Developing Creative "Spaces" in Libraries for Creative Tourism

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Abstract: Tourism is an interdisciplinary, economic and social phenomenon, directly linked to the promotion of cultural heritage. Creative tourism involves the active participation of the visitor in various cultural activities, contributing to the enjoyment of the tourist experience from the perspective of experiential interaction, as well as linking tourism to the economic, social and cultural development of a destination. Through creative tourism activities and interactive participation in cultural actions, visitors have the opportunity to develop their creative skills. Libraries, as organisations that are linked to the promotion of cultural heritage of a place, present opportunities to take part in the actions of creative tourism developing creative "spaces" for tourism purposes. This paper focuses on the presentation of creative tourism innovative activities related to the promotion, diffusion and their integration in the function of libraries through the development of creative "spaces". Through this work we strive to better understand how libraries as creative "spaces" provide opportunities for many forms of cultural participation, especially in the tourism sector, developing creativity in tourism experiences. The significance and originality of the current study reside in exploring the interrelations of creative tourism facets to libraries' function.

Keywords: libraries, creative tourism, creative "spaces", creativity

1. Introduction

Tourism, as an interdisciplinary social phenomenon (Dilevko and Dali, 2004) inextricably linked to cultural information (Richards et al., 2018), has been radically transformed in the last decades due to the continuous development of technology, the use of the Internet and the advanced skills of the users (Webb, 2018). Within this context, information seeking and access to information have inevitably evolved in the procedures of tourists' choices (Lavranos, 2018).

Tourism context may be defined by provided multiple ways of organizing, decision-making and accomplishing needs based on information literacy expertise people have gained. Globalisation, higher incomes, and better education lead to people probing new horizons and gaining new experiences by traveling around the world (Tosic and Lazarevic, 2010). All that leads to the astonishingly increase of the tourism options and needs (Gretzel and Jamal, 2009).

Therefore, innovation is unavoidably necessary in tourism models for the creation of sustainable tourism types. The societal recognition of the value of creativity plays the keystone in this procedure (Richards et al., 2018). Creative tourism, as a growing phenomenon of temporary mobility of information literate tourists (Gretzel and Jamal, 2009), promotes visiting and re-visiting destinations aiming at the novel experience and inspiring interaction with local culture (Tan et al., 2013, 2014). However, the question that arises is which institution could bear the organisation of authentic local and cultural events? An answer could be given by the cardinal goals of information centers; who disseminates and safeguards cultural information and knowledge better than libraries?

It is more than evident that libraries have an important role in the perspective of creative tourism. The advances in information research and access through technology have also influenced and changed libraries in the 21st century (Kostagiolas and Krokidi, 2008). In that respect, the enrichment of a library "space" and its potential has been enhanced. The development of creative "spaces" as a natural evolution of the relationship between information sharing and the public leads to new challenges and new environments (Johnson, 2016). As a result of the economic crisis and although, libraries faced severe problems and financial downturn, the need for innovation was reinforced both to support the library and to support the local community (Kostagiolas et al., 2011).

Social and community cohesion impacts of human activities, for example arts, is already argued to support creativity and culture and their place-creating and spatial dimensions for economic development objectives (Evans, 2015). An achievable opportunity in our contemporary societies is by joining libraries' world and cosmopolitanism. More specially, libraries as information providers maintain their educational role while also supporting and enhancing the cultural experience of tourists and locals by uniting them in a creative "space" (Tosic and Lazarevic, 2010).

This paper aims to explore libraries' creative "spaces" potentials through the perspective of creative tourism. It highlights the documentation need for the beneficial exploitation and connection between the tourism industry and libraries by pinpointing the relevant conceptual notions they both follow and share. It is argued that libraries as pioneers of the diffusion of cultural heritage have a very important role to play in the creative tourism industry that has been

shaped in recent years. Three parts are structured to present the background knowledge of the relationship between creative tourism and libraries, libraries as "spaces" for creative tourism based on five relevant key concepts, as well as a proposal through paradigms of creative tourism and libraries found in the literature. At the conclusion section, the subject is summarised and the need for further research strategies, such as empirical evidence, qualitative and quantitative research on the on the field of creative tourism and libraries is mentioned.

2.   Creative tourism and libraries

As mentioned in the introduction, libraries as information centers have been radically affected by technological and social changes in the 21st century (Lavranos, 2018). Their pivotal role in community and social networking (Boyle et al., 2014) and their offer in the formatting of information behavior and information literacy skills have been studied a lot over the last years (Tokić, 2014). At the same point, it is recognised that the economic crisis affects many societies worldwide and as result in their libraries (Kostagiolas et al, 2011). All these aspects elaborate the library-based environment of the postmodern civilisation.

In this perspective, communities comprehended the value of the provided services by the library, such as free information and knowledge dissemination, audiovisual material and much more (Lavranos, 2018). Therefore, libraries have been given the opportunity to become pioneers in an innovative research framework for maintaining their old services while supporting the enhancement of local economies (Kostagiolas and Krokidi, 2008). Promotion of tourism in a library's "space" by using trustworthy information and services is one of these enhancing methods. Libraries reflecting the sociocultural and technological evolution of our times have acquired places much wider than a "space" (Johnson, 2016).

The multidimensional approach of library's "space" should include libraries as learning and virtual "spaces" (Johnson, 2016), as well as digital safe, thinking, and social "spaces" (Boyle et al., 2014), even as open plan "spaces" (Evans, 2015). More importantly, libraries can help to the innovative dissemination of knowledge; can stimulate individuals by being creative "spaces". Creative "spaces" can be seen both as a concept and as a library's function (Webb, 2018). The novel functions of libraries' "space" require flexibility and activity-oriented planning (Boyes, 2017).

Creative "spaces" in libraries are both conventional and digital "spaces" that aim at promoting and restructuring information to create new knowledge (Johnson, 2016). In 2017, the State Library of Queensland in Australia published the *Creative Spaces Impact Framework* in order to reinforce the development of libraries. Eight factors were set as criteria for the assessment of

creative spaces: i. accessing resources, ii. idea building, iii. civic engagement, iv. community development, v. cultural participation, vi. health and wellbeing, vii. educational attainment, and viii. economic productivity criterion (Boyes, 2017). In this respect, creative "spaces" within libraries have a very important role to play in developing synergies between different factors to promote the economy, social well-being and the active participation of the world's citizens.

In the past, libraries' services and functions were unquestionably treaded in a very spacial-limited perspective. An example on this could be an IFLA Conference presentation of 1993, *Newspaper Interlending*, by Bergmann (1996) who talked about promoting library tourism to conserve the most vulnerable material such as newspapers not being worn through the process of interlibrary loan. Coming back to the current landscape for libraries and tourism, it has been analysed that changes under the influence of new inexpensive technologies and capabilities (Webb, 2018) are now offered for exploitation. New challenges have already arisen for both local users and non-residents patrons of libraries (Ross, 2011).

Creative tourism, as an outcome of cultural tourism, is closely linked to cultural information and authentic local interaction (Richards et al., 2018). There are several ways of considering this category of tourism: i. from a cultural point of view, for the promotion of cultural goods, ii. from an educational perspective, for the exploration of national and local values, iii. from an economic point of view, for the support the local economy, and iv. from a social perspective, for the active interaction and meeting of the participants' needs and expectations.

Having all these into consideration, it surfaces that creative "spaces" of libraries and creative tourism are sharing several conceptual approaches. Being within this view five key-ideas of significant importance can be presented. These theoretical perceptions are: i. the notion of participation and interaction, ii. the idea of sharing, iii. the concept of educational potential, iv. the economic asset, and v. the care for the participants' wellbeing. In the next part, it is presented some paradigms of the join between libraries as space for creative tourism based on the existing literature.

3.   The library as a "space" for creative tourism

Creative library "spaces" and creative tourism theory can be bridged through the common key-concepts as we have seen above. In practice, paradigms from the relevant literature are presenting interesting examples of the suggested cooperation.

As it has been forecasted previously, a library always was a tourist sightseeing and visiting option (Tosic and Lazarevic, 2010). The reasons why tourists could decide to choose a library as their destination point, could be either for the study of rare material or thanks to the free provision of services such as printers,

internet, and audiovisual material (Bergmann, 1996). Another point of interest was pure as an architectural and cultural heritage attraction (Tokić, 2014). However, the establishment of creative "spaces" and the implementation of novel activity-oriented programmes augment the loose relationship between libraries and tourism.

The collaboration between information centers and libraries is aiming to reinforce the innovative library "spaces" that are available to the local community. At the same point, creative tourists would have the opportunity to participate to the transfer of current and authentic cultural knowledge (Lavranos, 2018). Informal learning and activity-oriented interaction of the participants are the core qualities. According to the relevant literature, at least two types of existing creative "spaces" can be distinguished in libraries.

The first type concerns the conventional physical "space" of the library. Libraries can act as a suitable program organizer that unifies locals and foreigners by providing them the convenient environment (or space) for sharing ideas and values, sharing knowledge, by generating the indigenous experience of the local cultural asset through a learning process (Miedzińska and Tanaś, 2009). A number of similar examples can already be identified in the literature. In 2006, UNESCO's Creative Cities Network was promoting tango dancing classes as part of Buenos Aires nonmaterial cultural heritage. Additionally, creative programs on visual arts, cooking, weaving and other expressions of human productivity and cultural heritage can be offered by local artists, writers and creators to meet with the tourists exploring intercultural and interactive engagement (UNESCO Creative Cities Network, 2006). The second creative space as shaped by modern reality is the digital space. In creative tourism, the ethos of sharing social networks and blogs remains a central structure of tourism participation experience (Gretzel and Jamal, 2009). The library can offer its own organised digital space to exchange these experiences and opinions from its visitors and local users.

By shaping and promoting one or another type of creative "space" for creative tourism (i.e. conventional or digital) does not require as well the establishment of the other. Each library, depending on its type and the target audience, can choose the direction it would like to follow (Bovero, 2009). In any case, the benefit is twofold as, on the one hand, the creative tourists and the locals through the interaction gain new experience and ideally create new knowledge; on the other hand, the library carries out its main objectives, such as the promotion of culture, and the local economy as well as the prestige of the world.

It is obvious that the achievement of any innovation within the information agencies requires synergy with the local community, cooperation with many actors, consistent behavior and team spirit on the part of the library as well as long-term planning (Kostagiolas et al., 2009). All types of libraries have met the

requirements of organising creative venues, and although public libraries seem more suitable for ventures such as the social opening to creative tourism, no kind of library would be right to exclude. Academic or research libraries with creative moods and spaces can support activity-oriented programs for non-residents interested in experimenting with something novel.

4.   Conclusions

Tourism is firmly connected with cultural heritage. Nowadays, there are many opportunities for engagement and active participation of tourists in the local community. Furthermore, libraries are the dominant institutions in supporting and developing the local society and economy. Promoting creative tourism within library structures for innovation can affect only in a positive manner the participants. In conclusion, this paper presented creative tourism innovative activities related to the function of libraries through the development of creative "spaces". The outcomes of this brief review would be of interest in terms of better understanding how libraries as creative "spaces" provide opportunities for many forms of cultural participation, developing creativity in tourism experiences. Through all these, it is obvious that a great field of research in ways and means of exploring the potentials and developing synergies between the creative tourism industry and libraries has been set providing opportunities about the establishment of collaborative networks between creative industry and libraries for the promotion of cultural heritage in the context of tourism (e.g., promoting inter-culturalism through the organisation of cultural, artistic and educational activities, organising joint actions that will allow the exchange of experience between tourists and locals) that can be available to diverse audiences across the globe.

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