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VISITOR LEARNING AT HERITAGE SITES

Key words: heritage, attraction, visitors, education.

ABSTRACT

The article presents results of a study conducted among visitors to five main heritage sites of the Wielkopolska and Kujawy regions of Poland. The survey was carried out among 1910 subjects with the aim to determine the subjects' knowledge acquired from the visited sites. The factors identified in the study included lack of prior knowledge, visitors' group composition, educational motives, level of education and place of residence. A model of learning at heritage sites was identified using a logistic regression analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Heritage sites are important components of many forms of tourism. Learning is associated with such forms of tourism as qualified tourism, culture tourism, ecotourism, etc., and places where such knowledge is acquired are visitor attractions or heritage sites. The term *visitor attraction* means facilities, sites or environmental features of cognitive interest to people who visit them. Some visitor attractions can be classified as managed visitor attractions. Such sites are professionally managed and controlled, not only because of their value, but also because of being sources of knowledge and leisure to visitors [27]. The mission of many heritage sites and museums is to educate visitors. The objective of the sites is to "...inform of the values and content of gathered collections, promote the main values of science and culture (...) develop cognitive sensitiveness in visitors..." [41]. Do museums and heritage sites duly fulfill their educational mission? Or rather, do visitors acquire any knowledge by visiting heritage sites? What factors are crucial in acquiring knowledge while visiting heritage sites? The following paper is an attempt to provide answers to the above questions.

Education at heritage sites

A review of research papers on visitors' perception of museums published in Poland can be found in Banasik [3]. Such factors as motivation, preferences, and attitudes of visitors as well as their social and demographic structure were investigated [32, 44, 45]. Knobloch-Gala [20] and Fulczyk [9] studied the perception of art galleries and exhibitions and found that "the guide's spoken word" considerably improved the reception of museum contents. Studies on the educational and didactic functions of museums were also conducted. They concerned aesthetic upbringing of children [11], the role of museums in the process of school teaching [2, 5, 30, 42], and the role of museums in adult education [12, 47]. The above papers were pilot studies. Gluziński [10] and Gołaszewski [13] attempted a categorization of the research on museums. They focused on sociological examination of the visitors, including their social structure, motivation, needs and interests, and reception of museums. For instance, Winiecka [46] made research into urban museums by means of gathering opinions of Szczecin residents with regard to their preferences towards the themes exhibited in the Historical Museum of Szczecin.

Foreign authors generally agree that the most important benefits from visiting heritage sites are educational benefits in addition to social and leisure benefits [15, 21, 24, 33, 35].

Prentice et al. [36], in their research on educational benefits, applied the model of Levie and Lentz [22] who proposed four processes to describe the interactions between visitors and the interpretative media at tourist attraction sites: (1) attention (drawing attention to the exhibition and directing attention by the exhibition); (2) affection (giving satisfaction, affecting emotions and attitudes); (3) education (facilitating understanding, helping in communication, providing additional information); and (4) compensation (supporting weaker learners).

In a review of literature on the subject published between 1968 and 1986, Thomas [40] stated that a significant part of visitors to heritage sites actively looked for information and opportunities to learn something new about the visited site. Herbert [14] noted in another study that a relatively small number of people wished to be educated while visiting a heritage site, whereas the majority of visitors wished to be informed¹. However, Prentice [34] stated that a significant number of visitors to heritage sites, and especially highly qualified senior and managerial staff among them, perceived education and information as the principal functions of such sites. By contrast, Pearce [31], following a review of literature concerning research carried out in museums and interpretation centres, stated that (1) visitors did not attach any, or hardly any, importance to the exhibition, (2) visitors' interest was successfully attracted and maintained only by interactive exhibitions, (3) visitors did not learn anything and did not remember much from the visited sites. Anon [1 as per 16] observed the following kinds of behaviour among visitors: (1) only a small number of visitors showed a deep interest in the exhibition, (2) social interaction and discussions were important behavioural elements in visitors who were visiting in groups, (3) visual information was the most important for many people and the majority of visitors paid close attention and studied only portions of the exhibition, (4) it was noted that a broader interpretation of exhibits and a greater diversity of interpretation forms in addition to text panels were needed.

Moscardo [28] writes about three interconnected variables which have an impact on the level

of knowledge obtained during visits to heritage sites. These include acquaintance with the visited site, the objectives of and motives for visiting, and social interactions within a visiting group.

Hood [17 as per 25] stated that people who visited museums frequently paid great attention to science, sought new experience and tried to make use of their free time effectively. By contrast, for people who hardly ever or never visited museums, learning was not an important part of their free time. Prince [38] in his study of visitors to the Hull museum (mainly blue collar workers) noted that they considered the museum boring and discouraging. The majority of them deemed the museum to be overloaded with educational content, thus implying that they did not consider education to be a suitable way of spending free time. However, for some people, as Merrimann [26] notes, visiting museums and other visitor attractions can be a way of demonstrating their social status and position. Individuals try to make themselves different from others by identifying themselves with certain activities and social groups. One of the methods consists in accumulating cultural capital relevant to the image and lifestyle of the groups with which they wish to be identified. Museums and other visitor attractions bring about rich cultural connotations, and visiting them is associated with "being a cultural person". Visiting heritage sites is a way of gaining cultural capital for such people. This process is facilitated by informal education, and in particular heritage interpretation² provided in museums and managed visitor attractions. At the same time, as Walsh [43] insists, certain cultural competence is needed in order to be able to understand the message and consume the content offered by visitor attractions. As most interpretations are written, the visitors are forced to read and understand them. In Prince's [37] opinion, this is a reason for the popularity of visitor attractions among the middle class which traditionally considers the written word to be a very important element of culture.

Initially, as stated by Light [25], the designers of heritage interpretation did not take into account the needs of the public to which the message was addressed. It was often forgotten that the learning process through interpretation occurs out of one's own will and in an informal way. A great deal of interpretation exhibitions in museums were meant to be educational but were designed without

¹ The so-called informal education is meant here [cf. 24].

² For more information on heritage interpretation see another paper by the author [29].

any knowledge of the visitor's expectations. A common belief by the designers, and thus by interpreters, was that visitors would share their own values, interests and understanding of a subject. As a result, the exhibitions hardly appealed to unprepared public and could not be appreciated by people who were not experts in a given field. Lewis [23] confirms the above and writes that contemporary museums are known for their communicational incompetence. They can only satisfy the needs of people who have special interests; however, they are much less efficient as far as the general public is concerned.

However, another question arises: Should museums provide education, or rather leisure and entertainment? Foley and McPherson [8] state that museum visitors become more and more participants in or consumers of experience defined as a source of leisure and not solely a source of education. Many people find education and leisure belonging to two different zones. The former is associated with work, whereas the latter with relaxation in one's free time. It was already in the 1930s when it was suggested that a modern museum should give precedence to leisure over education as many visitors did not like to be educated [6]. This dilemma also exists today and is reflected by development of market-oriented attitudes in museum management, and by consuming and adapting commercial values and structures to the museum practice [19].

Research location

The research was carried out at five heritage sites of the Wielkopolska and Kujawy regions in Poland. They included the Archaeological Museum in Biskupin (during the 10th Archaeological Fête), the National Museum of Agriculture and Food Industry in Szreniawa, the New Poznań Zoo, the Wielkopolski Ethnographical Park (WPE) in Dziekanowice and the National Museum in Poznań (art gallery). The above sites belong to the most important and most frequently visited heritage sites in Wielkopolska and Kujawy. The sites differed considerably from each other in terms of applied forms of heritage interpretation. The richest source of educational content is surely the Agricultural Museum in Szreniawa. Its exhibitions contain a great number of interpretation panels with huge (at times too large) amounts of text. The panels do not only explain the purpose of the interpreted exhibits but also show production processes and cultural transformations of the countryside, as well as the

environmental and economic impact on the agriculture. Almost all the exhibits have information boards. There is general lack of any interactive exhibitions which would encourage visitors to show any activity in terms of education or merely leisure. The Archaeological Fête in Biskupin is a huge organisational project. In 2004 it was attended by more than 90,000 people over a period of 9 days. It refers to the idea of a live heritage park (arranged as an old settlement) and implements the principles of experimental archaeology. The Fête is full of live presentations of crafts, fighting, musical and dancing shows. It also offers a big assortment of food and drinks, and souvenirs. Permanent and temporary exhibitions are displayed in the museum pavilion. A free daily *Gazeta Biskupińska*, including the fête programme, daily programmes and thematic articles, is a peculiarity of the Fête. The New Poznań Zoo, located in the eastern part of the city, extends over an area which is attractive in respect of the natural environment and landscape. Animal yards and paddocks are made like natural habitats. All the paddocks are fitted with information boards supplying main data about the animals. Some paddocks, like for instance that of a Siberian tiger, show elements of modern interpretation: interactive panels, text including answer-evoking questions or causing the reader to think over the interpreted theme. The Wielkopolski Ethnographical Park presents a reinstated village of the Wielkopolska region dating back to the mid-19th century. The buildings have completely furnished and equipped interiors and are labelled with title panels. Only an ecological exhibition in an old mill provides a broader source of interpretation. An exhibition in the National Museum presents extraordinary works of art, both foreign and domestic. The pieces of art on display are accompanied only by small boards with the title, date of origin, name and surname of the author.

METHODS

The research was carried out among individuals visiting the above heritage sites. The surveyed visitors received questionnaire forms with an assessment scale for measuring their characteristics, knowledge, motivation, and perception of the exhibition³. The knowledge-measuring scale was provided through a multiple choice test consisting of five questions about the knowledge interpreted at the heritage site. For instance, a question about

³ The findings of the research constitute a part of a research project called "The Analysis and Modelling of the Heritage Site Product".

Biskupin read as follows : *The settlement in Biskupin was created in: (1) 9th – 8th century BC, (2) 5th – 4th century BC, (3) early Middle Ages, (4) I don't know.* In addition, the respondents were asked to declare whether the answer had been known to them before their visit to the site. Tests for individual attractions contained different questions. The motivation scale included 7 items incorporating three motivational factors (educational, recreational and social) and was developed on the basis of Pearce's [31] model of tourist travel career ladder. The statements were assessed using a five-point Likert scale. The perception was measured by means of assessing interest in 10 selected exhibitions, using a five-point scale. For instance, in Biskupin the exhibitions included: *museum exhibition, fighting shows, Wisz's homestead, livestock paddocks, baking, presentations of antiquity maintenance, presentations of craftwork, beer brewing, dance and song shows, musical instrument shows, bow and cross-bow shooting.*

The questionnaire was designed so that it could be filled in by an interviewer or by visitors themselves. The research was conducted among visitors upon their leaving the site after they completed their visit.

RESULTS

Visitors

The tested sample group included 1970 people, 582 of whom were visitors to the Archaeological Fête in Biskupin, 462 to the Agricultural Museum in Szreniawa, 407 to the New Poznań Zoo, 319 to the Wielkopolski Ethnographical Park in Dziekanowice, and 200 to the National Museum in Poznań. The proportion of men in the tested group was 41%, and of women amounted to 59%. Visitors aged 16-18 constituted 17% of the sample, 20% were between 19 and 25, 26% between 26 and 35, 15% between 36 and 45, 12% between 46 and 55, 8% between 56 and 65 and only 2% were above 65 years of age. Every fifth person reported to have completed primary education, 8% vocational education, every fourth person had completed secondary or post-secondary education, and almost 50% were university graduates. Almost 20% came from the countryside, 30% from towns with up to 100,000 inhabitants, 10% from cities with 101,000 to 500,000 inhabitants, and over 40% from cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants. Only 15% of the tested sample were tourists (i.e. they were on a trip longer than one day). Almost 40% of the peo-

ple visited a given site for the first time. Only 5% of the tested sample visited the site alone, 40% were with a friend or spouse, 22% visited the site in a group and over 30% with their families and children.

Knowledge

Visitors to the heritage sites under study showed good knowledge of the subject matter presented at the heritage sites. In total, more than 50% of the tested visitors gave correct answers to at least three of the five questions. The visitors to the Agricultural Museum in Szreniawa displayed the broadest knowledge. Almost 40% of them responded correctly to all the questions. The average score of correct answers was 3.96% (Table 1). The visitors to the Archaeological Museum in Biskupin gave worse answers. Merely every 10th of them could answer all the questions, and more than half of them answered correctly one question at the most (the average score of correct answers was 1.82). The mean of correct answers given for the remaining three sites was similar and ranged from 2.76 in the National Museum to 2.92 in Dziekanowice.

When examining the answers given by the visitors it should be remembered that some of them used pre-acquired knowledge, obtained before they visited the site. In order to eliminate such cases an additional question was asked *Did you know the answer to this question before you visited this site?* During a further analysis only those questions were taken into account to which the visitors did not know the answers prior to their visit. Such a method of assessment revealed that during their visit the visitors obtained answers to only few questions. The majority of people visiting Biskupin and Szreniawa could not answer any of the questions to which they did not know the answers in advance, i.e. prior to their visit to the site (Table 2). Similarly, almost half of the visitors (46%) to the Zoo answered none of the questions. The results were considerably better in the case of visitors to the WPE and the National Museum. Only 15% of the respondents did not answer any of the questions.

In order to find out which of the visitors' characteristics were associated with the acquired knowledge an χ^2 test was carried out. It was found in the Agricultural Museum and the National Museum that tourists learned much more than local visitors. There was also a considerable difference between first-time and repeated visitors. Differences at significance levels of $p=0.05$ and $p=0.001$ were found in Szreniawa and Dziekanowice. The level of the acquired knowledge was higher in the

group of first-time visitors. The group composition was connected with the learning process in Biskupin and the Zoo. The visitors to Biskupin learned the most with their friends or families, individual visitors learned a bit less and group visitors learned the least (Table 4). The results were completely different in the Zoo: individual and group visitors gained the most. A relation between the one's acquired knowledge and interests was found only in Biskupin. Visitors whose interest in archaeology was small or average learned the most. The acquired knowledge was also linked to some social and demographical features, such as age, education, and the size of home town or village. People at 26 and older learned the most. It was only in the Zoo where the youngest (below 19) learnt the most. Education and the size of home town/village had a different influence, depending on the tested heritage site. The relations in the WPE and Agricultural Museum are different in comparison with the other heritage sites.

The analysis of correlation between learning and the source of information showed hardly any relations. The most significant correlation was found among the visitors to the fête in Biskupin (Table 5). Contact with the staff had a significant impact on them, whereas maps and layouts and reading *Gazeta Biskupińska* had a smaller influence. A significant relation was also found among the visitors to the Zoo where the visitors' knowledge was affected by their interests in information boards and panels.

A further factor which may be associated with learning is motivation. From seven motives in the analysis, the educational one proved to be the most significant: *I came today to learn something new* (Table 6). That motive was strongly connected with the acquired knowledge among the visitors to the Poznań Zoo and less connected among the visitors of Biskupin. Further two motives adversely influenced the level of gained knowledge: *Because you should visit such sites* (a motive of prestige) in the WPE and *to have a good time with my children / family / friends* in the National Museum (social motive).

Table 1. Number of test questions answered correctly by visitors with prior knowledge of the site

Number of correct answers	Biskupin	Agricultural Museum	Zoo	WPE	National Museum	All sites
	%					
0	27.43	0.90	3.35	3.23	5.50	10.11
1	23.72	1.30	11.34	8.06	18.50	12.88
2	17.52	7.40	26.60	22.58	17.50	17.80
3	12.21	18.60	29.70	31.29	29.00	22.09
4	9.03	34.50	21.10	29.03	18.00	21.62
5	10.09	37.30	8.00	5.81	11.50	15.50
Mean	1.82	3.96	2.78	2.92	2.76	2.79
N	565	447	388	310	200	1910

Table 2. Number of test questions answered correctly by visitors without prior knowledge of the site

Number of correct answers	Biskupin	Agricultural Museum	Zoo	WPE	National Museum	All sites
	%					
0	52.22	51.68	45.88	14.85	12.50	40.58
1	28.32	27.29	29.38	22.58	26.50	27.17
2	12.21	12.53	14.43	30.32	24.50	16.96
3	4.60	5.59	7.22	19.35	23.50	9.74
4	1.59	2.24	3.09	11.29	10.00	4.50
5	1.06	0.67	0	1.61	3.00	1.05
Mean	0.78	0.81	0.92	1.95	2.01	1.14
N	565	447	388	310	200	1910

Table 3. Correlations between learning and visitors' characteristics (significance level of χ^2 coefficients)

Characteristic	Biskupin	Agricultural Museum	Zoo	WPE	National Museum
Day tripper / tourist	0.59	0.001	0.38	0.22	0.001
First-time / repeated	0.078	0.05	0.52	0.001	0.062
Visited other sites	0.41	0.24	0.56	0.098	0.56
Group composition	0.032	0.32	0.029	0.36	0.059
Interested in attraction theme	0.006	0.39	0.71	0.94	0.13
Gender	0.60	0.61	0.56	0.94	0.14
Age	0.002	0.001	0.003	0.098	0.067
Education	0.01	0.56	0.001	0.01	0.091
Size of home town/village	0.001	0.003	0.27	0.01	0.05

Table 4. The average level of test questions answered correctly by groups of visitors

Who are you with today?	Biskupin	Agricultural Museum	Zoo	WPE	National Museum	All sites
Alone	0.77	0.83	1.43	1.60	2.10	1.47
Spouse/partner	0.89	0.88	1.06	2.02	1.91	1.29
Group	0.68	1.25	1.39	1.97	2.41	0.98
Family including children	0.96	0.68	0.79	1.88	1.40	1.00

Table 5. Correlation between learning and sources of information (Spearman's rank correlation coefficient and level of statistical significance)

Sources of information	Biskupin	Agricultural Museum	Zoo	WPE	National Museum
Information boards and panels	0.05	-0.03	0.15**	-0.05	0.07
Staff	0.16***	0.02	-0.05	0.03	-
Leaflet/ brochure	0.03	0.06	-0.05	-0.02	0.07
Gazeta Biskupińska (journal)	0.08*	-	-	-	-
Guide	0.08	0.03	0.06	0.04	-
Directional signs	0.03	-0.01	0.08	-0.06	-
Plans, maps	0.10*	-0.003	0.06	-0.01	-

* - p<0.05, ** - p<0.01, *** - p<0.001

Table 6. Correlation between learning and visitors motives (Spearman's rank correlation coefficient and level of statistical significance)

Statement	Biskupin	Agricultural Museum	Zoo	WPE	National Museum
I came today to learn something new	0.09*	-0.06	0.20***	-0.08	0.12
I came today to relax in a nice setting	0.06	0.04	-0.001	-0.10	-0.04
I came today to show children/ family/ friends something new	0.06	-0.02	-0.10	-0.05	-0.13
I came today to escape from everyday stress	-0.005	0.02	-0.09	-0.07	-0.02
I came today because one should visit such sites	0.03	0.007	-0.04	-0.12*	0.11
I came today to see a new, different and interesting place	0.04	0.06	0.007	0.004	0.01
I came today to have a good time with my children/ family/ friends	0.02	0.09	-0.05	-0.02	-0.17**

* - p<0.05, ** - p<0.01, *** - p<0.001

Table 7. Results of logistic regression analysis between learning and visitor’s characteristics and motives

Variable	Second step of analysis (without visitor attraction’ factor)	Third step of analysis (with visitor attraction’ factor)
BO (estimated logistic coefficient)	0.65	-0.098
First-time / repeated	-0.35***	-0.30**
Group composition	-0.18***	-0.19***
I came today to learn something new	0.20***	0.19***
Education	0.16***	-
Size of home town/village	0.12**	-
Kind of a visitor attraction	-	0.51***
$\chi^2 =$	84.96	215.15
p =	0.0001	0.0001
N =	1830	1830

* – p<0.05, ** – p<0.01, *** – p<0.001

From the analysis of the knowledge gained by the visitors to the heritage sites under study it appears that as many as 40% of the visitors failed to answer any of the questions to which they did not know the answers prior to their visit to the site. Hence, 60% of the visitors answered at least one question. Consequently, the sample group can be divided into two sub-groups: (1) those who learned something (60%), and (2) those who did not learn anything (40%). In order to study the simultaneous impact of all independent variables on the dependent variable one should apply a model defining the influence of quality and quantity independent variables on a single dichotomised dependent variable. A logistic regression analysis is a suitable method to construct such a model. It is one of non-linear estimation techniques, a generalisation of linear regression and variance analysis. An advantage of logistic regression analysis is that independent variables in the model can be both quality and quantity variables [39]. In the first phase of the analysis, all the visitors’ features that were significantly connected with gaining knowledge were incorporated into the model. In the second phase, only those variables were incorporated which proved to be significant for the constructed model in the first phase (Table 7). The χ^2 value of the obtained model was 84.96 and it appeared to be highly significant (p=0.0001), which means that the variables included in the model were highly correlated with the learning process.

The lack of any prior knowledge of a visited site has the biggest impact on the learning process. The negative of the model estimator is interpreted in the following way: the value of the dependent variable (i.e. learning process probability) decreases

as the value of the independent variable increases. Therefore, being at a new and unknown site enhances the probability of acquiring new knowledge about it. The analysis of the visitors’ groups showed the highest level of acquired knowledge in persons who visited a site individually or with friends or spouses (Table 4). The positive values of the estimators corresponding to the variables *wanting to learn something new*, *education* and *the size of one’s place of residence* indicate that the increase of these figures enhances the probability of gaining new knowledge. A quite high figure for the estimator of the motivational factor means that it is to a large extent responsible for acquisition of new knowledge. In order to grasp the influence of the heritage site location on the acquired knowledge a variable *kind of heritage site* was incorporated into the model. The model obtained was also very significant (p=0.0001), and the increase of the test value to $\chi^2 = 215.15$ means a better adjustment of the obtained model to all the values of the model. It appears then that the quantity of the gained knowledge is largely dependent on the kind of visitor attraction. Moreover, the impact of the kind of attraction on the gained knowledge is so great that even the level of education or the size of the place of residence cease to be significant.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this paper was an assessment of the knowledge gained by visitors to heritage sites. The conducted analyses show that the level of the visitors’ knowledge is generally high;

however, new knowledge is acquired to a small extent.

It is very difficult to compare the knowledge gained by visitors to various heritage sites. This results mainly from differences between the visited sites, and hence from different questions asked in order to identify the gained knowledge. However, analysing only the knowledge gained during visiting mitigates this inconvenience to some extent and allows making comparisons between the sites. Furthermore, the subject matter presented at the exhibitions at some heritage sites is known to many visitors beforehand. This particularly concerns the agricultural themes in Szreniawa or the country themes in Dziekanowice, where the percentages of correct answers among the respondents were the highest. The diversity of the research findings between the attractions was also affected by the diversity of the visitors' social backgrounds. The attractions differ from each other in this respect. For instance, almost half of the visitors to Biskupin were youngsters (44%), only 4% in Szreniawa and Dziekanowice. This implies a large diversity of heritage sites as regards the visitors' market.

The level of gained knowledge is linked to a number of visitors' characteristics. These include mainly their level of education and place of residence. Museums differ considerably in this respect. In the case of museums offering country themes the dependence is reversed: people from smaller towns and with lower level of education gain more knowledge (probably, the subject is more interesting to them). It was also found that tourists gained more knowledge than local visitors, which is probably caused by the fact that the local visitors treat the heritage sites as places of leisure, social contacts or just entertainment to a greater extent. This finding is also supported by a higher level of knowledge of the persons who visit a site for the first time. Thus, novelty stimulates interest. These findings are contrary to earlier reports [7, 37], which showed that persons acquainted with the visited site find it easier to learn something new. The influence of group composition depends on the attraction. Visiting a large, crowded fête provides knowledge to those who visit it in a small group of friends. It looks different in a quiet zoo where guided tours are more efficient due to easier contact with the visitors' group.

The connection between the interests in information sources and gained knowledge proved to be weak. Is this a result of the lack of any modern multimedia interactive forms of interpretation? This may be the case. A lot of research shows that such forms attract visitors' attention [4, 25]. It is not a

coincidence that the strongest connection was identified for other modern forms of presentation: the live interpretation in Biskupin and the relatively modern interpretation panels in the Zoo.

Motivation is another significant factor for acquisition of knowledge. As it could be presumed, an educational motive was significant in affecting the process of knowledge acquisition. However, a connection was also found for the other two motives: the prestige and the social one, both of which have an adverse effect. Merimann's observations may be applicable in our case [26]. Demonstrating one's status by spending time in locations of rich cultural connotations does not have to be accompanied by the interest in the presented themes, and thus by education. Such visitor,s by the very fact of being in a given place, fulfill their needs of prestige and self-satisfaction [cf. 31]. Social interactions in a group of visitors, which was noted also by other authors [18, 28], distract visitors' attention from the educational content.

A general model of learning is an attempt to provide a comprehensive impact assessment of the factors connected with the learning process at heritage sites. The most important factors were location, novelty, motivation, and composition of the visitors' group. Regrettably, these factors can be modelled by the management of heritage sites only to a very small extent. Perhaps a more interesting educational offer, in the form of interactive multimedia presentations, educational games and facilities, would bring about a bigger interest for such sources of information, and thus increase the level of the acquired knowledge.

The most important conclusion resulting from the conducted research, which can be applied in practice, is the fact that visitors do not attach much importance to the knowledge offered to them by the attractions. Museums, to a greater extent, become places of recreation, entertainment and social interaction, rather than places of acquiring cultural capital. It could be supposed that visitors would gain less knowledge from museums which offered more opportunities of joy and entertainment to them. In fact, it is rather the opposite: certain types of museums are visited by certain types of visitors for defined purposes. Sometimes the purpose is education; sometimes it is recreation or entertainment. Therefore, it seems that the modern museum will succeed, if it can satisfy the needs of both types of visitors: the ones aiming at recreation and entertainment, and the ones aiming at education.

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