

A Typology Consumption Practices in Museums - Implications for Market Communications of Museums

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Objectives of the presentation

- Proposing a museum consumption framework
- Getting a deeper understanding of how, why, and what people consume in museums
- A pilot study and working paper
- Collecting feedbacks and insights from you



Outline

- Introduction
- Framework of consumption practices in museums
- Managerial implications for museum
- Limitation and further research



Introduction

- Influences and changes affecting museums profoundly in the new era
- One main philosophy of museums: object-oriented to audience-oriented
- Perspective of consumer research on what consumption means to museum visitors



Theoretical foundation

- How consumers consume?
- Consumer culture theory (Arnould & Thompson 2005)
- Holt's research (1995) on a typology of consumption practices
- Four distinct metaphors for consuming



METAPHORS FOR CONSUMING

PURPOSE OF ACTION

Autotelic Actions

Instrumental Actions

Object
Actions

CONSUMING
AS
EXPERIENCE

CONSUMING
AS
INTEGRATION

STRUCTURE OF
ACTION

Interpersonal
Actions

CONSUMING
AS
PLAY

CONSUMING
AS
CLASSIFICATION

Metaphors for consuming

- **Consuming as experience:** examining consumers' subjective, emotional reactions to consumption objects
- **Consuming as integration:** how consumers acquire and manipulate object meanings
- **Consuming as classification:** consuming as a process in which objects act to classify their consumers
- **Consuming as play:** sharing mutually felt experiences with each other, and making use of experiential practices to entertain each other



Metaphors for consuming

PURPOSE OF ACTION

Autotelic Actions

Instrumental Actions

Object Actions

Consuming As Experience

- Accounting
- Evaluating
- Appreciating

Consuming As Integration

- Assimilating
- Producing
- Personalizing

STRUCTURE OF ACTION

Interpersonal Actions

Consuming As Play

- Communing
- Socializing

Consuming As Classification

- Through objects
- Through actions



How about museums?

- Holt's theory: materialism as a style of consuming
- Museums, different contexts with similarities in terms of purpose and structure of consumption
- Is museum consumption more likely individual rather than collective?
- Is materialism the only style?



Research method

The National
Museum of History
(NMH) as the case





Example of the interviewees

Name	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation	Knowledge of art & history	Frequency of visits a year
Amy	Female	50	High school	Housewife Volunteer	High	□ 50
Yen	Male	19	B.A.	Student	High	□ 12
Ting	Female	22	B.A.	Student	Lower	2-3
Eddie	Male	51	B.A.	Business man	Medium	6-7
Jean	Female	20	B.A.	Student	Medium	□ 10



Museum consuming as experience

- Making sense (or accounting), evaluating and appreciating consumption objects
- Experiences in unordinary of daily life in museums
- Based on the audience's physical, social, and personal contexts (Falk & Dierking 1992)
- Transferring between outside and inside of museums



Museum consuming as integration

- Meaning making and facilitating the symbolic use of the object
- Recalling prior knowledge, experience and memories
- Assimilating by developing requisite knowledge and specialized tastes
- Producing to enhance their perception and to participate in the production of consumption



Museum consuming as classification

- The museum is an agency of cultural classification (Fyfe 1995)
- Cultural classification: distinction, the projection of group , and control
- E.g. classified by sub-culture of youth as the projection of group
- E.g. ‘Terra Cotta Worriers’ exhibition - a symbol of most “in” stuff
- “The laity sees the fancy part of exhibits but the professional sees the inside stories.” ~ by *Chinese slang*



Museum consuming as play

- To share their mutually felt experiences and insights with each other through communing
- To make use of experiential practices to enjoy and entertain each other through socializing
- To improve relationships and the the quality of life
- Spiritual feast and release
- The rest of the mind in particular



Museum consuming as learning

- Learning from objects
- Transferring abstract concepts into reification
- The nature of free-choice
- In a variety of ways
- With different motivations and purposes
- Learning in museum overlapping consumers' experience, integration, enjoyment, and classification



Framework of museum consumption practices

Objects

Consuming As Experience

- Accounting
- Evaluating
- Appreciating
- Transferring

Consuming As Integration

- Recalling
- Assimilating
- Producing

Edonic

Consuming As Learning

- Through objects
- By free choices
- In a variety of ways

Utilitarian

Consuming As Play

- Communing
- Socializing
- Improving

Consuming As Classification

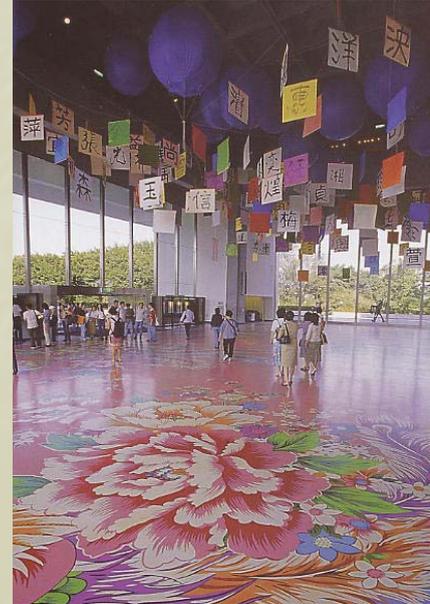
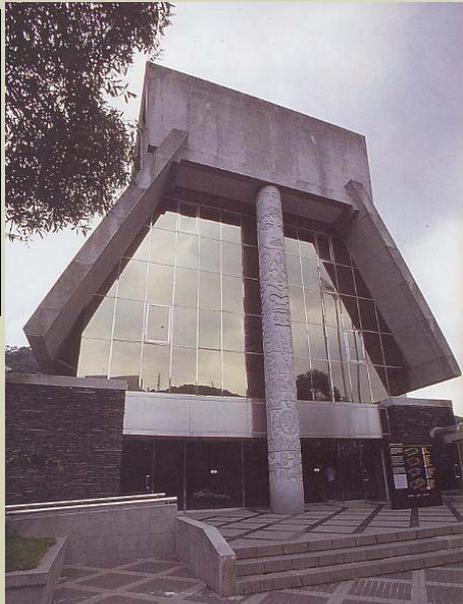
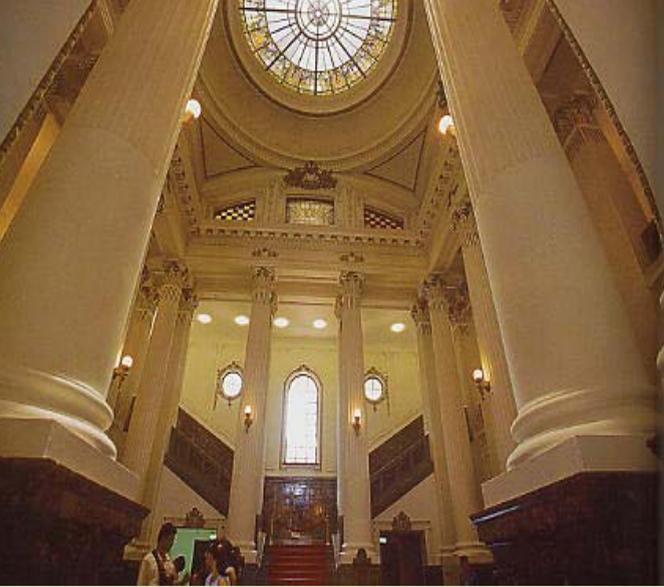
- Distinction
- Protection of group
- Involvement

People

Cultural issues on museum consumption

- Consumers' personal and collective identities are strong factors
- E.g. the audiences as consumers in Taiwan
 - more utilitarian than hedonic
 - tend to be people-oriented than focused-on objects
 - learning is the most driven factor for different ages and levels of the audiences





Implications for museum marketing practices

- A clear picture of audience's style and value of consuming in museums
- Humanism as a style and value of museum consuming
- Universal principles and indigenous considerations as well



Conclusion

- The more understanding of the consumer's behavior universally and indigenously, the better communication with our audiences
- Constructs need to be modified for further research
- The generalizability of the research should be considered
- Related consumer literatures and visitor studies need to be reviewed in breadth and depth



Comment and insights are
very much welcomed; and
thank you for your attention.

