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Dr. Muharrem Tuna
Faculty of Tourism, Ankara Haci Bayram Veli University, Turkey

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The Role of Virtual Reality in Tourism Marketing: An Approach From the Stimulus-Organism-Response Model 210
Thanh Ngoc Le-Nguyen *210*

Exploring the Antecedents of Tourists' Intention to Visit a Destination in the Digital Era 211
Francisco Javier Blanco-Encomienda, Lidia López-Araguez, and Elena Rosillo-Díaz *211*

Facility Location Problem in a Drone-Equipped Restaurant Chain 212
Mahmood Globi[1], Lhassane Idoumghar[1], and Shiva Ilkhanizadeh[2] *212*

Accessible Tourism in the Era of COVID-19 213
Betül Garda *213*

Examining Social Media Views on Post-Pandemic Tourism Rebuilding: The Case of Twitter 214
Muharrem Tuna[1], Nilgün Demirel İli[2], and Onur Çelen[3] *214*

Responsible Tourist: How Do They or Should Behave? 216
Nilgün Demirel İli and Gülşen Bayat *216*

The Effect of Religion, Ethnic Origin and Geopolitical Location on Hatay Cuisine Culture 217
Çağtay Akbıyık and Abdullah Badem *217*

A Conceptual Framework of Gastronomy: As a Destination Attraction Element 218
İlker Türkeri *218*

City Museums as Touristic Products 219
Aybüke Özsoy, Neşe Yılmaz, and Zeynep Çokal *219*

A Bibliometric Approach to the Concept of Smart Tourism 223
Şule Ardıç Yetiş *223*

Sustainable Thematic Routes in Şırnak 224
Sedat Çelik[1], Gökhan Kadırhan[1], and Esma Basan[2] *224*

A Bibliometric Analysis on The Last 20 Years of The Total Quality Method Literature in Tourism 225
Burçin Cevdet Çetinsöz and Merve Uzun *225*

Beekeeping Tourism Potential of Turkey and Suggestions 226
Hasan Tahsin Kokonalıoğlu[1], Tülay Güney[2], and İsmail Kızılırmak[3] *226*

Archaeological Heritage and Archaeotourism in Turkey 229
Hasan Ali Erdoğan *229*

Using Geographical Indications in the Scope of Cultural Heritage Tourism: The Example of Safranbolu Turkish Delight 230
Cenk Murat Kocoglu and Sema Bostancı *230*

City Museums as Touristic Products

Aybüke Özsoy, Neşe Yılmaz, and Zeynep Çokal

Faculty of Tourism
Nevsehir Haci Bektas Veli University, Turkey

Abstract

Culture, history, natural attractions are among the key motives of travel (Otoo & Kim, 2020). One of the most important attractions that make destinations more appealing is the museums. Museums, which are one of the indispensable parts of the tour programs of the people visiting the destination, play an important role in satisfying the curiosity of people, especially about history and culture. As a pull motivation factor (Crompton, 1979), museums can also be the main extrinsic driver that lead to the choice of a certain destination. Visitors, especially special interest tourists who are interested in museums are excited to see the collections of museums. Therefore, the travel choices of those special interest tourists can be structered by their interest in museums. Along with the fact that museums are important attractions in tourism, different museums have started to emerge. One of the museums that emerged in this context is the city museums. City museums can be characterized as a combination of museums that reveal and reflect all the elements of the city. City museums play an important role in developing urban identity and awareness of urban society and improving mutual understanding between different ethnic, religious, cultural and social groups living in the city. In addition, the main purpose of city museums is to help people play an active role in the preservation of historical heritage in the city, and to help promote the city as a whole and in depth. As a result of the literature review on museums in the field of tourism, it has been determined that the focus is on the service quality of museums; visitor motivation and satisfaction; visitor behavioral intentions; the elements that make museum visits attractive, museum experience and the place of museums in the tourism sector (Arslan, 2014; Caldwell, 2002; Harman & Akgündüz, 2014; Nowacki, 2005; Wu & Li, 2015; Yücelt, 2000). Although there is a rich literature about city museums around the world, there are limited studies on city museums in Turkey. In this context, it is determined that there is no study has general review covering all city museums in Turkey and also no research examines the websites of city museums in Turkey in terms of accessibility and content. Considering that the first interaction of the visitor's first contact with the museum is through the website, the importance of having a sufficient website in terms of content can be understood. For this reason, it is thought that examining the city museums in Turkey is beneficial for city tourism, museum managements and also for visitor experience. Based on the gap found in the literature, this study aims to examine the accessibility of city museums in Turkey as touristic products. In this context, secondary data on 38 city museums in Turkey were evaluated. Using the content analysis method through secondary data, what features the city museums have as touristic attractions and whether the promotion of these features is included in their web pages were investigated. In this study, the research scanning model was used through the websites of the city museums providing information about the history and culture of the cities in Turkey. Scanning model as a research method aims to describe a situation that exists in the past or today as it is. The event, individual or object that is the subject of the research is tried to be defined as it is with an objective outside observation (Karasar, 2006). The universe of the research is all city museums in Turkey. Although there is no statistical data on the number of city museums in Turkey, the number reached by the researchers as a result of scanning is 38. As a result of the literature review, some

parameters were determined in the examination of the reports to be discussed in the study. First parameter is existence of a website, and if there is a website for that specific city museum other parameters were started to be scanned. Those parameters are language selection possibility, general information about the museum (collections, history, the number of the visitors of the museum for a period of time etc.), contact information (phone, address, e-mail), visitor information (visiting hours, fees, transportation etc.), collection information (exhibition catalogues, book series etc.), the presence of a restaurant / cafe / store, having social networks, the availability of virtual tours, and accessibility for the disabled. As a result of the scanning, it was determined that only 7 of the 38 museums has their own websites. These museums are; Ahmet Piriştina City Archive and Museum, Antalya City Museum Urban Memory Center, Bursa City Museum, Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality Urban Memory Museum, Sakıp Sabancı Mardin City Museum and Dilek Sabancı Art Gallery, Samsun City Museum and Tire City Museum. Apart from these museums, information about other city museums is usually displayed on the websites of the municipalities of the province or district where it is located, or the Culture and Tourism Directorate affiliated to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. When we look at the language selection availability in the websites of the 7 museums, it is seen that this opportunity is offered in only 3 museums which are; Sakıp Sabancı Mardin City Museum and Dilek Sabancı Art Gallery, Samsun City Museum and Tire City Museum. General and historical information is available for all 7 museums in their websites. It is also possible to reach general information and historical information about city museums from the websites of the municipalities of the province or district where the museums are located, or the websites of the Culture and Tourism Directorates of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the social media tools of the museums. Although detailed information about museums cannot be reached from these channels, this information is mostly limited in terms of general features and history. It is possible to reach general information about 34 of 38 city museums and historical information of 29 of them from virtual environments. When the contact information of the museums such as telephone, address, e-mail is examined in terms of access, the information of only two museums cannot be reached. These are Darende City Museum and Tokat City Museum. This situation creates a disadvantage for museums by negatively affecting the transportation opportunity to the guests. Visiting hours of museums, fees, transportation, etc. Looking at the visit information, it is not possible to reach the information about 7 museums. The above-mentioned museums have a website, general information about the museum, history, contact information such as telephone, address, e-mail, visiting hours, fees, transportation, etc. Parameters such as visit information are the criteria for which the most information can be accessed compared to others. General information about 34 of 38 city museums and historical information of 29 of them can be accessed from virtual environments. When examining whether the museums have contact information such as phone, address, e-mail, it is not possible to reach the contact information of only 2 museums out of 38 museums. These are Darende City Museum and Tokat City Museum. This situation creates a disadvantage for the museums since it can affect the access of the guests to the museum in a negative way. When visiting information such as visiting hours, fees, and transportation of museums are examined, visitor information for 7 out of 38 museums cannot be reached. In terms of publications such as collections, exhibition catalogues, and book series, it is determined that collection information of three museums (Ahmet Piriştina Kent Arşivi ve Müzesi, Ödemiş Yıldız Kent Arşivi ve Müzesi, Havran Kent Müzesi), exhibition catalogs of four museums (Ahmet Piriştina Kent Arşivi ve Müzesi, Bursa Kent Müzesi, Ödemiş Yıldız Kent Arşivi ve Müzesi, Havran Kent Müzesi) and publication information such as book series are shared. When the number of visitors to the

museums is examined, it is seen that only Havran City Museum shares this information. Considering the presence of restaurants, cafes, store in the museums, it was seen that there were five museum-owned businesses. These are Kemaliye City Museum, Sakıp Sabancı Mardin City Museum and Dilek Sabancı Art Gallery, Bornova City Archive and Museum, Samsun City Museum and Adile Baysal Culture and Art House. While these enterprises are mostly owned by the museums, some of them belong to the municipality of the region where the museum is located. Considering the social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) usage status of the museums, it is seen that 24 museums have social media accounts. Effective use of social media is an important opportunity for museums since it creates an opportunity to reach large audiences. Moreover, with the development of technology, virtual museum tours are now more common around the globe. As it creates easy access and interaction with audiences, it is important to be able to apply this technology in museums. Therefore, whether there are applications of virtual tours in those 38 city museums has also been examined. Accordingly, it is found that only three museums (İnegöl City Museum, Karaman City Culture Museum and Samsun City Museum) provide such an opportunity. There are inclusive, adaptive, accessible applications in many fields, including tourism, in order to provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities. In this context, information regarding the suitability of city museums for disabled visitors was also searched. However, no information found about the accessibility and usability of museums for disabled people among the museums examined. This study tried to emphasize that city museums are an important touristic product and to reveal the pros and cons of city museums in Turkey as touristic products. One of the shortcomings highlighted by the study was the lack of shops in museums. The shop is seen as commercial opportunity for museums (Kotler and Kotler, 2000). Apart from the commercial contribution, it also has social contributions. For instance, the shop can extend the learning experience of museum visitors through its merchandise selection (Kent, 2010). Moreover, nostalgic goods for collections and a personal reminder of a museum visit can enhance the experience of the museum (Kent, 2010). The fact that the museums examined in the study do not offer a recreational shopping experience appears as a shortcoming. Another important finding of the study is lack of technological opportunities (e.g.virtual tours) in city museums in Turkey. As an extension to the real museum experience new technologies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) started to be used by museums. The effective use of those technologies can contribute the learning experience of visitors. Also, co-creation of value can be enhanced for visitors' pre-visit, onsite and post-visit experience through educational, more personalized, interactive and memorable museum experience offered by those technological opportunities (Jung & Dieck, 2017). Few museums examined in this study benefit from these technologies means that museums underestimate their potential. City museums are important in terms of sustaining the cultural heritage of the cities and also contributing to the tourism of the region. For this reason, it is thought that city museums should be included in the tour routes organized especially within the scope of city tourism. In addition, it is necessary to promote the city museums more effectively through public institutions. In particular, incentives should be offered for tour planners to include city museums on their tour routes. City museums have social media accounts, but awareness should be increased by more effective use of social media tools. Within the scope of this study, only city museums in Turkey were evaluated. In future studies, city museums in Turkey and city museums in different countries can be compared in terms of their involvement in tourism activities as touristic products. It is expected that the findings of the study will contribute to the literature and the sector, especially since a limited number of research has been done in the tourism literature.

Keywords: museum, city museum, touristic product

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