EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN MANAGING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND TOURISM INDUSTRY COMPETITIVENESS: A TWO COUNTRY COMPARISON

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Summary: 1. Introduction; 2. Literature review; 3. Research design; 3.1 The samples of museums analysed; 3.2 The tourism competitiveness of the regions where surveyed museums are located; 4. Research findings and discussion; 5. Museum marketing implications; 6. Conclusions and indications for further research.

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Paper – *Built cultural heritage, such as museums, are deeply linked to their locations and have a crucial role to play in tourism developments. Yet, the literature on museum management is focused upon museums without considering the competitiveness of the tourism industry where they are located. This paper will seek to address this lacuna, and attempt to connect or link museums management and competitiveness in the tourism industry.*

Design – *Two samples (most visited U.K. and Italian museums) will be analysed together with the competitiveness of their (local) tourism industry.*

Findings – *Research findings will allow classifying most visited U.K. and Italian*

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museums in clusters. The comparison will reveal country-specific differences and tourism industry competitiveness of regions of most visited Italian and U.K. museums.

Practical Implications – *The differences in tourism industry competitiveness and the museums appeal will enable elaboration of specific strategies for museums and the tourism industry for each identifiable cluster.*

Originality/value – *The link between museum marketing strategies and destination competitiveness has been quite neglected by researchers to date. This paper is a first attempt to address this gap, with regard to U.K. and Italian context.*

KEY WORDS museums | tourism destination competitiveness | museum marketing strategies | tourism industry strategies

1. Introduction

Built cultural heritage attractions, such as museums, undoubtedly have a crucial role to play in the development of tourism destinations (Leslie, 2001; Swarbrooke, 2002; Leask, 2003). Yet, it is noteworthy that this issue is under-researched in the literature, and most contributions on museum management tend to focus exclusively on museums without broadening their analysis to include the competitiveness of the tourism industry where they are located. This paper will address this lacuna.

The paper will seek to analyse museums together with accompanying locational tourism industry competitiveness. The need to study these originates from the consideration that these cultural heritage goods lie in locations whose tourist services have been developed or can be changed in a fairly ad hoc manner (Siano et al., 2009). Yet, destination competitiveness may be crucial in attracting tourists to a place (Enright and Newton, 2004), and museum management could play a crucial developmental role, in order to benefit fully from tourists attracted to their location and inter alia that locations may benefit fully from museum attractiveness (Richards, 1993).

This study considers two samples represented by most visited museums in the UK and Italy, analysed together with the tourism competitiveness of their territories of reference. The focus on most visited museums was determined by attendance figures as a key benchmark indicator of success (Johnson and Thomas, 1991). The choice of museums belonging to these two countries was not arbitrary. On one side, Italy is currently the nation holding the largest number of heritage sites the world (forty-three, as shown in the Unesco world list)[1] but it is only ranked twenty-eighth for capability to develop its travel and tourism industry, as revealed by the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index (World Economic Forum 2008). On the other side, the U.K. does not have as many cultural heritage goods as Italy (as it only controls twenty-seven sites), but it is ranked in a much better position than Italy (sixth) in the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (ibid).

Fairly straightforward - though hitherto unasked - questions tend to arise from these general overview data. For example:

- Which regions are the most visited museums in Italy and U.K. located in?
- What is the tourism competitiveness of these regions?
- What, if any, differences exist in the tourism competitiveness of U.K. and Italian regions where most visited museums are located?
- Which museums may benefit by being located in regions with high competitiveness, and which may be disadvantaged from being located in regions with low competitiveness?
- Finally, how can museum managers enhance the appeal of their museums and contribute to the tourism competitiveness of their region of reference?

The paper is designed to address these questions, and link museums from these two nations to the tourism competitiveness of their regions of reference.

The intention is to provide strategies of museum and tourism marketing which allow the appeal of these museums to be enhanced together with the tourism destination competitiveness of the regions where they are located. The comparison between U.K. and Italian scenarios allows understanding country specific differences in both museums and tourism marketing.

As previously noted, the need to link museum management to tourism competitiveness is also generated by the awareness that this issue is still under-researched in the extant literature. The next section undertakes a brief literature review of museum marketing and tourism competitiveness.

2. Literature review

Studies on cultural heritage management and marketing have experienced significant recent development. An examination of the available literature shows that one of the earliest references to museum marketing was that of Kotler and Levy (1969). Researchers later sought to transfer marketing concepts to the museum context (Ames, 1989; Fronville, 1985; Hoyt, 1986; Tobelem, 1997), and then drew attention to cooperation between museums and organisational networks (Danilov, 1990). More recently studies have focused on applying business principles to museums (Moore, 1994; Lord and Lord, 1997, Misiura, 2005; Veverka, 2000a and 2000b), on services marketing (McLean 1994), and on visitor behaviour (Falk and Dierking, 1992; Goulding, 2000). Additional studies have investigated specific

museum departments or processes, such as fund raising functions (Kelly, 1998), the identification of indicators of efficiency and effectiveness for museums (Ames, 1994), museum stores (Mottner and Ford, 2003), branding (Scott, 2000) and the pricing process (Rentschler et al., 2007).
Lately research has focused on the opportunities that digital technologies offer to museums (Bearman, 1995; Jackson et al., 1998) and specifically on museum web sites usability (Cunliffe et al., 2001), on the assessment of museum web sites page format (Campbell and Wells, 1996), on the virtual museum (Bowen et al., 1998), on visitor behaviour on line (Chadwick and Boverie, 1999; Soren, 2005), and on socialising activities and on line learning (Parry and Arbach, 2006). Digital technologies offer museums stimulating opportunities to develop innovative marketing strategies (Keene, 1996, 1998; Schweibenz, 1998).
Although these studies have the value of applying marketing management principles and practices to museums, they have not so far focussed on the potential link between cultural heritage goods and local situational conditions with respect to tourism destination competitiveness, an issue having an increasing prominence in the tourism and place marketing literature (see for example Dwyer and Kim, 2003; Kozak and Rimmington, 1999; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003; Wang and Fesenmaier, 2007). A symbiotic relationship between museums and their contexts has been supported in a number of studies (DiMaggio, 1991; Janes, 1997, 1999), but there has been no focus an tourism industry competitiveness aspects. It seems self evident that tourism competitiveness between different geographic areas of a country may differ and play a significant role in relation to museums. Thus, there is a lacuna wherein research can be undertaken.
We therefore compare tourism competitiveness of the regions where most visited museums in Italy and U.K. are located. The following sections clarify the definitions of museum and tourism competitiveness used, which museums are surveyed, and the tourism competitiveness of regions of location. Before discussing findings from this comparative study, information on the research design is provided.

3. Research design

Secondary data relating to most visited museums in U.K. and Italy, and to tourism competitiveness of the regions of museum location are utilised, in order to map the analysed museums together with the tourism competitiveness of their region of reference. The following two sections provide an overview of the data used in this paper.

3.1 The samples of museums analysed

The sample of museums are from Italy and the U.K. As a benchmark, the definition of museum used here is based on that provided by the International Council of Museums (ICOM):

> "A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment" (ICOM Statute, 2008).

Starting with this definition, secondary data were collected to identify most visited museums in Italy and U.K.

With regard to Italian museums, secondary data on most visited museums were derived from the Italian Touring Club Centre (TCI Dossier, 2008), which analyses each year most visited Italian museums in depth (number of visitors, prices, services offered etc). Concerning museums in U.K., secondary data were derived from the U.K. Department of Ministry of Culture, Media and Sport.

The 20 most visited museums in Italy and in U.K. are reported in Table 1 and Table 2, together with the competitiveness of their region of reference. The most visited Italian museums are mainly located in Italian art regions and cities par excellence. Lazio (which includes Rome) is the region with more museums (six of the twenty most visited), followed by Tuscany, which includes Florence (five of the twenty), Veneto (which includes Venice), Piedmont and Campania (two each of the twenty), followed by Ligury, Sicily, and Lombardy (one each of the twenty).

The most visited museums in U.K. are mainly located in the Greater London region (thirteen of twenty museums). Three museums are located in the North West (which includes Manchester and Liverpool), two in Yorkshire and the Humber (which includes York and Bradford), and the remaining two museums in the North East and East Midlands (which include Cambridgeshire and Newcastle).

The number of visitors to these U.K. museums is on average higher than Italian museums; this is partly explained because some of the U.K. museums surveyed offer free admittance, unlike those in Italy.

3.2 The tourism competitiveness of the regions where surveyed museums are located

Competitive advantage (Porter, 1980) is of central importance to the success of organisations, regions and countries. Thus, tourism destination

competitiveness is becoming a significant element of the tourism literature, and tourism competitiveness measurement has attracted considerable attention, since it is regarded as a crucial factor for the success of tourist destinations (Goodrich, 1977; Heath and Wall, 1992; Ahmed, 1991; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). Yet, despite the extensive literature on competitiveness, no clear definition of tourism competitiveness has yet been developed, or is shared among researchers in the field (Newall, 1992).
Competitiveness is a complex concept that can be difficult to measure. In addition, identifying elements of competitiveness is contentious because of conceptual problems embodied in definitions. This thus represents a relative concept and measurement consequently varies depending on the choice of base country and/or base year (Gooroochurn and Suguyarto, 2004). Most importantly, competitiveness is a multidimensional concept in the sense that being competitive requires superiority in several aspects (Scott and Lodge 1985).

Table 1 – *The most visited Italian museums for the year 2007 and the tourism industry*

Museums	Number of visitors* million pa	City - REGION	Region tourism industry competitiveness** High (H) Medium (M) Low (L)
Vatican Museums	4.3	Vatican City - LAZIO	M
Pompeii Archaeological Ruins	2.6	Pompeii - CAMPANIA	L
Uffizi's Gallery	1.6	Florence - TUSCANY	M
Doge's Palace	1.5	Venice - VENETO	M
Genoa Aquarium	1.4	Genoa - LIGURIA	M
Academia Gallery	1.3	Florence - TUSCANY	M
Santa Croce Opera	.92	Florence - TUSCANY	M
Bio Parco	.90	Rome - LAZIO	M
Central Museum of the Risorgimento	.88	Rome - LAZIO	M
National Museum of Castel Sant'Angelo	.84	Rome - LAZIO	M
Borghese Gallery	.71	Rome - LAZIO	M
San Marco Museum	.55	Venice - VENETO	M
National Museum of Cinema	.53	Turin - PIEDMONT	L
Capitoline Museums	.52	Rome - LAZIO	M
Museum of Egyptian Antiquities	.51	Turin - PIEDMONT	L
Royal Palace	.43	Caserta - CAMPANIA	L
Imperial Villa of Casale	.42	Piazza Armerina - SICILY	L
Old Palace-Monumental Districts	.41	Florence - TUSCANY	M
Medici Chapels	.39	Florence - TUSCANY	M
National Museum of Science and Technology "L. da Vinci"	.38	Milan - LOMBARDY	L

* Source: Italian Touring Club - Research Centre (2008)
** Source: Andraz, Norte and Silva (2007)

For the purposes of our study, the Weighted Tourism Location Index (WTLI) (Andraz et al., 2007) is used as a measure of the relative tourism competitiveness of U.K. and Italian regions. This index is based on variables referring both to regional offer (number of bed places, employment in the tourism sector, regional resident population, gross added value etc) and tourist demand (number of nights spent by non-residents and residents within the region). Based on this index, the afore mentioned research provides a ranking on the competitiveness of the regions of the countries member of the European Union. From this ranking, data about U.K. and Italian region competitiveness have been extracted.

Table 2 – *The most visited U.K. museums for the year 2007 and the tourism industry competitiveness of the regions where they are located*

Museums	**Number of visitors* million pa**	**City - REGION**	**Region tourism industry competitiveness ** High (H) Medium (M) Low (L)**
Tate London (Tate Britain and Tate Modern combined) (a)	6.8	London – GREAT LONDON	H
British Museum (ha)	5.4	London – GREAT LONDON	H
National Gallery (a)	4.2	London – GREAT LONDON	H
Natural History Museum (ha)	3.6	London – GREAT LONDON	H
Science Museum (s)	2.7	London – GREAT LONDON	H
Victoria And Albert (V&A)	2.4	London – GREAT LONDON	H
National Museums	2.0	Liverpool – NORTH WEST	H
National Maritime Museum (s)	1.7	Greenwich – GREAT LONDON	H
National Portrait Gallery (a)	1.6	London – GREAT LONDON	H
National Railway Museum (ha)	.81	York – YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER	H
Imperial War Museum (ha)	.75	London – GREAT LONDON	H
National Media Museum (s)	.72	Bradford - YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER	H
Museum of Science and Industry (s)	.70	Manchester - NORTH WEST	H
Tate Liverpool (a)	.65	Liverpool - NORTH WEST	H
Horniman Museum (Excluding Visits To The Garden)	.48	Forest Hill – GREAT LONDON	H
(Iwm) Duxford Air Museum (ha)	.48	Cambridgeshire – EAST MIDLANDS	H
Tyne & Wear (T&W) Discovery	.45	Newcastle – NORTH EAST	M
Museum Of London Group	.42	London – GREAT LONDON	H
(V&A) Museum Of Childhood, Bethnal Green	.36	London – GREAT LONDON	H
Wallace Collection	.32	London – GREAT LONDON	H

* Source: Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (2009)
** Source: Andraz, Norte and Silva (2007)

The high, medium or low competitiveness of the tourism industry of the regions considered has been derived from the positions of the regions in the WTLI ranking. Better positions in the WTLI ranking (1 < WTLI rank < 30) indicate high tourism industry competitiveness of the region, average positions (30 < WTLI rank < 60) indicate medium tourism industry competitiveness of the region, while worse positions (60 < WTLI rank < 120) identify regions with low tourism industry competitiveness. The relative rank of each region where most visited museums in U.K. and Italy are located is reported in the last columns of Tables 1 and 2. Although at a country level Italy is ranked in a better position within EU countries (fourth) if compared to U.K. (sixth), at a regional level almost all U.K. regions where most visited museums are located have a higher tourism competitiveness, in comparison to Italian regions.

The main limitation of the research is represented by the lack of more specific data about place competitiveness, such as cities, rather than the regions where surveyed museums are located. Furthermore, only some factors have been considered to measure tourism region competitiveness, and other variables (number of hotels, leisure structures etc) which may also impact tourism destination competitiveness are omitted, as they are not included by the WTLI index.

4. Research findings and discussion

The data illustrated in Figure 1 represents a mapping of the twenty most visited museums in Italy and U.K. together with the tourism competitiveness of their regions of reference. The figure shows a clear divide between U.K. and Italian regions tourism competitiveness, where most visited museums are located. The totality of U.K. regions (excluding North East) has a much higher tourism competitiveness, if compared to Italian regions where most visited museums are located.

In addition, the figure allows identification of six different clusters of museums, two referring to U.K. museums, and four referring to Italian museums.

The first cluster is composed of U.K. museums with strong appeal and attendance (number of visitors in excess of one million in 2007), which are located in Greater London and the North West, regions characterized by high tourism competitiveness (1 < WTLI rank < 30). Hence, the seven museums belonging to this cluster can be called "top-U.K. privileged".

The second cluster of U.K. museums is represented by the remaining U.K. museums (whose number of visitors is less than one million), and located in regions with high tourism competitiveness. For this reason, the seven museums belonging to this cluster can be called "low-U.K. privileged".

The remaining clusters of museums refer to those in Italy. Differently to U.K. museums, that are condensed in relatively few regions, Italian museums have been divided into four clusters mainly because they are spread throughout the country in regions having very different tourism competitiveness.

The first cluster of Italian museums includes top museums (number of visitors in excess of one million per annum) located in Italian regions, whose competitiveness is medium (30 < WTLI rank < 60). The museums of this cluster can be called "top-Italian advantaged".

Number of visitors to museums	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
> 1.000.000	**A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I** TOP-U.K. PRIVILEGED	**a, c, d, e, f** TOP-ITALY ADVANTAGED	**b** TOP-ITALY PENALIZED
< 1.000.000	**J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q*, R, S, T** LOW-U.K. PRIVILEGED	**g, h, i, j, k, l, n, r, s** LOW-ITALY ADVANTAGED	**p, q, t, o, m** LOW-ITALY PENALIZED

Tourism industry competitiveness

Figure 1 – *Most visited museums in U.K. and Italy and tourism industry competitiveness of the regions where they are located*

Legend

U.K. museums – Region of reference

A - Tate London – Great London
B - British Museum – Great London
C - National Gallery – Great London
D - Natural History Museum – Great London
E - Science Museum – Great London
F - Victoria And Albert (V&A) – Great London
G - National Museums – North West
H - National Maritime Museum – Great London
I - National Portrait Gallery – Great London
J - National Railway Museum – Yorkshire and the Humber
K - Imperial War Museum – Great London
L - National Media Museum – Yorkshire and the Humber
M - Museum Of Science And Industry – North West
N - Tate Liverpool – North West
O - Horniman Museum (Excluding Visits To The Garden) – Great London
P - (Iwm) Duxford Air Museum – East Midlands
Q - Tyne & Wear (T&W) Discovery – North East
*This museum can be considered as belonging to Low-U.K. privileged.
R - Museum Of London Group – Great London
S - Museum Of Childhood, Bethnal Green – Great London
T - Wallace Collection – Great London

Italian museums – Region of reference

a - Vatican Museums – Lazio
b - Ruins of Pompeii – Campania
c - Uffizi Gallery – Tuscany
d - Doge's Palace – Veneto
e - Acquario di Genova – Ligury
f - Academia Gallery – Tuscany
g - Santa Croce Opera – Tuscany
h - Bio parco – Lazio
i - Central Museum of Risorgimento – Lazio
j - National Museum of Castel Sant'Angelo – Lazio
k - Borghese Gallery – Lazio
l - San Marco Museum – Veneto
m - National Museum of Cinema – Piedmont
n - Capitoline Museums – Lazio
o - Museum of Egyptian Antiquities – Piedmont
p - Caserta Royal Palace – Campania
q - Imperial Villa of Casale – Sicily
r - Old Palace-Monumental Districts – Tuscany
s - Medici Chapels – Tuscany
t - National Museum of Science and Technology "L. Da Vinci"– Lombardy

The second cluster of Italian museums identified comprises museums whose number of visitors is lower than one million, located in regions whose tourism competitiveness is medium. For this reason, such museums have been called "low-Italian advantaged".
The third cluster of Italian museums includes one top museum (number of visitor in excess of one million) located in an Italian region, whose tourism competitiveness is low (60 < WTLI rank < 120). The ruins of Pompeii for example, located in Campania, can be called "top-Italian disadvantaged".
The fourth cluster of Italian museums identified comprises museums whose number of visitors is lower than one million, located in regions whose tourism competitiveness is low. For this reason, such museums have been called "low-Italian disadvantaged".
The figure also allows an understanding how U.K. most visited museums are located mainly in Great London region and in fewer regions, while Italian museums are much more distributed throughout various regions, furthermore characterized by very different tourism competitiveness (Italian region rankings vary from 36 to 120).

5. Museum marketing implications

Implications associated with tourism competitiveness may play a role in museum management marketing decisions. High tourism destination competitiveness represents a very good starting point for increasing the number of visitors to museums. The "privileged" and "advantaged" museums, as a result, can benefit from these favorable conditions. However, full exploitation of this opportunity depends, however, on the ability of museum managers to cooperate with local governments and agencies for the coordination of promotional programs and activities (such as tour operators). Thus, both museum management and destination competitiveness can be seen as part of a coherent and likely synergistic whole, and marketing cooperation seems to be mandatory. As a result of its appeal and tourism competitiveness, London attracted 15.3 million tourists in 2007[2], and represents the most visited city in the world. Museums located in Great London obviously benefit from the appeal of this city. Considering the top-privileged museums as a benchmark, it is possible to identify museum and tourism marketing strategies and tactics museum managers could adopt to enhance the appeal of the museums surveyed together with the tourism industry competitiveness of their region of reference (see Figure 2). A significant number of scholars approaching tourism destination competitiveness has shown that place marketing is a main factor in the formation of high degree tourism competitiveness (see, for example, Kotler et al., 1999; Ashworth and Voogd, 1990).

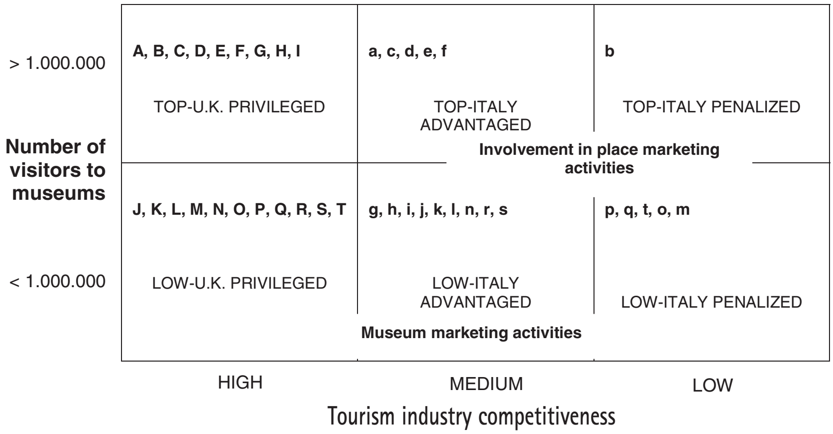

Figure 2 - *Strategies of museum and place marketing involvement for the clusters of museums and the regions surveyed*

Legend

U.K. museums – Region of reference

A - Tate London – Great London	B - British Museum – Great London
C - National Gallery – Great London	D - Natural History Museum – Great London
E - Science Museum – Great London	F - Victoria And Albert (V&A) – Great London
G - National Museums – North West	H - National Maritime Museum – Great London
I - National Portrait Gallery – Great London	J - National Railway Museum – Yorkshire and the Humber
K - Imperial War Museum – Great London	L - National Media Museum – Yorkshire and the Humber
M - Museum Of Science And Industry – North West	N - Tate Liverpool – North West
O - Horniman Museum (Excluding Visits To The Garden) – Great London	P - (Iwm) Duxford Air Museum – East Midlands
Q - Tyne & Wear (T&W) Discovery – North East *This museum can be considered as belonging to Low-U.K. privileged.	R - Museum Of London Group – Great London
S - Museum Of Childhood, Bethnal Green – Great London	T - Wallace Collection – Great London

Italian museums – Region of reference

a - Vatican Museums – Lazio	b - Ruins of Pompeii – Campania
c - Uffizi Gallery – Tuscany	d - Doge's Palace – Veneto
e - Acquario di Genova – Ligury	f - Academia Gallery – Tuscany
g - Santa Croce Opera – Tuscany	h - Bio parco – Lazio
i - Central Museum of Risorgimento – Lazio	j - National Museum of Castel Sant'Angelo – Lazio
k - Borghese Gallery – Lazio	l - San Marco Museum – Veneto
m - National Museum of Cinema – Piedmont	n - Capitoline Museums – Lazio
o - Museum of Egyptian Antiquities – Piedmont	p - Caserta Royal Palace – Campania
q - Imperial Villa of Casale – Sicily	r - Old Palace-Monumental Districts – Tuscany
s - Medici Chapels – Tuscany	t - National Museum of Science and Technology "L. Da Vinci"– Lombardy

According to their financial resources, managers of museums whose number of visitors do not go beyond one million (low-U.K. privileged museums, low-Italian advantaged and low-Italian penalized) could promote their collections (e.g. through reduction of ticket prices), host temporary exhibitions, and invest in joint promotional or communication activities to attract visitors. Furthermore, they could cooperate with top visited museums; as an example, low-U.K. privileged museums located in London could benefit from their proximity to the top-U.K. privileged museums and offer joint offer packages (e.g. visiting two museums where the combined price is cheaper than two separate tickets). Moreover, high tourism competitiveness of regions where these museums are located is a favorable condition for cooperating with tour operators, in order to create tourist itineraries that include these museums. This has been done with success in the case of the castles of the Loire in France. This tourist itinerary can provide an integrated product that allows the creation of a more attractive tourist offer.

These museums could enhance their brand awareness through co-branding strategies (Blackett and Boad, 1999; Kramer, 1995) which imply matching museum brands and place/destination brand.

Clusters or individual museums need to become involved in tourism marketing activities. For example, managers might collaborate with local government, providing recommendations to enhance place offers; encourage local tourist organizations (hotels, bars, restaurants etc) to promote their services, and become jointly involved in place co-branding activities

Potential tools for supporting destination competitiveness include sponsorships of programmes and activities for enhancing local culture. Indeed, tourism destination competitiveness may be influenced also by social climate, cultural values and moral discipline (Franke et al., 1991). These challenging place marketing programmes imply, of course, strong cooperation and coordination between museum directors and local authorities and agencies.

There also are other tools which represent an opportunity to avoid the limitations deriving from a low tourism industry competitiveness. The clusters of Italian museums could circumvent negative consequences deriving from low regional tourism competitiveness by means of virtual museums accessible via web sites. Virtual museum refers to a collection of digitally recorded images, sound files, text documents, and other data of historical, scientific, or cultural interest that are accessed through electronic media (Bernier, 2002; Schweibenz, 1998). By applying fees to on line visits of securely segmented web sites, museums could generate gains even if visitors do not physically reach the territory or territories where museums are located. Also, virtual on-line exhibitions may act as a promoter of real museums and simultaneously promote the local region (Bowen et al., 1998).

In addition these museums can raise funds through an advertising policy developed on line, via their museum web sites, which would also allow visitors to use on line virtual museums for free. With regard to this second option, it is interesting to recall the case of "The Old Bailey Proceedings Online"[3]. Since April 2008, this site has been raising funds through an advertising policy: the management of funds derived from the advertising is governed by a formal agreement between the Universities which created the site: the Open University, and the Universities of Hertfordshire and Sheffield, and allows visitors to collect on line published material for free.

6. Conclusions and indications for further research

Despite the limitations identified previously, findings from this comparative analysis have shown specific differences in the tourism competitiveness of regions where most visited Italian and U.K. museums are located. Analysing museums together with the competitiveness of the regions where they are located shows that U.K. most visited museums are mainly concentrated in few cities and based in highly competitive regions, whilst Italian ones are more spread throughout the whole country and located in regions having very different levels of competitiveness (the average - for example – is lower than U.K. regions where most visited U.K. museums are located). Findings suggest that, in conjunction with decisions about their marketing activities, museum managers should be aware also of variables not strictly connected to museum management itself. High or low competitiveness of the place(s) where museums are located can determine managers' involvement in place marketing activities. Museum directors are increasingly coming to recognize the pressures of the marketplace and the need to do things differently (Janes, 1997). Thus, strategic analysis of place-related competitiveness factors can inform museum management of how best museum managers can attract visitors. Museum managers should think in systematic and holistic ways and involve in their strategies stakeholders operating in their territory. Research has recently shown that local community can become a full partner in the development of museum exhibitions (Conaty and Carter, 2005; Cummins, 2004).

With reference to the Italian and the U.K. museums surveyed, specific museum marketing strategies and tactics were proposed, and involvement in place marketing activities was suggested for the clusters of Italian museums identified.

Linking museums management and place competitiveness appears to be a worthwhile area of study in which further secondary and primary research should be conducted as evidently there is a symbiotic relationship between museums and their contexts, and consequently between museum management and place competitiveness.

Further research could analyse museums together with their specific territory, such as the city, rather than the wide region where surveyed museums are located. To overcome the limitations regarding data on place competitiveness, it would be necessary to collect primary data on the perception of residents and tourists on the competitiveness of the specific territory (province or city) where museums are located. Furthermore, additional studies could examine museums belonging to other European countries, together with the competitiveness of their place of reference, to find out country specific differences.

Endnotes

[1] Further information are available at the following website: http://whc.unesco.org/en/list.

[2] Statistics from Euromonitor International's research on Top City Destinations Ranking available at the following website: www.marketresearchworld.net.

[3] The Old Bailey Proceedings Online is a not-for-profit project whose sole objective is to make the Proceedings of the Old Bailey available to all internet users free of charge. The Old Bailey Proceedings Online makes available a fully searchable, digitised collection of all surviving editions of the Old Bailey Proceedings from 1674 to 1913, and of the Ordinary of Newgate's Accounts, 1679 to 1772. In addition to the text, this website provides digital images of all 190,000 original pages of the Proceedings, 4,000 pages of Ordinary's Accounts, advice on methods of searching this resource, information on the historical and legal background to the Old Bailey court and its Proceedings, and descriptions of published and manuscript materials relating to the trials covered.

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