



Museums as a vehicle for domestic tourism growth in Malawi: an analysis of the push and pull factors

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Abstract

Museums are one of the major reasons why tourists tend to visit a destination. As such, contemporary museums now have perceptual dimensions of leisure in addition to being custodians of human identity and history. In this regard, simply having a museum building will not attract modern day tourists to wander around in them as they need far more than the exhibits and the curatorial services. This study aimed at finding out the reasons why people visit museums, the relationship between museum attributes and the overall customer satisfaction as well as the reasons why some people do not visit museums in Malawi at all. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling were used. A total of 200 questionnaires were administered to domestic tourists visiting five museums out of which only 186 were usable and five in-depth interviews were conducted with the five managers/curators of the museums under study. Thematic analysis was used to come up with recurrent factors in the study. Results showed that most respondents have been to museums for their history and heritage value, and recreational, cultural and educational reasons, but most of them were not satisfied with the services on offer. Finally, the study draws conclusions and provides some managerial insights for better museums management and customer retention, and thus sustainability.

Key words: Museums, customer satisfaction, museum attributes, domestic tourism, Malawi

Introduction

Museums are custodians of human identity, heritage and history. They have been known and defined according to their distinctive traditional functions of collecting and displaying artefacts from a range of ages. Through the collection and preservation of objects, museums often serve as a symbol of community pride (Stephen, 2001). Over the recent past, modern museums have made a paradigm shift from the native educational role for the uneducated masses, to now embracing a leisure market component which Stephen (2001) argues is the museum's *raison d'être* of contributing to an important public benefit. As observed by Page (2007), this trend has been born due to the changing tastes of museum visitors who want more out of their museum visits. Tourists have an insatiable longing for transcendence, hence tourism demand has moved



from resort products to other forms of tourism such as ecotourism, film tourism, heritage tourism and adventure tourism. Page (2007) describes this as a change from an old to a new tourism with an increasing demand for quality, service flexibility and differentiation. The modern tourists are active experientialists as compared to the older tourists who were for the most part, on the receiving end of what tourism had to offer.

In this regard, the contemporary museums have emerged with culture as an uncontrollable force enabling them (museums) to be recreational centers. As proposed by Shaw (1986), this paradigm shift means that museums now have a component of perceptual dimensions of leisure that includes enjoyment, freedom, relaxation, personal growth and social interaction. Museums have embraced visitor-based roles unlike the only museums-based prior roles (Sheng & Chen, 2012). With more and more museums aligning themselves in the leisure sector of the tourism industry, peoples perceptions about museums have changed drastically, creating a challenge for museum managers to maintain “their museums’ integrity as a distinctive collecting, conserving, research, exhibiting and educational institution” (Kotler & Kotler, 2000: 271). As such museums have become one of the major reasons tourists visit a destination (Graburn, 1998).

Museums are multifunctional as they can act as schools, churches, divine arenas, studios, research laboratories, temples, storage rooms, leisure places, and tourist sites or sightseeing spots (Camarero & Rojas, 2008; Chan, 2009; Falk & Dierking, 1992; Richards, 1996). Based on these functionalities, museums need to develop distinct purposes such as research, educational, recreation or entertaining purposes so that they best serve their clientele. As proposed by Soren (2009), museum visits are more of transformational experiences where visitors develop new attitudes, interests, appreciation, beliefs, or values in an informal, voluntary context focused on museum objects. Soren (2009) further argues that these experiences are enhanced with interpretive texts, hands-on activities, and interactive information technologies. When talking of tourism development using culture, it is obvious that tourist traffic is one major measurement tool that is used to gauge the progress being made, hence museums need to see ways to reach out to a broader public and compete effectively with alternative leisure and educational activity providers.

Cultural tourism and indeed museums, offer a distinctive competitive advantage for destinations as it encompasses living cultures (Timothy, 2011). As one way of protecting this tangible and intangible heritage, the Malawi government has developed the National Cultural Policy to promote culture as a main contributor to tourism development. The Malawi National Cultural Policy emphasizes the need to institute measures that will translate into improved preservation of Malawi’s cultural heritage and values and, increased promotion and development of Malawi’s culture (Malawi Government, 2015). Due to this recognition and importance attached to culture, many tourists destinations in Malawi have incorporated a cultural aspect to appeal to cultural tourists and still more new museums have surfaced on the cultural market.

According to the WTTC (2015), tourism in Malawi is predominantly domestic with domestic travel spending generating 89.3% of direct Travel and Tourism GDP in 2014 as compared to international tourism receipts pegged at 10.7 % in the same year. Domestic tourism has an impetus in the promotion of cultural understanding and coexistence among different tribes in a community or country. Domestic tourism helps to redistribute income to rural areas or tourism attraction areas where there is poverty while at the same time instilling a sense of pride and nationalism amongst the residents (Manono & Rotich, 2013). Surprisingly traffic to museums in Malawi still remains relatively low as evidenced by empty exhibition halls. Furthermore, there has been scanty research done to understand how best Malawian museums have embraced this paradigm shift. This study therefore sought to find out; the motivational factors for people to visit



museums, the relationship between museum attributes and the overall visitors' satisfaction and reasons why some people do not visit museums in Malawi.

Museums and tourism

Museums are considered as tourism products because they meet and qualify the characteristics of a tourism product which include; seasonality, perishability, intangibility, and inconsistency among others (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Camarero and Rojas (2008), Chan (2009) and Falk and Dierking (1992) concede that museum visits are not simply informative cultural visits, but they are experiences where experience becomes a core consumer satisfying attribute. These authors agree that modern tourists seek total experience where leisure, culture, education and social interaction are combined to produce one product hence museums are experience-centered places that offer both emotional and cognitive stimuli.

Schauble, Leinhardt and Martin (1998) observe that the role of museums is changing from that of a repository (collection) to that of a multifaceted, outward looking role as visitors are invited into the museums to wonder, encounter and learn. Kelly (2009) explains that museums are shifting from being mere providers of information to being providers of worthwhile knowledge and tools for visitors to actively engage with and draw their own conclusions. This contradicts the earliest theories on museums which were built around the education of the uneducated masses with an aim of raising the level of the public's understanding as well as elevating the spirit of the visitors (Kelly, 2009). According to Dirsehan and Yalcin (2011), this situation creates a museum paradigm shift from traditional curators who merely dictate things to their visitors to a visitor orientation, a thing that has pressed museum managers to consider changing their marketing strategies. Museums are expected to focus on visitors rather than to tell the public from curators' point of view.

Richards (2001) affirms the observation that most cultural tourists best enjoy small scale and less visited places with authentic local culture, where they love to live and be treated like locals and to find out the real identity of the places they visit hence museums provide a first-hand senses of sight and touch into the local area's culture. It is against this background that many museums are offering a social interaction platform for their users as well as offering a good reason for people to escape from their daily routines by giving them experience based recreation activities (Falk and Dierking, 1998).

Museums marketing and communication

To lure more people into museums, there is an urgent need for museums to properly market their products and services. Marketing which is demand driven and relevant to the museum's mission, enables the museum to generate both an audience and revenue (Scott, 2000). In order to achieve this, museum managers need to understand tourist's motivations so that they create products and services that satisfy tourists. The museums managers also need to understand tourist's motives and their decision making process (Uysal & Hagan, 1993). Without an understanding of consumer's motivation, museum managers might miss out on tourist behaviour and future travel patterns which subsequently leads to ineffective marketing. For museums to stand out, they need to develop high quality products and services that are in line with consumer needs (Uysal & Hagan, 1993). They need to study and understand the market and offer products that address the potential visitor without neglecting the current visitor (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

Many researches in the museum marketing area mainly focus on visitor profiles including demographics such as age, education, profession, economic status, place of residence and



nationality in order to determine who visits the museums (Falk, 1998; Harrison & Shaw, 2004). This could hold true since cultural tourism participation is closely linked with the socio-economic position of the visitors; people from higher social classes in general have greater access to the means of cultural tourism participation (such as higher levels of income and mobility) as well as having the cultural capital necessary to facilitate participation than low income earners (Hood, 1981; Kawashima, 1998; Richards, 2001). According to Chang (2006), Falk (1998) and McKercher and du Cross (2002) museum visitors can be categorized by the following demographics: age; gender; education and occupation; income; and personal and cultural history. However, Falk (1998) also proposed that researchers need to look beyond the demographics to be able to understand who visits or does not visit museums. He proposes that psychographic variables such as leisure time interests and preferences, and other environmental variables such as recommendations from friends and family, cost, time and museum marketing should be considered as well. As such, in order to offer exhibitions and services suitable for visitors, museums need to conduct visitor studies that would enable them to acquire knowledge related to visitors, and apply it to planning and decision-making (Sheng & Chen, 2012).

Museums in Malawi

The Museums of Malawi is a government agency that is mandated to collect, research, preserve and disseminate information to the public regarding the natural and cultural heritage of Malawi. Furthermore, it is mandated to exhibit objects illustrating the pre-history, history, ethnography and natural history of Malawi for the purpose of education and research. Currently there are six museums under its charge namely; Mandala, Chichiri, Mtengatenga, Mzuzu, and Lake Malawi. Other museums in the country are under private or public – private management and these include the Cultural and Museum Centre Karonga (CMCK) popularly known as Karonga museum and Chamare Museum at Kungoni Centre of Culture and Art at Mua Mission in Dedza.

Literature search shows that there are very limited papers on museums in Malawi (Baker, 2011; Gondwe, 2009, 2011, 2012; Maluwa, 2006; Mtonga, 2006 and Newlands, 1984). Gondwe (2009) presented the direction that the Museums of Malawi through Tisunge, the Lower Shire Heritage Centre has made to revive local cotton weaving industry in Chikwawa district. Local people are being taught how to spin cotton into finished goods like clothes for them to earn a living and as one way of preserving the once lost ancestral knowledge. In as much as this paper presents the role of the museum in reviving this ancient practice, it does not say if this is aimed at bringing people into the museum at the heritage centre. Gondwe (2011, 2012) narrated how the Museums of Malawi is addressing the current wide range of issues of health, poverty, food security and civic education through outreach education programs. He gave an insight into how outreach programs are being used to sensitize communities and fight HIV/AIDS through rights and cultural practices.

Baker (2011) investigated and reported on Mobile Museums Outreach programs that the Museums of Malawi have employed to educate Malawians on different social problems such as HIV/Aids, Malaria and cultural expression and promotion. Baker's intention was to find out how the targeted community responded to these museum messages in relation to the preservation of expressive arts and as well as how primary school teachers in the catchment area embraced the teaching of expressive arts to the pupils after such programs.

Mtonga (2006) in his paper titled *Gule wamkulu a multi-state enterprise* explains the origins of "Gule wamkulu", masked dance that is practiced by the Chewa people found in three countries of Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique. Since most of these Chewa people are found in Malawi, Mtonga commends the strides that have been made to preserve this Chewa culture by other things, collecting, preserving and displaying the Gule Wamkulu masks by a private museum,



ChampMartin (Chamare). Newlands (1984) on the other hand gave a chronology and genesis of the Museums of Malawi and the strategies to expand their operations

These papers only give an overview of the operations or some programmes that the Museums of Malawi are engaged in but do not tell us how these have affected numbers of museums users hence a gap that needs filling. In spite of the efforts on the development and promotion of cultural tourism by the ministry responsible for tourism in Malawi, many Malawians do not visit museums as tourist attractions. Do our museums have enough pull energy to attract tourists? Or were the tourists disappointed once hence do not want to revisit museums?

Research Methodology

The study was an exploratory one as it sought to establish reasons why museums are not among the most visited tourist attractions in Malawi. The study was conducted between October 2014 and February 2015. The study used a mixed research approach. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to complement each other and to make the results valid by minimizing the variance and limitations that come up as a result of using a single approach (Creswell, 2007; Jick, 1979). Additionally, the mixed research approach enabled the researchers to have a broader understanding of the topic as they gathered a lot of data from different perspectives leaving them with a wide choice of which data to use. As applauded by Babbie (2007), the use of more than one research method helps researchers to exploit the advantages of each method.

Five museums were sampled which included three museums under the Museums of Malawi namely: Chichiri, Mandala, and Mzuzu; and two museums under private and public – private partnership management, Chamare and Karonga. A qualitative methodology was used to obtain museum managers' or curators' perceptions on the performance of museums in Malawi and the marketing of museums. With the use of open-ended questions, qualitative data collection method helped to uncover museums trends through respondents' thoughts and opinions (Babbie, 2007; Walliman, 2005). A purposive sampling method was used to engage people whom the researcher deemed were knowledgeable concerning the topic, (Punch, 2005). It was planned to interview 10 key informants at the museums but owing to saturation levels of the data collected (Morse, 1995), only 5 museums managers or curators were interviewed. An interview guide was used to facilitate the interview process with the museum managers or curators. The interview guide consisted questions which sought to find out the performance of museums in Malawi, the marketing of museums as well as the effects of charging a fee for people to enter museums.

A quantitative approach was used to quantify the extent of the problem at hand by generating numerical data to support or negate the theories used in the study (Ghuri & Gronhaug, 2010). This approach was used to quantify attitudes, opinions as well as behaviors of the respondents and 200 questionnaires were administered to domestic tourists in the five museums, resulting in 186 usable questionnaires, representing a 93% response rate. The questionnaires were in three parts: the first part had six general questions on tourism attraction and asked whether the respondents had ever visited a museum. This was used as a filtering part of the questionnaires as those that had never been to a museums were then only asked to provide their bio- data profile, skipping section two of the questionnaire. The second part of the questionnaire contained questions related of visitors' museum visiting habits, their experiences at the museum, learning in museums, satisfaction and museum revisit intentions. The third and the last part of the questionnaire was on bio-data statistics which covered the respondents' gender, marital status, occupation and income.

The qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis involved transcription of all the interviews, generation of codes, searching for themes, reviewing of themes, defining and naming of themes and production of a report (Braun and Clarke, 2006). For the quantitative data, after checking all the completed questionnaires, all the questions were coded in readiness for data entry. The data was then analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Findings and discussion

Motivation to visit a museum

To understand why the respondents made a museum trip in the first place, they were asked to state their motivation to visit a museum. Respondents indicated that history (29%), recreation (26%), culture (22%) and school curriculum (16%) were the prime motivational factors for them to visit museums as shown in Figure 1.

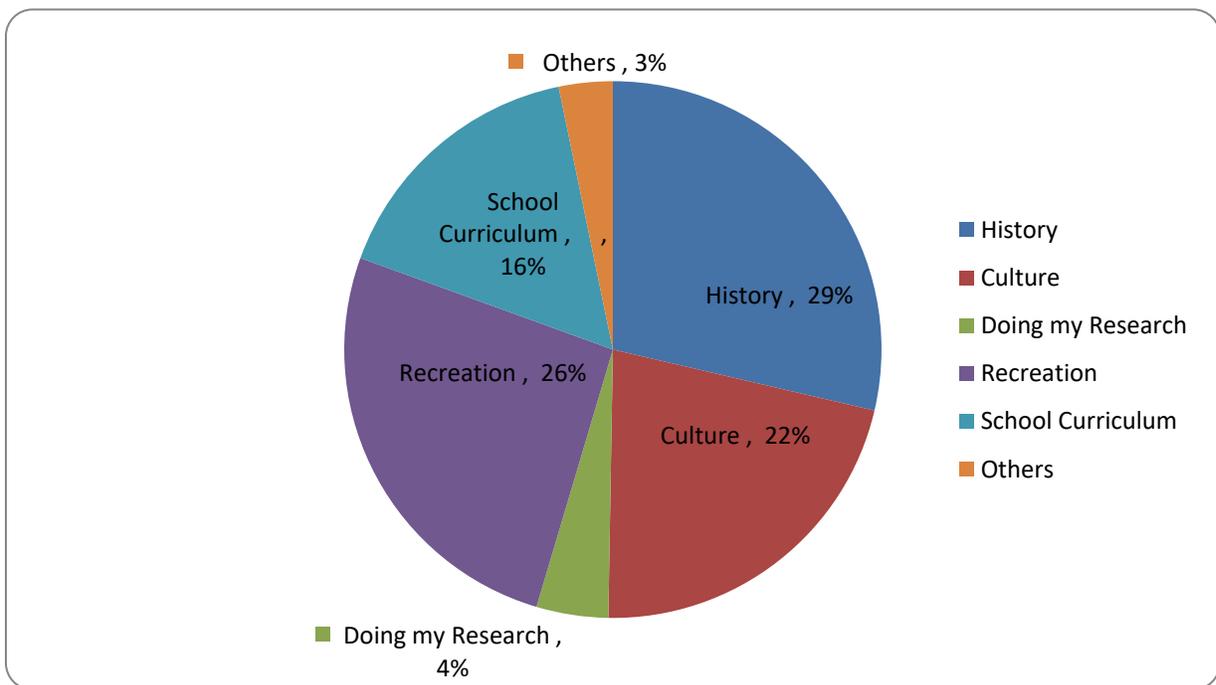


Figure 1: Respondents' motivation factors to visit museums

In a country where most museums are not themed or specialized, it is not surprising that history and culture were the prime motives for the respondents. Owing to the nature of the museums in Malawi, it is also not surprising that history and culture were singled out, as almost all exhibits in these museums are cultural or historical in nature and orientation. As echoed by almost all museum managers interviewed, people regard museums as custodians of old unwanted things in the community. People visit museums to appreciate cultural elements of a given society. As noted by Confer & Kerstetter (2000) and Kelly (2009), history or cultural reasons are a major motivating factor for people to visit museums. Although, all the five museum curators interviewed said that Malawian museums are still traditional as they have not fully embraced the recreation aspect, recreation was another major factor motivating people to visit museums. Tourists travel to museums for entertainment, leisure or recreational purposes (Dragicevic, Letunic & Pisarovic, 2012; Stephen, 2001). Furthermore, it also emerged from the study that people visit museums as part of their school curriculum. In Malawi, most primary, secondary and tertiary students make



trips to museums as part of their lessons, mostly in history classes. As indicated by Dragicevic, Letunic and Pisarovic (2012) and Kelly (2009), learning, education or academic purposes are some of the factors that influence visitors to visit museums.

Agreeing with Kelly (2009) and Falk (1998), a majority of the respondents (84%) indicated that they would be willing to revisit the museums. Various reasons were given for wanting to revisit museums. Respondents wanted to learn more of Malawi's history given that they were not satisfied with the services offered during their first museum visit. These mainly said that they were not accorded enough time to digest the artefacts and history being presented to them. Others said that the curators were not there when they visited so they were just told which directions to take in the museums and were cautioned against causing damage to any of the artefacts. For those who said they would like to revisit a museum to see changes said that they had been to the museum before but the artefacts on display were still the same. Being museum enthusiasts they still wanted to revisit to see new exhibits. Some of the people, who said they would not revisit a museum, indicated that it was a waste of time as it was not entertaining. They also said that since the artefacts were not changed, it was boring and lacked life to visit.

It emerged from the study that people are looking for more products and service offerings owing to their education exposure. In this regard therefore, Malawi needs to have more stand-alone and themed museums that can research, collect and display one type of exhibits that best serves the community. There are a few museums that have taken this path to differentiate themselves like Chamare, Karonga, Mtengatenga, Lake Malawi and Chileka which specialize in culture, Malawisaurus, telecommunications, marine biology and musical instruments respectively.

Relationship between museum attributes and the overall visitors' satisfaction

To gain an insight into what satisfied visitors when they visited museums, respondents were asked to state what they liked most of all at the museums during their visit. Four options were given which included: the display of artefacts, curator's interpretation of the things on display, the museum ambience and others which was an open-ended option. Most respondents stated that they were satisfied with the display of artefacts seconded by interpretation of the artefacts by the curators as shown in Figure 2. This holds true to the cliché that '*museums are more about what they contain.*' For respondents who had a chance to be guided through the museum, they said that they were able to understand and appreciate the collections because of the curators' expertise.

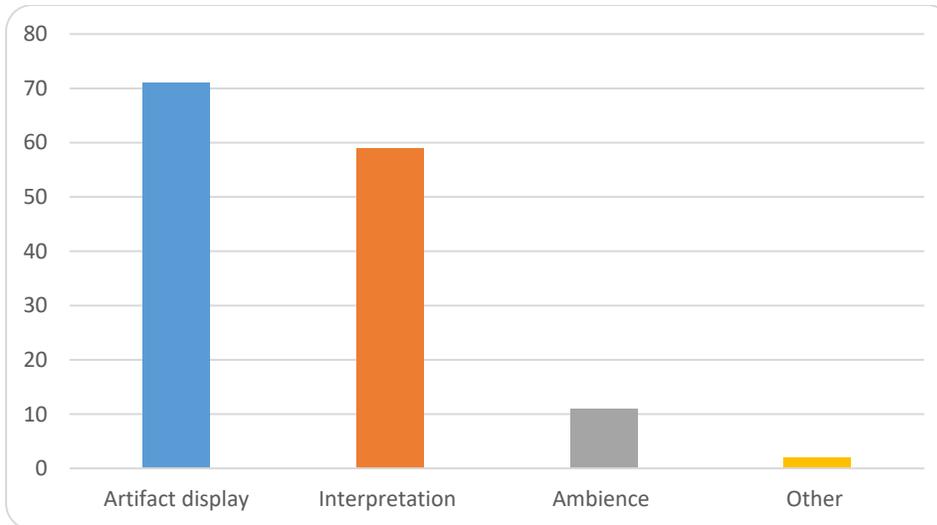


Figure 2: Respondents' satisfaction in relation to Museum attributes

It also emerged from the study that the respondents were more willing to revisit museums to learn more about history, a chance they were denied the first time they visited due to a poor or lack of interpretation. This according to Oliver (1999) is an act of loyalty that does not emanate from satisfaction. This could perhaps be an entry point for the museums to turn a 'bad' experience into a good one, but by working on the weaknesses mentioned as it is easier to retain these customers by augmenting the product than to attract new customers (Kotler & Keller, 2009). It is therefore important for the museums to have well trained curators, space for recreation, social interaction, contemplation and emotions as echoed by Hood (1983). As observed from the study, most respondents would love a tourist attraction that offers relaxation, recreation and good scenery. So if museums do not undergo facelifts and artefacts change, chances are high that visitor numbers will remain low.

As argued by Tung and Veerakumaran (2007) and Huh (2002), companionship enhances travel experience as visitors have someone to share their experiences with and this leads to tourist' satisfaction and also gives a high probability for a revisit. Companionship either by friends or museum staff could help erase the bad image that museums have (Durstun, 2013). In this regard, responsible authorities managing museums in Malawi need to understand the tourist's motivation, satisfaction and intention to visit a cultural and heritage site as proposed by Tung and Veerakumaran (2007). Museums need to offer diversified and customized visitor experiences unlike the 'one size fits all' services which do not work for all customers. Furthermore, museums need to concentrate on audience development by reaching new audiences and relating repeat visitors. Audience development is about improving services to existing visitors and reaching out to new audiences and it enriches visitor experiences by helping them to learn more and deepening their enjoyment of what museums have to offer (Walzl, 2006). This concept calls for several departments in the museums including curators, educators and marketers to work together (Walzl, 2006) in a synergistic approach.

In order to make museum visits in Malawi fun and worthwhile, despite the old exhibits, museums could use Rossitzas 12 steps of creating a tourism product from cultural products (Mc Kercher & du Cross, 2002). One major point in Rossitzas's 12 steps is making the cultural product alive through such things as mythologizing the asset, building a story around it, emphasizing its otherness and showing a direct link from the past to the present. Good asset interpretation or in other words building a story around an object is important coupled with creative and exciting ways



of telling that story. Museums also need to consider introducing information technology into the museums to enhance the interaction of visitors and their understanding, even where curators are not available. As argued by Falk and Dierking (1998), information technology is a solution for museums seeking to become more interactive, especially if they wish to serve children and the youth, who constitute the majority of visitors in Malawian museums.

Factors hindering museums from actively being used as tourism products

A wide range of issues cropped up from this study as possible reasons that keep Malawians from visiting museums as tourist attractions. The factors hindering museums from being actively used as tourism products are categorized as structural, cultural and information barriers.

Structural reasons

The structural reasons consist of policies and operations that govern museums in Malawi and they include: museum location and accessibility, curatorial services, type of exhibits and entry prices.

Museum location: Museums are sparsely located across Malawi with the majority of them (Mandala, Chichiri, Mtengatenga and Lake Malawi museums) located in the southern region of the country. People in the central region have been denied the chance to visit museums as there is only one private museum in the Dedza district. This means that Lilongwe, Malawi's capital does not have a museum. In the northern region, there are only two museums, the Mzuzu Regional Museum and the Karonga Museum. As argued by Wu and Hsing (2006), Kim, Kim, Ryu and Chu (2014) and Inman, Shankar and Ferraro (2004), high attraction accessibility enhances a museums value through convenience. Unfortunately for Malawi, only a few people are privileged enough to have museums in their cities and towns leaving out a external big market.

Curatorial services: Most respondents said that they were not pleased with their visit to the museum as some did not have guides or curators to take them around the various exhibits. A few indicated that they felt their curatorial service were poor when compared to the worth of exhibits from a heritage perspective. Owing to the small number of curators employed in the museums, visitors are mainly guided by other museum support staff, hence their inability to adequately explain the exhibits.

Type and quality of exhibits: A concern among all managers and all respondents who had been to the museum was that the exhibits were as old as the museum themselves. Lack of innovation in bringing in modern collections was another drawback. This was attributed to a lack of funds from the government as Museums of Malawi sorely depend on the government's subvention which unfortunately is not enough. Given the current situation, museums no longer have the needed pull factor of attracting tourists, they are rather having push factors, which direct tourists to seek recreation and leisure in other forms of tourism.

Cultural reasons

Cultural reasons include factors that are intertwined into the Malawian community system as manifested in its beliefs, actions and norms and these include a lack of exposure to museums, and lack of appreciation for one's own culture.

Lack of exposure to museums: As echoed by other authors, most people who had been to the museum as children are more likely to visit again when they grow up (Falk, 1998; Hood, 1996;



Kelly, 2001). In the case of Malawi, most people do not appreciate museums perhaps because their parents did not expose them to the museums and culture when they were children. Besides this, most Malawians do not consider museums as entertaining when compared for example, to football matches, live music shows or even television 'soaps'. As noted by one museum manager '*people have mixed views regarding museums. Those that are exposed and educated appreciate museums unlike those who are uneducated. As such they don't consider museums as attractions at all*'.

Lack of appreciation for own culture: Amongst most Malawians, foreign things are perceived of as being better over local things. In this study, it emerged that most people who visit museums were not from surrounding areas. It was found that some people view museums as '*a stocking of their own old things*'. Similar sentiments were echoed by another museum manager who indicated that '*most local people around here feel that we stock stuff which they have or used to have in their homes in the past*'.

Information reasons

It emerged from the study that the main information reason that hinders museums to be effectively used as tourism products is a serious lack of effective and efficient marketing.

Lack of marketing: It was agreed among all respondents including officials that there is little marketing being done to promote museums in Malawi. It was unanimously agreed that most government promotions on tourism do not cover museums adequately in any sense. As most museums are government owned, the central government is responsible for marketing museums as tourism products. All user fees collected by government owned museums are controlled by central government hence it becomes difficult for individual museums to have their own marketing programmes. Furthermore, a lack of information on the existence of museums to local residents and their roles, keeps some people away from museums. People do not have information on where to find museums, what to expect to see and how they can use the information gathered in the museum for their personal development. It is therefore recommended that museums should improve their programmes to attract more people to visit them.

Conclusion

Among museum pull factors, respondents in this research indicated that history, culture, recreation and school curriculum were the prime reasons that they visited the museums. Most tourists visit museums mainly for education, recreation, history, arts and entertainment (Sheng & Chen, 2012). But as noted by Bennett (1995), the education role has been taking centre-stage as museums in Malawi were originally founded on the premise of education for the uneducated masses. As such, most museums lack adequate recreation space to cater for leisure tourists. Therefore, it is recommended that government, through its responsible departments, should consider opening up recreational sections within the museums to cater for such clientele. The museums could have services like coffee shops and gift shops as well as childrens' playgrounds.

Museums in Malawi also need to embrace the use of modern technologies which would attract more people to visit them. Museums should introduce ICT devices such as Personal Digital Assistants (PDA's) into the museums to enhance interaction of visitors and their understanding of the exhibits even where curators are not available. As argued by Falk and Dierking (1998), this is a solution for museums seeking to become more interactive, especially if they wish to serve children and youth who are as stated prior, a majority of the visitors to Malawian museums. Museums could also broadcast televised records of some of their exhibits which apart from



reducing exhibition space could also attract technology lovers who would at the same time learn more about the rich Malawian culture and heritage.

The study has also found that more people are willing to revisit museums despite their first museum experiences which were mostly neither satisfying nor unsatisfying. According to Huh (2002) and Tung and Veerakumaran (2007), tourists are more likely to revisit a cultural attraction if they were satisfied with their earlier visit. It is therefore recommended that government and other stakeholders prioritize cultural heritage tourism development and promotion. There is a need for deliberate efforts to stock up all Museums of Malawi exhibition halls with exhibits so that the existing demand is met. Furthermore, there is need for government to build the capacity of the workforce in museums and the Department of Culture as a whole. The Government needs to partner with institutions of higher learning in the country and beyond, to train its staff as well as ensuring that culture and heritage is part of the school curriculum so as to stir up local people's interest to visit museums and cultural heritage centres.

Finally, the study has established that in as much as marketing is vital to the selling of any product and service (Kotler & Keller, 2009), museums in Malawi lack proactive and creative marketing communication abilities as seen in the number of people who have never heard of museums and have never visited them. Respondents felt that ignorance about museums mainly due inadequate marketing efforts makes many people reluctant to visit museums. Museums have not embraced the social media or electronic media. Museums in Malawi are currently relying on word of mouth as a marketing tool (Harrison & Shaw, 2004). The study notes that since all museums but one under study (CMCK), are under direct government control through the Department of Culture, this has had a bad impact on the freedom to market and advertise their products as this function is done centrally. All museums under the Museums of Malawi do not have websites, let alone social media platforms through which they could interact with their patrons. Therefore, it is recommended that government should allocate enough funds to market and promote museums in Malawi. As noted by Kamal and Pramanik (2015), the promotional strategies for the museums can include conducting market surveys, advertising, website development, relationship marketing and organising exhibitions and other special events such as social and cultural programmes.

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