosophy (Joshi, 2012). This discrepancy between theory and practice has motivated us to analyze how museum professionals see sustainability and to what extent they think that Romanian museums are sustainable. In order answer these questions, a group of 5 museum professionals were selected to offer their perspective on sustainability. The first part of the interviews consisted of asking the experts to say if museums should be sustainable or not and define what the concept of sustainability meant to them. Another part of the interviews focused around the theme of Romanian museums' sustainability. Respondents were asked to give some examples of measures implemented by the museums in order to become sustainable and think upon the factors that affect the museums' sustainability. Finally, the questions about the satisfaction by the museums of their communities' needs helped us clear up why many museums fail in their mission to serve the society.

After analyzing the experts' responses, we noticed that there are two opposing views on what a sustainable museum means and what the role is that a museum should play in serving the society. Most experts believe that sustainability must come within the museum. Expert A emphasizes that in order to be sustainable, museums must know very well their customers, competitors, competitive advantages, market section and targets, and adopt an entrepreneurial behaviour to increase the value they offer to visitors. The same idea is shared by many scholars. Rentschler (2001) stressed that in order to become sustainable, museums should use entrepreneurial strategies. The two characteristics of entrepreneurship, i.e. creativity and innovation, allow museums: (1) to increase the quality of their services (Griffin, 2002); (2) to maximize the public value and get the resources needed for the performance of their activities (Durel, 2009); (3) to diversify the funding sources and develop creative programs (Rentschler & Geursen, 1999); and (4) to find ways to mitigate the environmental, social and economic risks inherent in their approach toward sustainability (Lord et al., 2012, p. 6). On the other hand, expert E considers that a museum's objective shouldn't be to obtain money or adapt to the customers' needs. In his view, a sustainable museum is a museum to which someone (whether it is the state, the community or a private donor) provides all the necessary resources so that it can carry out its traditional functions related to collecting, preserving and researching the heritage. Therefore, he promotes the idea of a closed system, specific to a planned economy, where the output should not be correlated with the consumers' needs and preferences. The existence of such hugely different points of view within the museum sector is not specific to Romania, but is a global issue. In this regard, Gilmore and Rentschler (2002) used the terms "custodial management" and "marketing management" to make the distinction between the conservative, inside-oriented museums, which are resistant to change, and the modern museums, which focus on offering value to consumers according to their preferences.

Although there are several museums in Romania which attempt to be sustainable by diversifying their products and services according to customer needs and by developing cultural projects with and for their communities, all the interviewed experts generally considered that Romanian museums are not sustainable. While Drăgulănescu and her colleagues (2013) show that cultural tourism is a fundamental element for the sustainable development of a region, our research finds that the Romanian museums' lack of sustainability has a negative impact upon cultural tourism and implicitly upon the sustainable development of the country.

The causes that have led to this situation are related both to the economic, political and legal context in Romania, and to the internal environment of museums, such as the qualification of human resources, the poor training of museum managers in entrepreneurial management and their resistance to change. If external factors are more difficult to control, in theory museums would have the ability to take measures for improving their performance within their internal environment. In this regard, museums should "*radically change their approach to public relations*" (CCCDC, 2013). The manager's role would be to develop strategies "*for both the custodial role and visitor attraction*" (Hume & Mills, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper aimed at analyzing the views of museums professionals on the sustainability of Romanian museums. The findings of the research are useful for museum scholars, as only a few studies have been carried out about such issues. At the same time these findings might

be helpful for the government and the local authorities, as they could change the political and legislative context that influences the museums' sustainability negatively.

The finding that a sustainable museum involves an entrepreneurial behaviour, as well as the finding that the sustainable development of a region depends on its museums' sustainability extend the research on sustainable entrepreneurship or sustainopreneurship (Howaldt et al., 2012, p. 187, Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011), by providing evidence that this notion should be used in the museum sector as well. In fact, we may even say that sustainability in museums involves entrepreneurship and total quality management but means more than that because its final result consists in the development of a sustainable society. While in the business sector sustainopreneurship involves "the use of traditional business skills and knowledge of entrepreneurs to accomplish social and environmental goals" (Boyd et al., 2009), for museums sustainopreneurship is a direct consequence of using entrepreneurial strategies for the museums' sustainability. In other words, an entrepreneurial company doesn't necessary lead to the accomplishment of some social goals, but an entrepreneurial museum does, whether it wants or not. Thus, a major contribution of this study lies in showing that a sustainable museum causes a sustainable development of the society as a whole, but both these results depend on entrepreneurship. For the museums to support the sustainable development of a region, they first have to be sustainable, and in order to be sustainable, they must use the same entrepreneurship and business strategies as private companies.

Besides all the results, our study has a series of limitations as well. First, the interview participants' awareness about the concept of sustainability cannot be extrapolated to all museums specialists; therefore, similar research should be conducted and a larger number of experts' opinions should be considered. Also, despite the fact that nationwide we found no correlation between the number of visitors in museums and the number of arrivals in tourist accommodation establishments, things may be different in some parts of the country. In this regard, similar research should be conducted at regional or county level. Also, future research should focus on a more in-depth analysis of factors influencing the museums' sustainability and the ways through which museums can become sustainable.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was cofinanced from the European Social Fund through Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013, project number POSDRU/159/1.5/S/134197 „Performance and excellence in doctoral and postdoctoral research in Romanian economics science domain“.

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