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**MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF GREEK MUSEUMS TO ATTRACT TOURISTS.  
COMMON PRACTICES AND EMERGING TRENDS.**

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Master in Tourism Development & Culture (Erasmus Mundus Joint Master)

Supervisor:

PhD, Luis Pedro Miguel, Assistant Professor,

Iscte-lul

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**BUSINESS  
SCHOOL**

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Department of Marketing, Strategy and Operations

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## Resumo

Nas últimas décadas as estratégias de comunicação de marketing foram estabelecidas como um eixo central das actividades dos museus para atingir um público mais vasto e melhorar a sua imagem de marca. A comunicação estratégica engloba várias ferramentas promocionais e canais de comunicação. A presente dissertação analisa as estratégias de comunicação de marketing dos museus gregos para aumentar a sua visibilidade junto do público nacional e internacional de modo a se adaptarem às exigências contemporâneas. Para o estudo, foram realizadas entrevistas semi-estruturadas a 17 museus gregos, sete públicos e dez privados, e foi utilizada uma abordagem de investigação qualitativa. Com este estudo, verificou-se que os museus gregos utilizam ferramentas de comunicação tradicionais e contemporâneas, as colaborações com outras instituições culturais e partes interessadas do turismo dão mais visibilidade, permitindo o intercâmbio de boas práticas e conhecimentos técnicos. A utilização de ferramentas de comunicação inovadoras intensificou-se significativamente após o surto da pandemia de COVID-19, que obrigou os museus gregos a atualizar as suas estratégias de comunicação online e a utilizar de forma mais consistente as ferramentas digitais. O estatuto jurídico dos museus e os níveis de independência do Estado podem ser fatores que afetam os níveis de inovação em termos de comunicação de marketing no contexto dos museus. O presente estudo mostra também que os museus gregos enfrentam desafios significativos, como a falta de recursos financeiros e de pessoal, que impedem a implementação de estratégias em maior escala. Conclui-se que um investimento mais significativo na presença online, em práticas sustentáveis e em parcerias poderia ajudar os museus gregos a desenvolver e a fazer avançar a sua comunicação estratégica a longo prazo.

**Palavras-chave:** Museus Gregos, comunicação de marketing, canais de comunicação, estratégias, marketing digital, desafios, inovação



## Abstract

In recent decades marketing communication strategies have been established as a central axis of museums' activities to target a broader audience and improve their brand image. Strategic communication encompasses various promotional tools and communication channels. The present dissertation examines Greek museums' marketing communication strategies to enhance their visibility among national and international audiences and how they have developed and evolved to adapt to contemporary demands. For the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 17 Greek museums, seven with public and ten with private museums and a qualitative research approach was used. The data analysis showed that Greek museums utilize both traditional and contemporary communication tools. The study also shows that collaborations with other cultural institutions, museums, and tourism stakeholders give more visibility and enable the exchange of good practices and technical knowledge. The use of innovative communication tools has significantly intensified after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced Greek museums to upgrade their online communication strategies and make more consistent use of digital tools. The legal status of the museums and the levels of independence from the state can be factors affecting the levels of innovation in terms of marketing communication in the museum context. The study also shows that Greek Museums face significant challenges, such as a lack of financial resources and staff, which hinder the implementation of strategies on a larger scale. The study concludes that more significant investment in online presence, sustainable practices, and partnerships could help Greek Museums develop and advance long-term strategic communication.

**Keywords:** Greek Museums, marketing communication, communication channels, strategies, digital marketing, challenges, innovation





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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

The increasing competition has led many cities to embrace solid marketing strategies in order to upgrade their image and attract a larger number of visitors, investors, cultural affairs and all the necessary means for their faster development (Altınbaşak & Yalçın, 2010). To achieve this mission, cities make use of their different capacities and tourist elements, among which museums are also included (Altınbaşak & Yalçın, 2010). Cultural material heritage can increase the city's attractiveness and improve visitors' perception (Hernández-Rojas et al., 2021). In many cases, museums serve towards the regeneration and the reintroduction of the image of the cities, giving them a competitive advantage compared to other urban centers; this phenomenon is assigned as "the Guggenheim effect" (Scrofani & Ruggiero, 2013). The role of museums in place branding can be substantial (Prentice, 2001). While their contribution to the growth of international tourism is irrefutable, these cultural institutions also offer many potentialities for social and economic development (Corbos & Popescu, 2011; Khaustova et al., 2022; Li, 2020; Plaza & Haarich, 2009). However, their efficient promotion in the international tourism industry requires a costly combination of cognition, finances and capacity, a combination which is rarely achievable by many museums that purely rely on their resources without any complementary support from the government (Khaustova et al., 2022).

Cultural tourism has become one of the most expanded forms of tourism in the last decades (Prentice, 2001). This form of tourism covers a broad spectrum of cultural products and activities, integral to museum tourism (Bogan et al., 2018). Museums are "guardians" of important items of the past and pieces of art (Bîră, 2018). Through the authenticity of the exhibited objects and collection, they make up for significant tourist attractions (Navarrete, 2019).

However, despite the expansion of cultural tourism in recent decades, the leading role of museums in the cultural tourism industry has lately shown some signs of weakening since tourists have started showing less interest in formal learning activities that museums traditionally offer. On the contrary, lately, they prefer accumulating enriching, authentic and multisensory experiences (Prentice, 2001; Mavragani & Lymperopoulos, 2013). Tourists nowadays are no longer simple observers of attractions and passive receivers of information, but they have turned into active participants in the "consuming" experiences (O'dell, 2007).

To cover these emerging new needs, museums have tried to reshape their offered products and services and have expanded their role by developing more market-oriented activities (Bantimaroudis et al., 2010; Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002), putting more emphasis on satisfying the needs of their visitors. It has been supported that the two main visitors' expectations encompass the participation in

fun and entertaining activities and the recollection of past events (Sheng & Chen, 2012). Among other suppliers, museums have also expanded their products and services towards offering engaging experiences to their visitors (Kotler, 2001; Prentice, 2001). Traditional static exhibitions of museums have started being complemented by interactive and live exhibitions and educational programs, often with the use of new technologies and the Internet (Mejón et al., 2004), audiovisual and multimedia tools (Bantimaroudis, 2011; Nechita, 2014). Cautiously channeling procedures between the museum visitor and the exhibits, such as narratives and story-telling techniques, help the visitor more profoundly and effortlessly conceive and interpret the complex meanings of the objects. At the same time a sense of cohesion between them is created, and a new dimension to the structure of the exhibition spaces is given (Roppola, 2012).

Additionally, museums' increased competition and limited funding have forced them to adopt new marketing policies, apply integrated marketing communication strategies, and create more communication channels with current and potential visitors (Nechita, 2014; Rentschler, 2004). Museum marketing is considered an exchange procedure between the museum and its visitors, where the museum supplies products or services of high value to its visitors, with the view to covering its costs or making a profit (Kotler et al., 2008; Kupec et al., 2020). Marketing communication is considered any audience-centered activity (Fill, 2009), and it is an intercorrelation of different elements such as information, images, emotions, and features that showcase the unique attributes of any product or service (Chaturvedi & Chaturvedi, 2011).

Nowadays, especially after the "de-demonization" of the application of marketing from museums, marketing communication constitutes a crucial aspect of museum management, and its significance is gradually increasing (Hausmann & Poellmann, 2013). Marketing communication strategies rely on many different communication tools, which can be traditional or innovative, like the Internet and digital media (Fill, 2006). Communication tools that could be specifically effective in increasing the number of tourists has also been recommended in the literature (Mudzanani, 2017).

The use of new technologies and online communication tools has mainly concerned museum managers in recent years. With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, cultural and heritage institutions and organizations faced an unprecedented reality. It is estimated that around 90% of museums globally temporarily closed their doors to the public, and this fluid situation jeopardized the viability of many museums (UNESCO, 2020). However, due to these new unforeseen circumstances, museums started implementing more integrated communication strategies by opening themselves up to the various possibilities that technology and multimedia offer to keep up with the uncertainty, ensure their sustainability (Kyprianos & Kontou, 2022) and confront the severe implications of their closure (Noehrer et al., 2021).



With various web-based tools, museums aim to build and maintain an ongoing connection with the public and promote their products and services. Through their online presence, museums primarily accomplish two main objectives: to empower their social role and to increase the number of onsite visitors (Bîră, 2018). Contemporary tourists rely significantly on Global Positioning System (GPS) to collect immediate information on tourist attractions (Brito, 2012), and museum visitors consider digital media as the most effective communication tool (Kupec et al., 2020).

In general, marketing communication and evaluating different strategies implemented are fundamental since, by investing in proper practices, museums can become considerably more visible in a highly competitive environment and attract many tourists year-round.

## 1.1 Relevance and purpose of the research

Greece is a country with a vibrant history and numerous cultural attractions. According to the most recently published UNESCO statistics, the total number of museums in Greece in 2020 was 487 (UNESCO, 2020). Despite the rich cultural attractions of the country, Greece is mainly associated with the sun and sea tourism model (Sotiriadis & Varvaressos, 2015). The seasonality in tourism demand, with large fluctuations in the arrival of tourists between summer and winter, is one of the main challenges the country has been dealing with (Dritsakis, 2008; Sotiriadis & Varvaressos, 2015). Seasonality is especially evident during August and September (Bantimaroudis, 2010).

Cultural tourism in Greece could actively contribute to sustainable tourism development and give additional value to the country's museums. However, many of them are poorly promoted and lack the implementation of sustainable marketing practices (Mavragani & Lympelopoulou, 2013; Mavragani, 2021). Moreover, through their direct connection to the tourism market, Greek museums could improve the quality of tourism (Mavragani, 2018). It has been claimed that museums, apart from all the economic and social benefits they bring to the destinations, can also help tourism managers address seasonality problems (Khaustova et al., 2022). More significant investment in cultural tourism could prolong seasonality and increase the economic benefits for the destinations.

In the literature, there are some studies concerning the marketing strategies of Greek museums of particular cities and the use of new technologies, mainly before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic (Amanatidis et al., 2020; Bantimaroudis et al., 2010; Vassiliadis & Belenioti, 2015; Boutsiouki & Polydora, 2020; Kyprianos & Kontou, 2022) However, none of these studies has dealt with the marketing communication strategies that are applied primarily to attract tourists.

According to the latest data of the Greek Statistical Authority (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2023), in the calendar year 2022, Greek museums received a total number of 4.6 million visitors, 2.8 million

of whom visited the seven most visited museums. This number was relatively small compared to the almost 11 million who visited archaeological sites (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2023). In other words, 61% of the museum visitors were concentrated in just seven museums. Despite the absence of specific data regarding the exact number of international visitors to Greek museums, the existing data showcase that the number of museum visitors significantly increases during the summer months when the flow of tourists entering the country is much higher.

This dissertation aims to shed light on the marketing communication strategies used by Greek museums to attract national and international visitors. Furthermore, it aims to examine the main challenges they confront and to what extent they have invested money and expertise in new technologies to communicate with their international audience. The four main research questions of this study are:

**RQ1:** To what extent do Greek museums implement integrated marketing communication strategies to attract tourists, and what are their primary tools?

**RQ2:** How do Greek museums use new online communication channels, and how has COVID-19 influenced the online communication practices of Greek Museums?

**RQ3:** Which are the emergent marketing strategies Greek museums use to engage tourists during their visit?

**RQ4:** What are the principal challenges Greek Museums face regarding implementing integrated marketing communication strategies to attract tourists?

Qualitative research with semi-structured interviews with Greek Museums was chosen as the research method. Seventeen interviews were conducted, seven with public museums, and ten with private.

The present is divided into six chapters. The first chapter addresses the topic of the dissertation, the topic's relevance, the objectives, and the research questions.

The second chapter, the literature review, is presented. This chapter incorporates various concepts. Firstly, the concept of museum tourism as a cultural tourism category is defined, and the concepts of marketing communication and marketing strategies in the museum context are analyzed. This chapter also includes a presentation of the most efficient marketing tools, the traditional and the more contemporary ones, used by the museums. This general overview follows a brief part regarding

the communication marketing strategies used by Greek Museums as they have been analyzed in the literature.

The third chapter focuses on the methodology employed for the study with specific reference to the research method process, data collection, and data analysis approach.

The fourth chapter contains the presentation of the results, while the fifth chapter encompasses a discussion of these results and a comparison with previous research.

Lastly, the sixth chapter includes the conclusions and the summary of the findings and the study's contribution on a theoretical and practical level are also discussed here. Moreover, the study's limitations and recommendations for future research are also part of this final chapter.



## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

This chapter offers a broader idea regarding the central axes of the topic. More specifically, it conceptualizes cultural and museum tourism, and it presents different definitions and theories on marketing communication in the museum context by making reference to conventional and contemporary communication channels. Lastly, previous literature on the marketing strategies of Greek museums is also presented at the end of the chapter to link it with the subject of the present research.

#### 2.1 Cultural tourism and cultural tourist

Cultural tourism, which traces back to the "Grand Tour" of the 17th century (Mavragani, 2021; Prentice, 2001), constitutes one of the most rapidly growing forms of tourism in recent decades (Khaustova et al., 2022). Various authors have tried to interpret the term "cultural tourism" (Galí-Espelt, 2012; Mousavi et al., 2016; Richards, 1996), but there is no widely accepted definition. However, despite the numerous interpretations, there has been consensus that cultural tourism is primarily triggered by cultural reasons and motivations (Galí-Espelt, 2012) and refers to this tourism segment that revolves around cultural and heritage attractions (Mavragani, 2021; Polyzos et al., 2007).

One of the most broadly accepted conceptual definitions of cultural tourism in the literature was given by Richards, according to whom cultural tourism involves "the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs" (Richards, 1996, p.24). In Europe, cultural tourism had traditionally been associated with visits to heritage sites (museums, monuments), but later, it also started integrating intangible elements of culture (Richards, 2002). Cultural tourism, also known as complex tourism, apart from its educational value, offers opportunities for leisure and cultural experiences (Khaustova et al., 2022).

Nowadays, UNWTO defines cultural tourism as "A type of tourism activity in which the visitor's essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products are related to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative

industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions" (UNWTO, 2017). Hughes (2002) supported that tourists might be interested in certain aspects of culture.

As it arises from the given terms, the definition has become much broader throughout the years. Nowadays, cultural tourism is associated with a wide range of cultural activities and tangible and intangible aspects of culture (Galí-Espelt, 2012).

As for cultural tourism, it is equally difficult to define who a cultural tourist is. With the absence of a commonly accepted definition, a cultural tourist is considered someone who travels with the purpose of 'consuming' culture. However, the intensity of cultural interest shown by the individual has led to numerous sub-categories of cultural tourists by scholars (Galí-Espelt, 2012). Silberberg (1995) identified four distinct categories of cultural tourists by evaluating their motivation. Those for whom culture is the primary motivation for travelling, those who are partly interested in culture, a third group that consists of those for whom cultural activities occur adjunctively when travelling, and the last one for whom visiting cultural attractions is accidental.

Some also supported that implications can arise due to the term's complexity. The fact that all those who get involved in cultural activities, regardless of their real motives, are considered cultural tourists, along with the absence of an accurate and formally approved methodology to evaluate their number and the negligence of examining their natural association with culture might create difficulties in estimating the actual size and the development of the market (Galí-Espelt, 2012; Hughes, 2002). Hughes (2002) pointed out that the vagueness around the definition of cultural tourism can create uncertainty for museum managers regarding the efficiency of their marketing strategies.

## 2.2 The Museum and Its Mission

One of the most relevant terms for the study is museums as a primary attraction for cultural tourism. The word "museum" comes from the Greek word "mouseion", since in ancient Greece, it was mainly a place dedicated to the cult of muses. It was much later, in the 18th century, that the Museum started being open to the public for the interpretation of its collections and up to this day, the role of Museums keeps becoming broader (McLean, 1995). The International Council of Museums defined the Museum as: "a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing" (ICOM, 2022, p. 3). Museums vary according to the collections they exhibit, their subject and their organizational structure (Mclean, 1994; Ginsburch & Mairesse, 1997). Recently, many museums, apart from their physical form, which concerns the on-site presentation of

collections, have also adopted a digital presence, the so-called “virtual museums” (Boutsiouki & Polydora, 2020).

Museums have a multi-functional role in society that keeps expanding (Bjeljac et al., 2011). Traditionally, their core mission was built around the custodial management of cultural objects, the collection, research, and protection of cultural heritage and artefacts (Bjeljac et al., 2011; Khaustova et al., 2022; Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002; Ginsburgh & Mairesse, 1997; Yucelt, 2001). Over the years, serving the public has become a dominant purpose of the museum function (Kotler & Kotler, 2000). Museums have turned into visitor-oriented institutions, and attracting an audience has become vital for their viability (Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002). Their objective has broadened from education-oriented to entertainment-oriented (Mclean, 1994). For this reason, besides their educational exhibitions, museums have introduced additional entertaining activities with participatory and interactive approaches and many other on-site services (Deffner et al., 2009). Rentschler (2004) explained that due to these determinative evolutions, the definition of the Museum has changed from functional (the object-based role of the Museum) to purposive (audience-based services of education and entertainment).

### **2.3 Museums as active partners in the tourism industry**

The relationship between museums and tourism is interdependent, and Khaustova (2022) has described the relationship between museums and tourism as mutually beneficial. Corbos and Popescu (2011) characterized museums as “key partners in the tourism industry”. Museums constitute a crucial column of cultural tourism (Boutsiouki & Polydora, 2020) and that has led to a significant increase in the number of institutions and their “users” (Gurt & Torres, 2007). Because of their collections’ authenticity through which visitors connect with the past (Navarrete, 2019) and the remarkable and diverse experiences they offer (Boutsiouki & Polydora, 2020), museums make up popular attractions and leisure destinations for tourists.

Museum tourism is a form of cultural tourism that refers to the visits taking place in the Museum and, apart from the transmission of information, involves different experiences and means of learning that provoke the arousal of feelings and emotions (Bogan et al., 2018). In the 20th century, museums started evolving into significant attractions for tourists and important generators of jobs for the local population and income for the local and national economy (Capstick, 1985; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Khaustova et al., 2022; Nechita, 2014). In Europe and North America, a significant number of large, modern and world-famous Museums have adapted to the needs of international visitors (Khaustova, 2022). In the Western world, museums have a significant position in the cultural world and constitute a pole of attraction for tourists (Tobelem, 2011). It has even been argued that many aspects of a

museum, its architecture, the expositions, and programs serve as tourist attractions (Kotler & Kotler, 2000). By adapting to this evolution, many Museums started marketing themselves as tourist attractions and commercializing their expositions (Prideaux & Kinimont, 1999). Ginsburch and Mairesse (1997) supported that in the case of some museums, the promotion of tourism might be a more robust objective than the research, and public authorities strongly support it.

Museums are an inseparable part of tourism, especially in urban areas (Thyne, 2001). Multiple authors in the literature have analysed the positive impacts that Museums can bring to the cities as tourist attractions. Corbos and Popescu (2011) referred to museums as critical elements for cities' economic and creative competitiveness. Scholars referred to cases where the construction of cultural amenities, such as Museums, becomes part of urban development projects and serve the cultural and economic regeneration of the cities (Capstick, 1985; Bantimaroudis, 2011; Plaza & Haarich, 2009; Zukin, 1998). Museums as new visual attractions can improve the image of the cities, and with their branding power, they increase the number of tourists and tourism expenditure (Plaza & Haarich, 2009; Zukin, 1998) and can even accomplish global visibility (Plaza & Haarich, 2009). Through international recognition, they offer a competitive advantage to cities by "broadcasting" their image over their borders (Scrofani & Ruggiero, 2013). On the other side, because of tourism, museums gain financial resources, develop more modern practices and expand their exhibitions (Khaustova et al., 2022).

## 2.4 Museum communication and marketing

This section presents the critical column of marketing communication in the museum context and the different communication channels and tools implemented by museums to raise public awareness.

### 2.4.1 Strategic communication and its role in museums

Bantimaroudis (2011) defined cultural communication as the process of creating and promoting a cultural product to the audience (Bantimaroudis, 2011), while marketing communication is considered the process that can increase brand awareness and create a unique and positive connection with it (Prikrylová and Jahodová, as cited in Kupec et al., 2020). Mejón et al. (2004) described cultural marketing as a procedure in which a cultural product or a service is distributed to the market according to its demand, using communication strategies after setting specific, quantifiable goals. According to the authors, the marketing strategy can be successful if the organization creates and retains a loyal, long-lasting relationship with the consumers (Mejón et al., 2004).



The principal aim of museum communication is to increase the levels of museums' publicity (Mejón et al., 2004). According to Hooper-Greenhill (2000), strategic communication for post-modern museums is vital since it reinforces the relationship between the museum and the public and facilitates the distribution of information about cultural heritage while empowering the museum's reputation. Capriotti (2013) stated that strategic communication is necessary for museums to achieve their mission, attract a larger audience, build a long-term relationship with it, and gain a more substantial reputation.

Communication is considered one of the central pillars of an organization's function (ICOM, 2019) and should have a central role in the marketing management of museums (Kupec et al., 2020). In the case of museums, the communication tools used should be adapted to the needs of the audience and the message they want to convey (Kotler and Kotler, 2008). This is why, in the last decades, museums have started putting more effort into understanding their public to secure their longevity and cope with their social and economic obligations (Rentschler, 2004). According to Nechita (2014), museums often try to conduct different types of visitor studies before planning and taking decisions. Thyne (2001) highlighted the importance of psychographic segmentations so that museum marketers can extract information regarding the visitors' motivations for visiting.

McClean (1994) pointed out that museums have three channels of communication, the so-called marketing channels: to their audience, their funding bodies and among the museum's employees. Strategic communication concerns the inner and outer communication processes of the institution. Internal communication serves the interaction between employees (Capriotti, 2013), and Gilmore and Rentschler (2002) considered internal communication and cooperation between the different museum parties as a prerequisite for achieving external communication. This way, museums can better design communication plans to increase visibility.

Capriotti (2013) described the four stages of communication planning based on Corporate Communication and Public Relations. These stages are the research of the institution's audience, the design of the strategy, the implementation of the plan and its evaluation. Mejón et al. (2004) suggested that museums should give priority to examining their visitors' motivations before formulating their final product and setting permissible prices so that they can design a communication strategy. Kotler and Keller (2009) recommended the use of multiple communication tools to promote the value of their services (Kotler & Keller, 2009), and Mudzanani (2017) suggested that the integrated use of various communication tools is critical to ensuring the success of the communication strategy and the consistency of the messages conveyed.

According to Śmiałowicz (2020), planning an efficient communication policy is one of the biggest challenges that the marketing managers of museums confront. Through her study, Capriotti (2013) pinpointed numerous omissions regarding many museums' communication activities, such as the

absence of a long-term communication plan, the limited financial resources dedicated to the communication activities and the investment in low-cost options.

#### 2.4.2 The background and the significance of Museum marketing

Cultural organizations started adopting marketing techniques in the 1980s (Mejón et al., 2004). For many museums worldwide, they became the means to establish better communication with the public and improve their image (Yucelt, 2001). Such techniques included promotion through advertisements, public relations, public announcements, and posters. Some museums also introduced corporate sponsorship to keep fares low and attract more visitors.

As many scholars explained, applying marketing techniques in the museum context has always caused great controversy since its essence has been considered incompatible with the museums' non-profit character and cultural value (Camarero & Garrido, 2008; Li, 2020; Rentschler, 2004). Kotler (2005), discussing the expansion of marketing in non-commercial organizations, explained that commercialism seemed to be something controversial with the exhibitions and mission of the museum for museum directors. Nechita (2014) and Tobelem (1992) demonstrated the fear that by introducing marketing activities, there is a danger of commodifying museums and turning them into products, alienating them from their cultural responsibilities and mission.

Despite the reservations expressed, nowadays, marketing is applied for most museum activities with positive results for their function (Kotler, 2005). Camarrero and Carrido (2008) evaluated that market orientation can positively influence the performance of non-profit organizations. However, they also underlined that one of the challenges that museums must overcome is that the marketing orientation should be in agreement with the mission of the organizations, which should not be alternated just for the sake of increasing its revenues (Camarrero & Carrido, 2008; Kotler & Kotler, 2000).

In many countries, museums have been facing a limitation in the revenue they receive from the government (Rentschler, 2004) and introducing marketing seemed to be an essential solution to expand their audience, increase their resources, implement their cultural programs appropriately and even transmit cultural and historical information and educate the public (Li, 2020).

Additionally, museums are subject to accountability to their funding bodies (Cole, 2008; Mclean, 1994; Mclean, 1995; Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002), and they need to find additional financial means like donations to survive and ensure their financial viability (Mejón et al., 2004). Rentschler (2004) referred to a triple, which consists of a balance of governmental funding, visitor revenue and sponsorship for the museums' sustainability.

Another reason concerns the emerging competition between different museums on an international level and between museums and other cultural and leisure tourist attractions, which also claim visitors' time (Deffner et al., 2009; Kotler & Kotler, 2000; Nechita, 2014).

Lastly, gradually, museums are becoming more visitor-oriented and by introducing marketing, they can better understand their audience's needs and behaviors (Cole, 2008; Deffner et al., 2009; McLean, 1995; Nechita, 2014).

### 2.4.3 Key components of Museum marketing

Museums are service organizations (Fahy, 1995) and their services are a composition of multiple elements. Their exhibits, the way they are structured and interpreted, and the museum's physical aspects constitute part of its service (Mejón et al., 2004). Mclean (1994) stated that museums display all the typical features of services: intangibility (the objects are tangible, but the experience and the emotions are intangible elements), inseparability (education and entertainment constitute integral parts of the service), heterogeneity (lack of standardization in the provided services), perishability (the museum experience cannot be stored) and lack of ownership.

By presenting a conceptual framework, Gilmore and Rentschler (2002) referred to the three most important dimensions of museum marketing: education, accessibility, and communication. Educating visitors is the central mission of the museum. The variety of collections and the existence and quality of special exhibitions can make the museum more appealing and increase repeat visitors. Accessibility refers to the different museum services and facilities intended to cover the needs of a wide range of potential visitors (first-time visitors, tourists, and students). Communication is vital for the visitor's experience, and it concerns the interaction between the museum staff and the public before and during their visit and the interpretation of the exhibits by the visitors. As the authors demonstrated, improving all three dimensions is vital to accomplish the museum's multi-dimensional mission and to meet visitors' needs.

Camarero and Garrido (2008) categorized museums into three categories according to the management-marketing approach. The first is the custodial-oriented museums which emphasize preservation, research, and public education. The second one is the sales-oriented museum, which highly invests in advertising, communication, marketing techniques, public relations, branding and visitor interaction through exhibitions. Sales orientation can increase the number of visitors and bring powerful economic results. The last category is the customer-oriented museum which is committed to satisfying the needs of different customers by organizing a wide range of events and activities that help to get insight into their expectations.

Gilmore and Rentschler (2002) recommended that contemporary museums must balance the two seemingly contradictory roles; preserving their traditional custodial and educational role on the one hand and becoming more market-oriented to attract visitors on the other hand. According to Li (2020), this balance could come to fruition with marketing strategies: preserving and disseminating culture and heritage and attracting more visitors to increase funds.

## 2.5 Common marketing techniques for museums and marketing recommendations in the literature

### 2.5.1 Promotional tools to increase visibility

Various promotional and communication tools have been presented in the literature as relevant to marketing museums.

McLean (1997) considered word-of-mouth, press articles and public relations as museums' most potent communication strategies. Yucelt (2001) and Mudzanani (2017) have highlighted the effectiveness of word-of-mouth promotion for museums, and Yucelt (2001) supported that word-of-mouth strategies, such as advertising in the press and the media, can be highly efficient in attracting long-distance travelers.

Especially for the case of tourist segmentation, museums should pursue their cooperation with tourist offices and operators and aim to their promotion through leaflets at hotels and airports (Mudzanani, 2017). The author underlined that public relations with all the tourism and hospitality industry stakeholders could reinforce the museum's image among visitors.

Furthermore, documentaries and programs that educate the public have been enumerated in the literature as efficient promotional tools (Anderson, 2004) and as a non-traditional advertising method based on content marketing (Li, 2020). As Li (2020) proposed, cultural products and documentaries projected on television or radio should be used by museums more occasionally to promote their collection and increase their visibility to the audience. In a similar mindset, Cole (2008) suggested that advertisements and exhibition programs should be promoted by specialized media, such as thematic magazines to attract visitors particularly interested in the organized events and exhibitions.

According to Rentschler (2004) marketing strategies must have a unique and innovative character, imposed by the post-modern tendencies of the market, but also be adapted to each museum's strengths and available resources. It has also been recommended that marketing efforts in the museum context should have an innovative character that differentiates them from traditional marketing methods (Mejón et al., 2004; Rentschler, 2004), while Kupec et al. (2020) suggested that marketing

communication strategies should constantly be evaluated and adapted to market trends to bring results.

### 2.5.2 Organizing temporary and themed-based exhibitions

Li (2020) recommended the organization of attractive exhibitions by museums as an efficient way to attract more visitors. As she explained, museums must become more product-oriented and develop temporary and themed-based exhibitions that raise socially topical, interesting topics for the public. Temporary exhibitions can empower the museum's prestige and publicity and increase the number of visitors (Tzortzi & Koukouvaou, 2019). It was supported that the distinctive and unique nature of the temporary exhibitions by complementing the permanent exhibitions can be a successful method for museums to gain new visitors and retain loyal and regular audiences (Gilmore & Rentschler, 2002; Tobelem, 2011). Thus, according to Tobelem (2011), temporary events can be more easily communicated to the public than permanent exhibitions. However, the author highlighted that possibly for the case of tourists, temporary exhibitions might not be essentially the primary motivation to visit a museum.

## 2.6 Museum communication marketing strategies in the digital era

### 2.6.1 The online presence of the Museum and Web 2.0 possibilities

One of the main topics raised in the literature and potentially the most relevant for contemporary museum communication concerns their online presence and the use of digital communication tools.

In the modern tourism industry, information and communication technologies and a solid e-marketing strategy are indispensable innovations for companies to retain a competitive advantage of their products and services (Labanauskaitė et al., 2020). Various museums in the last two decades have entered the digital age very vigorously. They have taken advantage of digital communication and numerous other innovative prospects offered by the Internet (Scrofani & Ruggiero, 2013).

New technologies, such as the Web and social media, complement the traditional advertising tools, enabling museums to reach a much wider public, previously unapproachable audiences (Zingone, 2019) and even potential visitors on a global scale (Mejón et al., 2004; Padilla-Meléndez & del Águila-Obra, 2013). Significantly, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had a strong influence on the operation of numerous global museums, forcing them to redefine their online communication strategies to ensure their viability (Kyprianos & Kontou, 2022; Noehrer et al., 2021).

In the cultural context, digital marketing constitutes a part of the entire museum's marketing strategy. Through its application, cultural institutions can more effortlessly reach their objectives, increase their sources of income, and draw international tourists to the physical space by offering an online customized experience. (Liew & Loh, 2009).

Web 2.0 offers museums unlimited possibilities to meet their communication needs, such as the feasibility of uploading content on their website and social media, sharing podcasts, uploading videos, and offering access to their collections (Camarero et al., 2016). It facilitates the communication of their events and activities to current and potential visitors (Boutsiouki & Polydora, 2020). Additionally, it allows museums to develop online any activity that takes place in the museum physically, such as buying tickets and participating in fundraising campaigns and virtual tours. Mejón et al. (2004) suggested that all museums should include all their products and services online, from basic information to guided tours and analytical catalogues. Nowadays, investment of money and time in online communication is considered more than necessary (Zingone, 2019; Russo et al., 2008).

### 2.6.2 Towards a more participatory online communication model

Apart from the promotional aspect, another significant aspect of online communication is the dialogue it creates with the audience. With multimedia, museums give an innovative character to their products and offer new cultural experiences with a participatory approach (Padilla-Meléndez & del Águila-Obra, 2013).

Web 2.0 is transforming into a place of dialogue and debate between cultural institutions and their audience (Zingone, 2019; Russo et al., 2008). According to Russo et al. (2008), cultural institutions with their online presence can retain their "authority" and provide authentic cultural information when users often find misleading and unreliable information distributed online. Users interested in acquiring cultural information online show increased trust in the institutions' knowledge compared to other entertaining sources (Noehrer et al., 2021). Cole (2008) supported that the Internet, with all its possibilities, allows museums to create "virtual communities" where museum lovers can participate, share their interests and exchange information, which could help museums gain popularity in a broader circle of people.

### 2.6.3 Forming virtual museum networks

Another possibility the Internet offers is the cooperative actions and exchange practices between museums. The development of museum networks with new technologies has allowed the distribution

of information and communication between museums and their audience, which has been highly facilitated, especially with the museum documentation systems (Fahny, 2013). Fronzetti Colladon et al. (2020) recommended that museums form online co-partnering marketing strategies with other museums to improve the quality of the content offered and attract a more considerable number of visitors. Web 2.0 gives the possibility for the creation of virtual museum networks. With the creation of museum networks, a form of synergy is created between museums, which comprises the sharing of tangible and intangible assets such as practices, resources, suppliers, and collaborative actions like creating joint exhibitions with an international appeal and the centralization of specific projects (Scrofani & Ruggiero, 2013). Cole (2008) claimed that participation in a museum network allows the exchange of fundamental marketing and management practices between professionals and can make the institution more visible among national and international visitors.

## 2.7 The online museum channels

Nowadays, museums use various online communication channels to maintain ongoing communication with online users and entice them to a physical visit. Websites and social media stand out as pivotal online communication channels, a prerequisite for every contemporary museum.

### 2.7.1 Museum websites

One of the central axes of the museums' online presence constitutes their website. Well-designed websites are considered an efficient marketing aspect for contemporary museums (Deffner et al., 2009; Mudzanani, 2017). Camarero et al. (2016) examined the online communication strategies of the major art museums worldwide and their impact on the web traffic of the museum. Websites are used as marketing communication tools for museums through which they distribute their products and services to the public (Camarero et al., 2016; Lehman & Roach, 2011).

Corona (2021) featured the museum's website as the "visiting card of the museum" and supported that it contributes to making the institution more visible to Internet users. Marty (2007) found out that most people, especially travelers, prefer to advise the museum's website when planning an actual visit and that it can determine their decision to visit. For that, the author suggested that museums make websites rich in information, appealing and luring to inspire both first-time and repeated visitors. Śmiałowicz (2020) highlighted the importance of responsiveness and usability functions of the museum websites.

Websites must also showcase unique characteristics and features to build a stronger connection with the physical museum, such as virtual exhibitions (Marty, 2007). Scholars have supported that virtual collections can encourage users to physically visit the museums since many virtual users will be stimulated to pursue direct contact with the artefact at a future point (Siano et al., 2010; Scrofani & Ruggiero, 2013). Museums located at destinations of low competitiveness levels can use virtual exhibitions to raise funds and attract more visitors (Siano et al., 2010).

The content published on the website is also considered to be important. Camarero et al. (2016) examined the effectiveness of three different online communication strategies used for museums' websites and their efficiency in increasing the web traffic.

Content orientation is a one-way communication activity from the museum to the consumer. It aims to provide those who visit the website with all the necessary information, such as the museum's location, the operating hours, the program of the activities and even detailed information about the exhibitions (Corona, 2021). The second, "interaction orientation", creates a process of interaction and co-creation between the museum and the public with the active participation of the last. The last strategy is the "transaction orientation". This orientation refers to all the trade transactions on the museum's website. These can include ticket purchasing, shopping from the gift shop, membership registrations and others (Camarero et al., 2016). The possibility of buying tickets online increases the access possibilities for the audience and upgrades the online visitor experience (Śmiałowicz, 2020

Camarero et al. (2016), through their study, showcased that combining all the above orientations would be the more efficient to increase the number of online visitors and retain them on the website for a long time. Moreover, vivid images and videos that provoke stronger emotions and online interactive and participatory user experiences can considerably influence web traffic (Camarero et al., 2016).

### 2.7.2 Museum social media

Social media platforms constitute another emerging and central online communication channel for museums. Many museums nowadays have started using social networks that give additional value to their audience (Camarero et al., 2016).

Kyprianos & Kontou (2022) described social media as a "flexible communication tool" of low cost with long-term effects (Russo et al., 2007). It is considered that social media have an increased advertising power, and by posting up-to-date and engaging content, they can help museums expand their audience and gain repetitive visitors (Śmiałowicz, 2020; Zafiroopoulos et al., 2015). It was also



supported that their use can be especially beneficial for museums of smaller sizes without the financial resources to implement large-scale communication strategies and campaigns (Corona, 2021).

Social media can bring multiple opportunities for museums, like promoting their brand by announcing future exhibitions, communicating engagingly with the public and receiving reviews (Kyprianos & Kontou, 2022). They even allow the exchange of information between museum specialists and the audience (Russo et al., 2007).

Instagram can be a multi-functional tool for institutions with a valuable, informative role since, with the appropriate images and words used, they can describe technical and historical aspects of the collected artworks, provide detailed information about the museum's operational details and its temporary and special exhibitions (Zingone, 2019). Especially with the hit of COVID-19, numerous European institutions started using social media in innovative and creative ways, such as producing movies about the artefacts with descriptions of artists and curators, broadcasting interviews with them to keep an ongoing dialogue with the public and organizing educational and fun activities (Kyprianos & Kontou, 2022).

Another aspect broadly discussed in the literature is that social media platforms facilitate a smoother transition from a one-to-many communication model to a many-to-many since social media elaborate the creation of a participative cultural communication model, serving the visitor's desire for active participation in an interactive environment (Russo et al., 2008; Kyprianos & Kontou, 2022). This new model enables museums, on the one hand, to retain their authority and authenticity in terms of the communicated information and, on the other hand, to initiate a dialogue with the audience (Russo et al., 2007). For example, Instagram is a place to share between the museum and its visitors (Śmiałowicz, 2020), who can acquire a participatory role and share their own stories and images regardless of location. Zingone (2019) claimed that this interactive, narrative environment can become "a source of inspiration" for potential future travelers.

Furthermore, the user-generated content posted on social media can bolster and enhance the museum's brand awareness and cultivate a more profound rapport between the audience and the museum's identity. According to Fronzetti Colladon et al. (2020), a large volume of online posts and the rich quality information provided by users online can reinforce the museum's brand and lead to a rise in the number of visitors. They stated, "Tourists might be influenced by the awareness effect generated by online word-of-mouth, that is, the presence of brand names" (Fronzetti Colladon et al., 2020). According to Cole (2008), branding is an essential element in the communication strategy of museums as it helps to increase the prestige of the museum and helps strengthen its identity. Brand name awareness increases the chances of attracting potential visitors. It is reinforced and retained through different forms of media, advertising and public relations. Cole (2008) also associated brand name

awareness with quality, which is customers' belief regarding the quality of products and services of a particular brand (Caldwell, 2000).

Another aspect concerns the number of social media platforms museums should retain. Śmiałowicz (2020) suggested that the more social media platforms museums use, the more efficient, especially when the activity is accompanied by eye-catching posts, edutainment, vivid images, videos and storytelling. On the other hand, Kyprianos and Kontou (2022) expressed that the number of platforms used is less important than the quality of the content posted there.

Despite all the advantages social media can offer to increase the online visibility of museums, scholars have highlighted that many of them have not completely taken advantage of their use, and they often neglect their power (Amanatidis et al., 2020; Russo et al., 2008; Śmiałowicz, 2020; Zafiropoulos et al., 2015). Zafiropoulos et al. (2015) supported that museums should seize the opportunities that social media can offer and integrate them into their marketing strategy to achieve a higher engagement with their existing audience and reach a wider audience beyond the standard. As the authors demonstrated, the success of these museums lies in implementing a well-organized and well-structured strategy with the collaboration of specialized marketers, communication experts and curators.

## 2.8 Communication strategies of Greek museums

This section presents the role of Greek museums in the national tourism industry and the existing literature on marketing communication strategies of museums in Greece.

### 2.8.1 The position of Greek museums in the tourism industry

For the Greek tourism industry, cultural tourism is considered one of its central economic pillars. Greece has a rich history and a great variety of cultural attractions and various museums that offer a competitive advantage to the country (Polyzos et al., 2007). These museums should have a central role in the national tourism policy (Boutsiouki & Polydora, 2020).

Some of the museums operate under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, while others are controlled by local private bodies (Boutsiouki & Polydora, 2020). Many museums in Greece, especially archaeological ones, are under state control. (Kyprianos & Kontou, 2022). It was supported that public museums in Greece, using appropriate strategic marketing techniques, could be one of the main drivers of sustainable tourism development (Mavraganni, 2021).

However, on many occasions, the country's cultural resources are not sufficiently promoted, so tourists are unaware of their existence (Polyzos et al., 2007). Especially for public museums, decision-making often becomes difficult, as complex proceedings are required. This, combined with the lack of financial independence and the staff reduction because of the financial crises (Garezou & Keramidas, 2017), affects crucial aspects such as budget management, policy and marketing strategies, as well as the management of their social media (Kyprianos & Kontou, 2022). Bantimaroudis (2010) captured a difference in the operation between public and private museums in Greece. According to the author, public museums invest little in public relations activities to increase their media exposure but rely mainly on the uniqueness of their exhibits. In contrast, private museums that have more independence strive for media promotion.

### 2.8.2 Marketing communication strategies of Greek museums

Marketing communication in the context of Greek museums is not a typical research topic, and only a few studies appear in the literature. Tzortzi and Koukouvaou (2019) analyzed the significance of temporary exhibitions to increase the visibility of the national museums and the country overall. Through the analysis of the travelling exhibition in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, they explain how this strategy constitutes a powerful marketing technique that consolidates cooperation with foreign museums and can significantly empower the Museum's communication policy and improve its image.

Most of the studies in the literature concern the online activities of Greek museums and the use of new technologies. Boutsiouki and Polydora (2020), through the analysis of the websites of 19 archaeological museums, found that most Greek museums have rudimentary websites that, while they are primarily user-friendly, provide limited opportunities for interaction with potential visitors. Only a few of them have adopted some innovative approaches. This can have negative implications for the levels of visitation. The importance of well-designed websites adapted to the visitors' needs is highlighted in the literature since they can attract new visitors to the Museum, even those who are generally not interested in visiting one (Marty, 2007)

Amanatidis et al. (2020) examined the use of social media by Archaeological Greek museums and the response of visitors to the content shared online. In 2020, when the research took place, as shown by the survey, social media use was not a common communication practice for Greek museums since, at that time, only the Acropolis Museum maintained an official Instagram account. The rest of the archaeological museums would only gain visibility on Instagram through photos uploaded by users who would share the Museum's location.

Kyprianos and Kontou (2022) analyzed the communication practices on social media of Greek museums in Attica, the region that accepts the most significant number of tourists. According to the authors, Facebook is the most common social network museum used in the region, with Instagram and YouTube platforms following. The survey results showed that the main objectives of social media marketing were primarily promotional and informative to turn virtual visitors into real ones and to build a more substantial reputation for the institution. On the contrary, the use for promotional purposes was more limited.

The absence of a well-structured strategy with well-defined objectives is the main challenge for Greek museums (Kyprianos & Kontou, 2022). Kyprianos and Kontou (2022) referred to a "conservative communication policy," as museums are restricted to promoting their activities but lack the effort to interact more intensively with the public.

According to Boutsiouki et al. (2020), bureaucratic dysfunctions, the difficulty organizations face in adopting new practices, and the lack of sufficient financial resources are the three leading causes of the slow digitization of museums in Greece. This sluggishness creates obstacles to fostering communication with the public, improving their image, and attracting more national and international visitors. Regarding social media marketing, Kyprianos and Kontou (2022) identified the principal challenges that museums face: the limited time and resources allocated for their management, the absence of staff, and the lack of expertise.

Mavraganni (2018) argued that the Greek Ministry of Culture and Tourism should collaborate with the museums' directors to develop efficient marketing practices, achieve higher levels of visitor satisfaction, and provide services of better quality. Sustainable tourism development could become a reality by developing strategic marketing plans for the museums in Greece since satisfied visitors will diffuse positive information for the museum and the country (Mavraganni, 2018).

## CHAPTER 3

# Methodology

After presenting the study's theoretical background in the previous chapter and defining the research objectives, this chapter aims to describe the research methodology. The methodology chapter presents how the research was built up and developed, the different stages followed by the researcher, the research approach implemented, and the tools undertaken to collect primary data, which will complement the existing literature.

### 3.1 Research Approach

According to previous studies conducted among public museums in Greece, most of the Greek museums had not yet implemented structured marketing strategies, nor had they taken advantage of new technologies. The broad objective of the research is to investigate the evolution and the current state of marketing communication strategies of museums in Greece and the main challenges they face in increasing their visibility and attracting a wider international audience.

A qualitative research approach was chosen for the study as it allows the researcher to understand the participants' views (Bell, 2001). Qualitative research is used to analyze facts, not assumptions about them. Therefore, the respondents' experience was investigated in this context, and thus, accurate data was extracted. Although qualitative research enables the researcher to obtain clear and detailed information about the participants' views, it usually addresses a small number of participants. Thus, on the one hand, an in-depth understanding of the respondents' perceptions is allowed; on the other hand, the conclusions drawn are challenging to generalize.

This type of research allows the researcher to gain more insights about a problem or an issue that has not been sufficiently investigated and is quite ambiguous. The research aims to explore the current marketing landscape of Museums in Greece to attract tourists and the main challenges these museums face (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2014). For this exploratory study, qualitative data was collected by conducting in-depth interviews with professionals holding key museum positions. In-depth interviews are among the most common methods for collecting data in exploratory research (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2014). The researcher interacts with the interviewee to investigate their perceptions, attitudes, knowledge, or experience regarding the examined topic (Patton, 2005; Rowley, 2012). In marketing, in-depth interviews with people holding key positions can be preferable since they can give access to more detailed information (Rowley, 2012).

The choice of interviews, compared to other research tools, such as online ethnography or observations, assists in a better understanding of the topic by giving access to targeted, detailed and accurate information and enhances the reliability and validity of the research through personal interaction with museum professionals and marketing experts.

### 3.2 Interview Structure

For the research, semi-structured interviews were conducted. An interview guide was developed with pre-defined open-ended questions about the research topic. Semi-structured interviews are the most common interview format used in the qualitative research approach (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). They usually consist of a list of pre-set questions that guide the issues the researcher wishes to cover during the interview (Isari & Pourkos, 2015).

One of the main advantages of using semi-structured interviews is their combination of structure and flexibility since the interviewer usually follows a topic guide. However, at the same time, this structure can be adapted to the needs of each specific participant with whom the researcher interacts (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

The semi-structured interview consists of a series of questions that have been formulated, and their sequence is logical. The researcher can omit some questions or change their order whenever necessary. However, the questions must cover the topic the researcher is investigating, and the participant can answer freely without guidance (Bell, 2001). The researcher can come up with follow-up questions in case they need more clarification regarding a particular point brought up by the interviewee (Kallio et al., 2016). Follow-up questions enable the researcher to understand more profoundly what the interviewee means and to fully explore diverse aspects of the answers provided (Qu & Dumay, 2011; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

The interview guide (Appendix 1) was formulated based on existing literature presented in the literature review chapter and the research questions posed by the researcher. The first question asked the participants to provide some information regarding the legal status of the museum, and the second question was to present some demographic characteristics of their visitors, such as nationality, gender, and age if they were available to share. The following questions were divided into four sections according to their subject matter. The first section concerned Greek museums' major marketing communication strategies to attract visitors. The questions of the second section aimed to investigate the use of innovative marketing communication methods by the Greek museums to increase their visibility. The third section of questions was about the marketing strategies museums use to engage

their visitors during their visit, while the fourth section aimed to gain insight into the main challenges that Greek museums confront in organizing and upgrading their marketing communication practices.

### 3.3 Sample size selection

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research does not aim to develop numerical representations and generalized conclusions but to showcase multiple aspects of the problem, comprehend it, and analyze it in depth (Queirós et al., 2017). For that, qualitative research usually involves the purposeful selection of a relatively small sample of cases. These are examined in depth, allowing the researcher to gather full-fledged information to illuminate the study's research questions (Patton, 2005).

The researcher set four inclusion criteria to ensure a representative and related to the research sample.

The first criterion was to include museums of different legal entities, both private and state-run. Public and private museums often have different organizational structures, financial resources, and goals, which may affect and differentiate their marketing strategies and their effectiveness in attracting visitors. According to Monastiridis (2021), in Greece, the relationship with the state can be a determinant factor concerning innovation development in cultural organizations.

The second criterion was to include a broader spectrum of museum types based on their exhibits. The determination of these two criteria aims to offer richer data and provide a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of marketing strategies in the museum sector. This diversity allows for a broader exploration of typical policies, emerging and innovative approaches and potential cross-pollination of ideas and practices between diverse types of museums.

The third criterion concerned the geographical representation of the sample. As the research concerns the strategies of Greek museums in general, a sample from museums distributed in different parts of the country should be assured. Typically, museums located in major urban centers or critical tourist destinations have a higher flow of tourists than museums located in provincial cities, which might be connected to their marketing and communication policies.

The fourth and final criterion was to include a wide range of museums of different sizes, both more prominent museums that attract many visitors and smaller museums with fewer visitors. Smaller-sized museums may encounter multiple challenges and constraints that hinder their development and drastically reduce their popularity among tourists.

In order to have a relatively adequate sample of participants, the researcher contacted around 60 museums in total. For the selection of the sample of public museums, the researcher initially decided to contact the museums that had the most significant number of visitors in 2021 and 2022, according

to the official government statistics published online. In the first stage, the researcher contacted all the museums either by telephone or by physical visit, depending on their location, providing them with information about the subject of the research and its purpose. In the second stage, an e-mail was sent to all these Museums, in which the researcher gave more thorough details about the research.

Since only one of the most visited museums of the last two years was willing to provide some information, the researcher contacted the next most visited museums. Additionally, for the sample's representativeness, the researcher reached smaller museums and museums in smaller provincial towns with a relatively low visitor rate.

The arrangement of interviews with public museums was extremely challenging since most state museums did not reply to the e-mail sent to them. In contrast, those that responded negatively invoked different reasons for not being able to participate, like extreme workload or the inexistence of a marketing or a communication department.

In contrast to the public museums, the private museums were chosen regardless of their size and based on the type of activities they organize and their online presence. The museums chosen are all located in Athens and Thessaloniki since most of the private museums in Greece are located in these two cities. Apart from a few exceptions, most private museums the researcher contacted were willing to arrange an interview and share information.

### 3.4 Interview process

The museums that accepted to participate in the research designated the suitable person to provide the necessary information and ensure the collected data's reliability. The persons appointed held one of the following titles: General Director of the Museum, Head of Administration, Communication and Public Relations Director, Communications and Promotions Director, Marketing Director, Resource Development Director, Head of Development and New Technologies, and Social Media Manager.

Seventeen interviews were conducted, seven with public and ten with private museums (Appendix 2). The interviews took place over three months, starting in April 2023 and ending in July 2023. Of the 17 interviews, 15 were face-to-face, one by telephone, and one online. Face-to-face interviews allow increased engagement with the interviewee, often giving the researcher access to rich information through social cues (Sarstedt & Mooi, 2014). However, they can be more costly and time-consuming (Opdenakker, 2006). The museums of the study are located in six different cities in Greece (see Appendix 2), where the interviewees travelled at their own expense.

Before starting the interview, all interviewees were informed about the interviewer's commitment to respect the anonymity of the interviewees, their right to refuse to answer any questions they wished



and to withdraw from the interview at any given moment. Additionally, permission to record the interview was sought from all the respondents. All interviews were conducted in Greek, and each lasted from thirty minutes to one hour and thirty minutes.

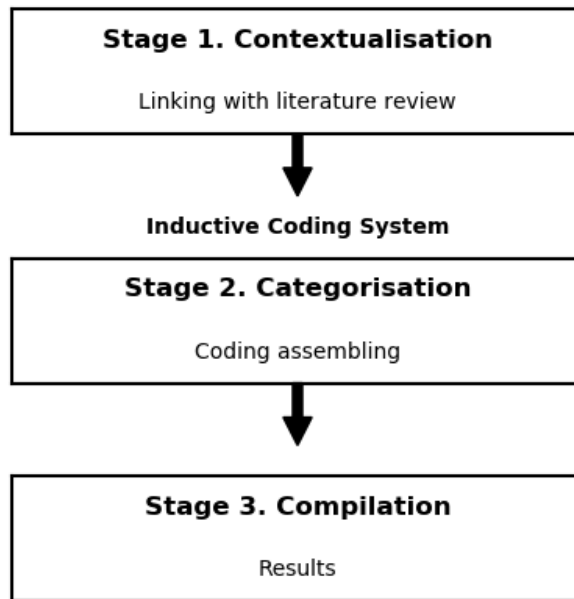
After completing each interview, a word-by-word transcription of the content of the discussion followed, and the researcher checked the content twice.

### 3.5 Data analysis approach

The study was designed to explore Greek museums' standard and emerging marketing communication strategies to attract tourists and the challenges they face. Inductive reasoning was used to add to the existing literature. The inductive approach is based entirely on the experience of the participants, and from the analysis of the raw data, the researcher can extract ideas and themes from it (Thomas, 2006). The first part was formulating codes for categorisation, utilizing pertinent codes from the interviews. The coding was conducted manually without the help of any software, as the interviews were carried out in Greek, and none of the well-known softwares, such as MAXQDA, NVivo, and ATLAS.ti, are not available for coding in Greek. At the same time, translating the interview content into English could alter the meaning in some parts.

The final section establishes categories/clusters that reply to the research questions posed by the researcher and certain categories/clusters are subdivided into smaller sub-groups based on the similarity of their content.

The coding of the interviews is presented in Appendix 4, and Figure 1 describes the methodology followed.



**Figure 3.1** *Methodologic Framework. The figure was reproduced based on a figure in Bilro & Cunha (2021).*

## CHAPTER 4

### Results

From the analysis of the results, seven categories/clusters emerged:

- A. The organizational structure of marketing communication strategies
- B. Marketing communication channels
- C. Co-operations
- D. Digital strategies
- E. Enriching on-site experiences
- F. Audience research
- G. Challenges and future changes

#### **A. The organizational structure of the marketing communication strategies**

Regarding the first cluster, the answers provided by the museums created a set of sub-groups due to their similarity. The first was *the legal status* of the Museum, whether they are public or private (A1-A3). Four museums are public museums under the control of the Regional Antiquities Department (A1), three museums are public museums operating under the supervision of a Board of Directors (A2), and ten museums are private (A3).

The second sub-group concerns the *financial support and the resources* museums receive to develop and implement their actions and strategies (A4-A6). All seven public museums have stated that they receive state funding (A4), the ten private museums do not receive any funding by the part of the state (A5), while five of the private museums have received funding from the NSRF for specific actions (A6).

Regarding *demographics*, seven museums face seasonality in the number of international tourists (A7). This means the number of international tourists is much higher during the summer than the rest of the year. For these museums, Greeks, families and school groups are the primary visitors during wintertime and foreign visitors during summertime. This shows that the variation in the number of tourists according to the season is a common phenomenon for many Greek museums. Three museums have a higher number of international visitors all year round (A8), and only one Museum has an equal number of Greek and international visitors (A9). Lastly, two museums referred to an increase in international visitors when organizing themed-based or temporary exhibitions and special events (A10). The organization of such events may influence the profile of the visitors for a short period.

Concerning the *organization chart, the responsible departments and figures* for implementing the marketing communication strategies of the museums (A11-A15), six museums have a communication director or a department of communication (A11), and only two museums have a marketing department (A12). In contrast, ten neither have a communication nor a marketing department in their organizational chart (A13). For four archaeological public museums, the Ministry of Culture and Sports undertakes the marketing management of the museums exclusively or complementary (A14). According to one of the interviewees: "*The Ministry's department is responsible for promoting material, organizing activities, promoting events, informing the media, providing material to journalists, managing social media, organizing promotional activities.*" (Interviewee 1) Lastly, the Board of Directors determines the guidelines for three of the Museums (A15).

Then, another group of answers surged concerning *the significance* of implementing marketing communication strategies in the museum context. The participants expressed two points of view regarding museum marketing (A16-A17). All sixteen interviewees believe that strategic marketing communication is crucial for contemporary museums (A16), while only one expressed their opposition and reservations about the application of marketing in its commercial sense (A17). The increase of financial resources and visitor numbers and directing the message to all target groups to improve the image and prestige of the Museum and create awareness were the main arguments raised. On the contrary, the opposed participant stated: "*I am not in favor of marketing, and I think all archaeologists of this service tend to be in favor of communication, information, recreation, but not marketing in the sense of commodifying the monuments.*" (Interviewee 2)

The next sub-topic is about *the organization of marketing communication strategies*. In this area, the first sub-group that came up by nine museums was about the budget that museums devote to their strategies (A18-A20). Two private and one public mentioned that they have a budget for communication strategies (A18). Five museums stated that they have no budget, particularly for this purpose (A19), while one public Museum explained that there is usually a budget only for large-scale projects (A20).

Another sub-group that emerged concerned *the structure and the decision-making process* (A21-A27). One Museum mentioned that communication is holistic (A21), equivalent to that of businesses. Three museums do annual planning of their communication strategies (A22), four museums formulate their communication strategies according to their target audience (A23), and one according to the SWOT analysis conducted for the Museum (A24). Four museums plan their marketing communication strategies for each action (A25). Two participants highlighted that their marketing strategies and branding reflect the Museum's core values (A26). For example, one of the two encourages sustainability and environmentally friendly behaviors, and the other the concept of inclusivity through every strategy they implement. As one of the participants highlighted:

“(..) The strong point is that the orientation is sustainability for everything that goes into the Museum. The criteria are high in terms of organic and environmentally friendly materials, and all products are in the logic of no waste production. For example, one action we did was strategic planning in the marketing plan. We have banners hanging outside the Museum which inform about the exhibitions. When they come down, we use them and make bags, materials used in our press conferences, and our communication materials. We do the so-called circular economy; we recycle green materials anyway.” (Interviewee 3). Lastly, seven museums pointed out the importance of cooperation between all the departments and the staff members (A27) for the configuration of the communication actions.

**Table 4.1** Absolute Frequency of ‘Structure of marketing communication strategies’ Coded-Answers

Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency
A1	4	A10	2	A19	5
A2	3	A11	6	A20	1
A3	10	A12	2	A21	1
A4	7	A13	10	A22	3
A5	10	A14	4	A23	4
A6	5	A15	3	A24	1
A7	7	A16	16	A25	4
A8	3	A17	1	A26	2
A9	1	A18	3	A27	7

## B. Marketing communication channels

The second cluster concerns the *marketing communication channels* that museums use most to enhance their visibility and increase the number of visitors. Fifteen museums stated that they use traditional communication tools (B1). Television, radio, print media, public relations, partnerships, press releases and billboards are considered traditional means of communication. However, four of these make limited use of printed advertising (B2) because of their high cost, low efficiency, and efforts to invest in more environmentally friendly approaches. Fourteen museums referred to the Internet and social media as one of their primary marketing communication channels (B3). Additionally, ten museums use newsletters to communicate with their audience (B4), but only three private museums send newsletters in English to the international audience. For five museums, their events, programs, and exhibitions are a means of communication with the public (B5), and three other museums mentioned that the organization of big events such as conferences and festivals also constitute a

means of communication with the international audience (B6). Two museums organize communication campaigns (B7), and three use their physical and online shops with their products as an additional marketing channel with the audience (B8).

As one of the participants specifically said: *"The e-shop with its functional features is an innovative form of communication and marketing linked to the Museum's identity, offers a complete experience to the visitor and helps to build customer loyalty. It is essentially a form of reminder for the visitor to come to the Museum."* Additionally, they mentioned: *"(...) Another positive part is the branded products. We have built a strong brand, corporate identity, logo, and everything else that goes with it. Visitors are looking for branded items with the Museum's logo."* (Interviewee 3).

**Table 4.2** Absolute Frequency of 'Marketing communication channels' Coded-Answers

Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency
B1	15	B5	5
B2	4	B6	3
B3	14	B7	2
B4	10	B8	3

### C. Co-operations

In terms of cooperation, the majority of public and private Greek Museums attach great importance to creating partnerships to increase their visibility. Fourteen museums cooperate with Greek and foreign museums and cultural institutions (C1). Nine museums have direct or indirect partnerships with public and private travel organizations and tourism agencies (C2) and six with hotels (C3).

According to one of the interviewees: *"The collaboration with the Greek National Tourism Organization has several significant benefits for the Museum since GNTO, through its offices and communication departments abroad, arranges for the dispatch of journalists from major international magazines and newspapers to cover political events and whom the Museum would not otherwise be able to sponsor."* (Interviewee 4).

Six museums of the two big urban centers cooperate with the city airport (C4). For some, this also happens with travel and transit providers such as airlines or ferry companies and the city's public transit services, like the metro and buses (C5).

One of the interviewees highlighted the importance of cooperating with airlines to attract tourists. *"Many times, in terms of sponsorship, they give us free placements, and we run some campaigns at the airport and put up some posters. Similarly, they have an exhibition space at the airport occasionally for free we do some partnerships again and run some small exhibitions. Either with*

*photographic material or in other ways, we can have an exhibition that is a precursor to the one we have at the Museum. Therefore, the tourist walks by, sees, gets a brochure, and eventually comes to the Museum."* (Interviewee 4).

Three museums referred to cooperation with online travel platforms and agencies (C6), one with digital contact creators (C7), and another one with foreign media (C8) for the creation of a documentary. Six museums mentioned cooperating with the municipality and the local authorities (C9), and four with Greek and foreign artists (C10). One of these four museums collaborates with Greek artists who design authentic and custom-made souvenirs for the Museum.

As one of them said: *"(...) For the shop respectively, we seek many collaborations with Greek designers, who are inspired by our collection to be original. We try to have custom-made products, 90% produced with minimal production specifically for the Museum. No one can find them anywhere else, and there is that differentiation. The Museum for us is a complete experience. We do not want visitors to come here for a dry visit, see five things and leave, but to enjoy it on all levels."* (Interviewee 5).

Lastly, three museums cooperate with educational institutions (C11) and two others with companies that organize tailored-made and executive services for high-end visitors and tourists (C12).

Regarding the benefits museums gain through cooperations, many highlighted the expansion of their activities and the enhancement of their outreach efforts (C13). This way, museums manage to increase their visibility among tourists. At the same time, three others also value exchanging knowledge and good practices (C14).

**Table 4.3** Absolute Frequency of 'Co-operations' Coded-Answers

Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency
C1	14	C8	1
C2	9	C9	6
C3	6	C10	4
C4	6	C11	3
C5	5	C12	2
C6	3	C13	6
C7	1	C14	3

#### **D. Digital strategies**

The fourth cluster is about the Museum's *Digital strategy*. Most museums highlighted *social media* as a principal means of communication they use, emphasized their importance in attracting younger audiences to the Museum, and provided some additional details regarding their online strategies.

Regarding *management* (D1-D8), only nine museums have an internal manager or external partner responsible for managing social media (D1). For the four public museums under the control of the Antiquities Department, their social media are managed by archaeologists of the administration and the Ministry of Culture and Sports (D2), and for four small private museums, volunteers and interns have a supporting role in their management (D3).

Regarding their *online tools*, only four museums maintain separate Instagram and Facebook pages for the Museum's online store (D4). Two private museums mentioned conducting occasional research on different platforms (D5) to evaluate them and choose those compatible with the Museum's profile. Two other museums focus only on platforms where they can retain an active presence and ongoing communication with the public (D6). Five museums use paid advertisements on social media (D7). Online advertising involves sponsored ads in social media to target broader audiences and to promote the Museum's products and actions. One of them uses permanent advertising in English that tracks tourists within a certain distance from the Museum. Lastly, one Museum cooperates with digital experts to improve the efficiency and SEO of the Museum's website (D8).

Another sub-group of the online strategies concerns *the content* museums publish online (D9-D18). Most interviewees stated that they emphasize presenting and promoting representative content of the Museum's activities, actions, and exhibitions through their digital activity (D9). At the same time, three museums mentioned trying to make their content informative and educative enough for the public (D10). One of the museums uploads rich audiovisual material (D11) to allow the visitor to "prepare" before the visit. The projection of entertaining content (D12), such as participation in trends or sharing funny videos with the public, is a less common approach, and it was mentioned only by two private museums. Two other private museums highlighted the importance of sharing contemporary, visually engaging and highly aesthetic content (D13). Two others stated that they try to adapt the content to the particular needs of their target audience (D14), while one adapts it to the nature of each particular platform (D15). In contrast, another stated that they mainly use "amateur" practices to increase their visibility (D16). A point made by four museums is that coordination between all the museum departments and the staff is necessary (D17) to choose the content wisely and verify its accuracy. Lastly, another aspect brought up by the three museums is that they make balanced use of social media (D18), mainly because excessive use of social media with uninterrupted content dissemination can become toxic and tiring for the public.

Another sub-group that emerged regarding online strategies to attract international audiences is *language usage* (D19-D20). In general, to attract more international audiences, museums need to ensure the provision of multilingual content and the accessibility of information to people of different nationalities. Sixteen museums have their website available in two languages: Greek and English (D19).



However, only seven (five private and two public museums) offer English descriptions on their social media for foreign users (D20).

Regarding *communication and interaction with the public* (D21-D27), the most common approach for museums is to reply to user-generated content, such as questions, online comments, reviews, and messages (D21). By implementing this approach, museums consistently retain contact with online users and provide them full access to the requested information. One participant even pointed out that they reply with engaging content, like videos, to better understand the information shared. At the same time, another noted that they try to reply to all the comments in the users' language to create a sense of familiarity between the two parties. The competent department evaluates the feedback in two museums (D22). On the other hand, three museums tend not to respond to malicious, negative, and rude comments (D23) but only to thorough, reasonable, and fair criticism. Another museum mentioned that it interacts with the audience by organizing online campaigns (D24) and creating public dialogue through digital educational programs (D25). Lastly, reposting the content visitors share (D26) and the Museum's membership program were also mentioned as a form of connection to the public (D27).

Another sub-topic that came up quite a lot regarding the Museum's online strategy was *the effects of COVID-19* on the Museum's strategies (D28-D35). Apart from two public museums, fifteen museums supported that Covid-19 had a bigger or smaller influence on their online strategies (D28). Additionally, only two private museums noted they were quite prepared regarding their online presence when the pandemic broke out (D29). For the majority of museums, the main long-term effect of Covid-19 was the initiation and adoption of online events and activities (D30), and eight museums (six private and two public) started and retained virtual tours to "allow" visitors from all over the world to have access to the Museum's artifacts (D31). As some participants pointed out, "the virtual tour does not come to replace the visit to the Museum, but functions as an invitation to the visitor for a physical visit." However, one of the participants demonstrated that even though they adopted virtual tours during the outburst of COVID-19 and spent much money investing in them even after the pandemic, the investment did not pay off particularly well.

*"(...) We were convinced after the pandemic that the virtual tour would work. From December 2022 to this day, we spent a lot and set up a 4K video after the pandemic with incredible detail. We ran a campaign from the beginning of the year until now, at the beginning to the English-speaking audience worldwide, then we limited it to the US because there was no response, not even one sale. If we made something that does not exist, a fictional museum, maybe there would be visitors. We are thinking about creating a fictional museum..."* (Interviewee 6).

For three museums, the pandemic was the driving force to use social media more consistently (D32), and three other museums have proceeded to digitalize their content (D33). For two others, the

pandemic was the motivator for completing their online store (D34). Lastly, one of the museums started taking exterior professional consultancy on digital marketing (D35) to increase their online visibility by applying more efficient web strategies. However, many participants pointed out is that the public prefers the physical museum experience after the pandemic is over (D36).

**Table 4.4** Absolute Frequency of ‘Online Digital strategies’ Coded-Answers

Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency
D1	9	D13	2	D25	1
D2	4	D14	2	D26	1
D3	4	D15	1	D27	2
D4	4	D16	1	D28	15
D5	2	D17	4	D29	2
D6	2	D18	3	D30	12
D7	5	D19	16	D31	8
D8	1	D20	7	D32	3
D9	11	D21	11	D33	3
D10	3	D22	2	D34	2
D11	1	D23	3	D35	1
D12	2	D24	1	D36	5

### **E. Enriching on-site experiences**

This cluster concerns the enriching experiences museums aim to offer their visitors. Experiences constitute a crucial element of the museum's marketing strategies. Organizing appealing and diverse activities parallel to their leading exhibitions enables them to target different audiences more effectively.

The first sub-group concerns the types of experiences museums offer (E1-12). All the 17 museums that participated in the research pay particular attention to offering additional enlivening experiences to their visitors. The main activities that museums offer to their audience include educational activities for young children and adults (E1), scientific conferences and lectures (E2), recreational activities (E3), and hands-on interactive exhibits and workshops (E4). A smaller number of museums have also included family activities (E5), cultural events and festivals (E6), and outdoor multicultural activities (E7). Out of the 17 museums, only two reported that they have integrated storytelling activities (E8)

for their audiences, and one offers services that fall within the framework of experiential cultural tourism (E9).

For example, this last museum provides visitors with an authentic and immersive experience of ancient Greek culture through gastronomy. (...) "*There is a very nice product, a service to organize a dinner in the museum premises. This service is only offered on request to certain groups of specific people. We are launching it, especially for tourists, because for a visitor to come and have dinner with a menu about Ancient Greece inside the exhibits is an experience. Innovation is generally about optimizing the visitor experience whether you have digital tools or not. It needs some smarter ideas. So we are trying in those ways as well.*" (Interviewee 4).

Some museums also try to adapt the content of their exhibitions to contemporary demands. Two museums reported focusing on modernizing the content of exhibitions and events to broaden their audiences and attract younger visitors (E10). One said that they even regularly renew the content of the permanent exhibition so that the visitors often return and see something different from their last visit (E11). Lastly, for 11 museums, temporary exhibitions constitute part of their marketing strategies to broaden their audience (E12).

The second sub-group concerns the *significance of temporary exhibitions* (E13-E17). Various opinions were expressed regarding the importance of temporary and themed-based exhibitions in increasing the number of tourists. Four participants supported that the offer of temporary exhibitions contributes to renewing the public interest in the museum, which helps to create the so-called "loyal visitors or repeaters" (E13). These visitors will return to the museum because a new product or service is offered, and they wish to see something new and different from their last visit. Participants also claimed that temporary exhibitions, besides strengthening the existing audience, help increase the overall number of visitors (E14) by bringing a new and wider audience to the museum since temporary exhibitions usually touch the interest of a broader spectrum of visitors. In terms of tourism, two of the interviewees claimed that the temporary exhibitions have a low impact on increasing the number of tourists to the museum (E15). As they explained, the permanent collection is the primary reason tourists visit the museum and will attend the temporary exhibition "occasionally." However, it can be a beneficial strategy for attracting domestic tourists to the museum (E16). Some also pointed out that the topic of these exhibitions is the most critical factor that makes them successful among tourists (E17). Temporary exhibitions with attractive, unique topics that captivate the visitors' interest can create a competitive edge for the museum and even become blockbusters.

The third sub-group concerns the *integration of technological tools* to enhance and upgrade the visitors' experience (E18-F26). For multiple museums, technology has started gradually being included as an engagement tool during the visit. The most common method museums use is the creation of digital representations and interactive screens within the Museum (E18) and providing technological

devices, such as audio guides and tablets (E19). Four of the museums have already created visitor information applications (E20). These mobile applications provide rich information about the exhibits and the artifacts, have a supporting role, and accompany and facilitate visitors during their visits, offering them a sense of independence. Two other museums have created gamification activities (E21) through applications to help children learn in a fun and exciting way. According to one of the participants, during summer months, families of tourists visit the museum, but young children often show less interest during the guided tour. They seem bored and want to leave. To solve this problem, they created a gaming application "*that makes the visit child-friendly and fun for families.*" (Interviewee 7). This method has helped a lot to keep the interest of young children undiminished. Lastly, five museums have incorporated extended reality through Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and three-dimensional graphics-3D animations (E22) to create immersive experiences for their visitors.

Another sub-group that emerged is accessibility and assimilation of information from visitors of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. All museums provide the above content and information in English and Greek (E23), while seven museums have incorporated more than two languages (E24) in their signs, catalogs, or applications. For example, for one of the museums, the visitor can download an application for free, which is essentially a digital audio guide, and it is available in 12 languages. Some museums highlighted the supporting role of the staff and the guards in interacting with the visitors during their visits and providing them with information (E25). Lastly, one important aspect mentioned by multiple museums is ensuring accessibility to vulnerable social groups (E26). Virtual tours and unique features in the apps for the elderly, online activities with people who have diseases or prisoners, ensuring total access to disabled people, and providing a Braille catalogue for the visually impaired were those mentioned.

**Table 4.5** Absolute Frequency of ‘Enriching on-site experiences’ Coded-Answers

Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency
E1	7	E14	6
E2	5	E15	2
E3	4	E16	1
E4	7	E17	3
E5	4	E18	7
E6	3	E19	4
E7	1	E20	4
E8	2	E21	2
E9	1	E22	5
E10	2	E23	17
E11	1	E24	7
E12	11	E25	3
E13	4	E26	8

## **F. Audience Research**

Another cluster that emerged from the analysis of the results is that of *audience research*. Five museums do not conduct any sort of survey among the visitors (F1). Most museums use the visitors’ impression book or guest book to get feedback from their visitors (F2). Two private museums disseminate surveys online (F3) through their newsletter and social media, and two museums leverage data from online digital platforms to draw conclusions (F4). Two museums carry out pilot surveys to collect feedback before launching a new product or service (F5). Only one of the museums cooperates with an advertising agency to conduct visitor surveys (F6). These surveys cover a broad range of topics like awareness, image measurement, visitor satisfaction with the Museum’s services, operational issues, and visitors’ perceptions of programs, services, facilities, and prices. Lastly, two museums conduct small-scale or focused research (F7) on visitors’ perceptions of products or services, and three museums carry out formal or informal audience research through their employees (F8). More particularly, the staff of the Museum collects face-to-face feedback and statistical data from the visitors at the front desk and in the Museum’s facilities.

**Table 4.6** Absolute Frequency of ‘Audience Research’ Coded-Answers

Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency
F1	5	F5	2
F2	7	F6	1
F3	2	F7	2
F4	2	F8	3

### **G. Challenges and future changes**

The final cluster concerns the main *challenges* museums face (G1-G10). The principal challenge declared by 14 museums is the lack of financial resources, which prevents museums from implementing marketing communication strategies on a large scale and further developing their actions (G1). For example, three museums among these are particularly unable to pay for newspaper advertising funds. The second main challenge is the lack of available staff in the museums (G2). The lack of experts in the field of digital marketing and the lack of employees who can create high-quality digital tools and translators to translate the content published online in other languages are some of those mentioned during the interviews. Furthermore, in the case of public museums, creating new positions is quite restrictive due to the cumbersome bureaucracy and the strict procedures (G3). On the other hand, three private museums referred to the challenge of drawing in sponsors to fund the projects and their communication (G4). According to the respondents, to find sponsors, museums need to come up with tempting and innovative ideas for new products and services. Moreover, nowadays, sponsors often give priority to subsidizing organizations related to sustainability. Thus, for museums that are not state-funded, finding sponsorships can be one of the main difficulties they encounter. Three other mentioned challenges in forming co-operations (G5), such as collaborating with the local channels, journalists, and tourism agencies. Moreover, two museums reported that cultural institutions and cultural issues, in general, are neglected by the Greek Government, mainly due to the financial crises and other social problems that the country must address and overcome (G6). Some museums reported that one of their most significant challenges is to find ways to attract the younger audience to the museum (G7), and three others, the challenge of making modern art museums more visible among tourists in Greece (G8). As they explained, museums related to ancient Greek culture and antiquities have a ready-made brand and are the principal attraction for tourists coming to the country. This is why modern art museums are often lower on the priorities of international tourists. Another limitation, according to four museums, is the regressive perception of those holding key positions in the museum, which rarely aligns with modern international standards and requirements

(G9). For example, the administration of the museums is often staffed with people of an older age who sometimes underestimate the value of digital marketing for the contemporary museum. In addition, archaeologists may occasionally seem to hold a conservative mindset and appear to be somehow cautious about using new means of communication to promote the artifacts. However, despite all these challenges, some private museums supported that difficulties make them more creative in devising innovative ideas and strategies (G10).

Another sub-group of answers concerns *future changes* that museums aim to make in order to attract a larger number of national and international visitors (G11-G15). Five museums plan to target cruise tourists who regularly arrive with cruise ships in their cities (G11). Seven museums are planning to improve their online presence (G12). Changes like updating the content more often, improving their website's format to make it more appealing and user-friendly, and increasing the number of available languages are among them. One museum is even considering creating an entirely virtual museum to enhance the online experience of its visitors. On the other hand, three museums will invest more in upgrading the digital live experience of the visitors (G13) by creating new applications and digital representations in the museums. Four museums mentioned that they want to put more emphasis on increasing the number of on-site activities and museum experiences (G14) by adding more educational programs, cultural and groundbreaking activities, and theme-based exhibitions. Lastly, the two museums aim to invest more in publishing activities (G15).

**Table 4.7** Absolute Frequency of 'Challenges and future changes' coded-answers

Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency
G1	14	G6	2	G11	5
G2	8	G7	3	G12	7
G3	2	G8	3	G13	3
G4	3	G9	4	G14	4
G5	3	G10	4	G15	2





## CHAPTER 5

### Discussion

According to the interview results, several topics have arisen that are worth discussing and complement the existing literature about marketing communication strategies of museums in Greece. This chapter aims to discuss the study's findings, connect them to previous literature, and answer the research questions.

Regarding the first research question: *To what extent do the examined Greek museums implement integrated marketing communication strategies to attract tourists, and what are their primary tools?* (RQ1).

The results showed that adopting integrated marketing strategies has yet to be established as a common practice in Greek museums. Private museums, as well as public museums operating under the supervision of a Board of Directors, constitute an exception. These have a communication department and a manager, and a few have a marketing department or manager. On the contrary, in the case of Public Archaeological Museums under the control of the Antiquities Department, the Greek Ministry of Culture undertakes most of the promotional and communication activities on their behalf. This aligns with what Mavraganni (2018) demonstrated in her research about public archaeological museums, which are departments of the Ministry of Culture. As the author supported, these museums primarily focus on micromarketing marketing and still need to implement more holistic strategic marketing approaches (Mavraganni, 2018).

It is worth noting that private museums often have more advanced marketing communication approaches, even though they also encounter numerous financial challenges they must overcome by finding potential sponsors. This can be attributed to the higher flexibility in making decisions and creating new departments and positions in their organizational chart. The lack of state funding for private museums, even though a great challenge, often leads them to find creative and innovative ways to develop and promote their services more efficiently and attract new audiences. This can possibly justify private museums' relatively high traffic rates.

Regarding the communication tools, most of the Greek museums, both private and public, primarily rely on conventional means and channels of communication. Retaining traditional means as part of museums' strategic communication can significantly increase the number of tourists. Liew and Loh (2007) supported that the balanced combination of traditional and modern marketing strategies

is necessary for museums to reach a broader audience in the tourism industry and increase their financial resources. New media channels should only partially replace the conventional ones.

Of all these means, particular reference should be made to partnerships. The results showed that one of the critical aspects of the marketing communication strategies of Greek museums is the remarkable openness and extroversion they show in collaborating with other museums and cultural foundations. Most museums place increased emphasis on developing a solid network of partnerships in order to share practical knowledge and information and to increase their visibility. Cole (2008) highly emphasized the importance of creating museum networks for exchanging good management and marketing practices and attracting cultural tourists more efficiently on a national and international level, while Scrofani and Ruggiero (2013) supported that networking between museums of the same territory can have positive economic, social, and cultural implications and boost tourism.

Another common practice and one of the most efficient in attracting more international visitors is the investment in partnerships with public and private stakeholders of the tourism industry, such as travel agencies and tourism organizations, the Hellenic Hotelier Federation, and the Tour Guide Association. Particularly in the case of the museums of Athens, these partnerships often include the airport, the public transport system, and airlines. As Mudzanani (2017) recommended, retaining good relationships with the major tourism industry stakeholders should be a vital aspect of the marketing communication strategies of the museums since these collaborations can generate positive word-of-mouth.

The second research question concerns *the use of online communication channels and the influences of COVID-19 on the online communication practices of Greek Museums* (RQ2).

In terms of the online marketing communication of Greek museums, it was derived from the results that there is generally a lack of homogeneity regarding the strategies they follow since participants highlighted different aspects and approaches as essential parts of the digital strategies. Therefore, even though it is impossible to reach safe conclusions, especially without closely examining the museums' digital channels, some interesting topics emerged from the interview results.

Firstly, most public and private museums have started taking advantage of online digital channels (Appendix 3). However, for many museums, mainly public archaeological museums of smaller provincial towns, their digital strategies are still at a very early stage. A critical limitation is that various museums still need experts in the field of digital marketing to manage their websites and social media accounts. Özdemir and Çelebi (2017) pointed out the importance of having social media accounts managed by professionals to increase their effectiveness and update them regularly and properly.

As far as the content published online is concerned, the results also align with the findings of Boutsouki and Polydora (2020), who, after examining 19 websites of Greek public museums under the control of the Ministry of Culture, concluded that the majority of the Museums' websites still have a

very conventional layout. Most participants referred to focusing on the provision of essential information regarding the museum's actions and activities, and two of the private museums referred to the importance of providing visitors with visually engaging and eye-catching content. It appears that content orientation is the most common strategy for the websites of many Greek museums. However, Camarero et al. (2016) demonstrated that the ideal format to increase web traffic is not limited to a particular orientation type but should combine content, interaction, and transaction orientation. Additionally, Marty (2007) supported that museums should make their websites more unique and appealing by providing all the essential information, showcasing the exhibits, and interacting with the users to cover the needs of both first-time and repeated visitors. For example, a commendable effort is that on one of the private museum's websites, the visitor has full access to the museum's exhibits, all accompanied by information-rich texts and audiovisual material in Greek and English. Moreover, another private museum provides a staff organization chart with the contact information of people in critical positions so visitors can reach them directly. According to Liew and Loh (2013), this function enhances the organization's public image and communication practices.

However, despite the weaknesses above, it is an encouraging sign that many museums declared their plans to upgrade their websites and make them more ergonomic and appealing for their users. Especially in the tourism sector, maintaining user-friendly, responsive, easy-to-use websites in multiple languages is considered necessary.

Furthermore, even though more museums acknowledge the importance of engaging social networking sites as part of their strategies, many public museums still do not hold social media accounts, or their accounts remain inactive with only a few posts. A general remark is that, in many cases, social media are managed using nonprofessional methods. Usually, there is no consistent strategy, a finding that aligns with those of Kyprianos and Kontou (2022).

Moreover, a few cases have invested in online paid advertising to increase their online visibility among international visitors. Online paid advertising should be more broadly used in the museum context. Śmiałowicz (2020) has suggested that museums should invest in social media advertising by selecting efficient online advertising tools that can be cost-effective and help museums increase their online visibility. Another question is that only a few museums share their content in English. This is a significant limitation for Greek museums since the possibility of navigating in a multilingual environment would be crucial to increasing the flow of international tourists to museums.

In terms of interaction with the public, many museums focus on replying to comments and online reviews. Answering and evaluating both positive and negative feedback from online users is a vital aspect of the online marketing strategy of every organization. However, only a few museums try to create a sense of familiarity by sharing delightful content and replying more intimately to the users. This indicates that Greek Museums do not widely implement the engagement marketing proposed by

Chung et al. (2014). Engagement marketing aims to create an environment where active interaction is created between staff and visitors and between visitors in a creative and often pleasant way (Chung et al., 2014).

The second part of the research question concerns *the influence of COVID-19 on the museums' digital strategies*. The findings showed that the outburst of COVID-19 positively influenced the online strategies of the museums since most of them adopted online educational and interactive activities with their visitors and invested more in their digital strategies. The adaptation has been more noticeable for private and public museums in large cities than regional public museums. This aligns with the findings of Kasiola and Metaxas (2023), according to whom, during the pandemic, large public museums in Greece started taking advantage of digital technology to maintain an ongoing relationship with the public and retain their extroversion.

Also, for some museums, Covid-19 was the motivator to start using social networking sites. Virtual tours are the principal tool adopted and are still used by multiple Greek museums. Some participants commented that virtual tours can stimulate a visit to the museum premises without replacing the actual visit. This is in line with the view of Siano et al. (2010), who supported that the virtual representation of collections can spark the interest of online visitors for a future physical visit to the museum.

Regarding the research question RQ3 about the emergence of *new marketing trends*, the question of services marketing has arisen. Most museums aim to offer various on-site experiences to their visitors. These include educational, recreational activities, and hands-on-interactive experiences so that they cover the emerging needs of their visitors and target different audiences, such as families, students, and tourists. This is an essential provision since, according to Sökmen et al. (2020), postmodern museum visitors look for experiences that combine the educational, recreational, and social aspects, and more and more museums in Greece are intensifying their efforts towards this direction.

A few museums have focused on additional services, such as their physical and online store, the museum cafe and the provision of branded products that are unique and custom-made. For those museums, their stores with their souvenirs complement the museum experience and make it more holistic, a view that coincides with Li's (2020).

In addition, organizing temporary and themed-based exhibitions is part of various museums' marketing strategies. Tzortzi and Koukouvaou (2019) supported that temporary exhibitions make up for an innovative cultural policy and marketing strategy that expands the museum's distribution avenues, allowing it to open to a broader audience and achieve long-term sustainability. The results showed that the primary contribution of temporary exhibitions is that renewing visitors' interest leads to visitor loyalty. However, the view shared among a few participants is that the efficiency of

temporary exhibitions to attract tourists lies in their unique and compelling theme. Li (2020) also demonstrated that the success of temporary exhibitions depends on their interesting and captivating topic.

A rather intriguing finding is the experiential dimension that some of the services showcase, and that falls under the scope of experiential marketing. This is indeed an innovative approach regarding the Greek data. In the contemporary demanding tourism industry, providing experiential cultural tourism activities gives a competitive advantage to organizations and enables them to differentiate their products and services. By offering such experiences, museums employ the four realms of the experience model (education, entertainment, aesthetics, and escapism) (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, as cited in Rather, 2019). Through experiential marketing techniques, museums create personalized and engaging experiences for their visitors, generate engraved memories, and increase the number of loyal visitors (Meacci & Liberatore, 2018). The use of experiential marketing techniques can generate positive word-of-mouth referrals in the tourism industry and increase the brand awareness of the organizations.

Moreover, a few museums have also integrated technological tools, such as Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, and gamification applications, to upgrade their visitors' experiences to interactive and immersive encounters. These technological tools have been described by Nechita (2014) as modern and engaging ways of marketing communication. Jung et al. (2016) found that their application in the museum environment significantly improves the visitor's experience and increases the chances of tourists revisiting the organization. In addition, gamification applications give a dimension of edutainment since they allow visitors to combine learning and entertainment (Nechita, 2014). It should be noted that all these concepts are applied only by very few private and some public museums operating under the supervision of a Board of Directors. This finding confirms and agrees with the view expressed by Monastiridis (2021) that the relationship of the cultural organization with the state, as well as the personality of the Director of the Board or the Artistic Director, are critical elements for developing innovative practices (Monastiridis, 2021).

Another marketing strategy used but on a limited scale is audience research. Except for a few museums that conduct online and offline surveys of a smaller and larger scale, most museums have not incorporated systematic audience research, and the majority use impression books to collect feedback from their visitors regarding the provided services.

Lastly, the limited development of marketing strategies on a larger scale can be attributed to *several challenges and obstacles that most Greek museums face* (RQ4). The study results showed that the most common limitations are the limited financial resources and the lack of available staff to undertake marketing responsibilities. The major blow left by the economic crisis, combined with the other social problems plaguing the country in recent years, leads to the state's neglect of cultural

institutions and other potential sponsors who often "shift their gaze" towards different directions. In addition, in the case of public museums, the strict bureaucratic procedures decelerate their evolution closer to modern international standards. Boutsiouki and Polydora (2020) pinpointed these particular challenges in developing marketing strategies on the part of public museums in Greece. The authors demonstrated these as the main reasons, especially behind the sluggish development of their digital strategies.

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusions

This chapter presents the study's main conclusions and its contribution on a theoretical and practical level. The study's limitations and recommendations for future research are also presented in this chapter.

#### 6.1 Main conclusions

Marketing in the museum context has lately been discussed extensively in the literature. As previous studies have shown, museums nowadays have developed various creative marketing strategies to become more appealing tourist attractions in a highly competitive environment. The study focused on Greek museums, and its objective was to present the current marketing communication strategies that museums in Greece implement to attract tourists. Data were collected from 17 Greek museums, seven public and ten private.

The findings showed that Greek museums should take more decisive steps towards the amendment and improvement of their marketing communication strategies. The number of museums with well-organized strategies and a budget for marketing communication activities is relatively small.

Among the most common strategies museums use are traditional communication channels, and more and more are gradually incorporating social networking sites. Educational programs constitute part of most museums' strategies to target a broader target audience. Another critical element of their strategies is partnerships with other museums and cultural and tourism stakeholders. In order to increase their visibility even more, museums could expand their collaborations with international cultural institutions by further investing in participation in real and virtual regional, continental and even international museum networks. Such synergies will allow even smaller-sized museums to gain an international appeal by exchanging suppliers and resources and through the creation of joint initiatives with museums of bigger sizes (Scrofani & Ruggiero, 2013). This way, Greek museums could raise awareness among international visitors more efficiently.

Additionally, museums should invest more in upgrading their collaborations with tourism stakeholders. Implementing campaigns and increasing advertising in the primary and significant touchpoints for tourists could be highly beneficial, especially for the less-known museums or those lower in the visitors' priorities.

Furthermore, more and more museums are gradually incorporating digital platforms in their strategies to increase their online presence and attract visitors. However, in many cases, this use is not systematic and lacks a proper structure, and the management of experts in digital marketing is not a joint policy. It is, therefore, critical that professionals take over the management of social media accounts, especially in cases where those are managed by a member of the administration or solely by volunteers with little experience. Even in cases where the academic community resists and expresses reservations, the accuracy of the content can be ensured through collaboration between digital marketing professionals and archaeologists or art historians. After all, the existence of cooperation between different departments was expressed by many participants and should be safeguarded.

In addition, it is vital for all museums to maintain active and regularly updated social media accounts with engaging, interesting and entertaining content in order to reach a broader audience as Śmiałowicz (2020) has recommended and more dynamically implement the engagement marketing strategy proposed by Chung et al. (2014). This way, museums could create virtual communities with online users where they can interact, exchange content and ideas, create participatory activities, and establish a stronger, more personal relationship with them. By increasing user-generated content and online word-of-mouth, museums can build a stronger brand online, creating tourist awareness (Fronzetti Colladon et al., 2020). Additionally, by increasing the number of provided languages on their online platforms, Greek museums could more efficiently capture the attention of international visitors.

Concerning the marketing strategies for the on-site experiences, the most significant number of museums offer a wide range of educational programs, experiences and temporary and theme-based exhibitions to meet the needs of a broader target audience. However, only a few museums have incorporated more innovative strategies with technological tools such as VR, AR, and gamification activities to upgrade the museum experience. It would benefit more museums in Greece to take advantage of these new technological possibilities on a larger scale to meet the wishes of postmodern museum visitors.

Lastly, as Bantimaroudis et al. (2010) have pointed out, audience research is a condition for every public and private cultural institution nowadays. However, systematic audience research is yet to become a prevalent strategy in the Greek museum environment. Most museums rely on impression books to collect feedback from their visitors. Through visitors' books, various themes and evaluations of the visitors about the museum collections may arise since the impressions are a set of personal feelings and experiences. Nevertheless, it would be beneficial for museums to incorporate audience research more systematically and formally, as done by a few museums. This could be achieved by providing questionnaires after the visit or by sending them through social media and even through collaboration with agencies. At the same time, these responses must be carefully evaluated and



considered by the department responsible each time and be incorporated into their marketing and management strategies.

To conclude, marketing communication in the museum context has yet to evolve significantly. However, some museums implement innovative marketing communication practices, which could set an example for other museums in Greece. Given the limited financial resources, making changes can take time and effort. It is a standard view that cultural organizations and culture in Greece, in general, are often neglected and affected because of financial crises and other social problems. Instead of applying short-term methods to combat the consequences of a recession and financial crises, managing long-term relationships with stakeholders is a more reliable strategy for achieving financial stability (Lindqvist,2012). Additionally, establishing cooperation between private and public museums and cultural institutions could allow the exchange of good ideas and practices, exhibits and even venues could serve as a solution for long-term change. Making changes and moving closer to European standards could help museums in Greece become competitive attractions for tourists throughout the year and even combat the phenomenon of seasonal tourism.

Overall, despite the challenges holding back Greek museums, it is noteworthy that the traditional role of museums is evolving even at a slow pace. The majority of them are turning into inclusive spaces by ensuring access to people from different cultural backgrounds and individuals from vulnerable social groups. Tailored applications and tactile exhibits for the visually impaired, virtual tours, and quizzes to enhance the mental and emotional health of the elderly are emerging trends in marketing and inclusivity. Moreover, a few museums pave the way towards adopting environmentally friendly practices and no waste production strategies in the circular economy context. Incorporating such strategies shows that, gradually, even Greek museums are becoming spaces where sustainability and diversity are encouraged and coming closer to the last expanded role of museums as defined by ICOM (2022).

## 6.2 Theoretical contribution

The study complements the existing theory by offering insights pertaining to Greek museums. Previous literature has mainly focused on the online presence of Greek public museums during COVID-19. The study can add to our present knowledge and comprehension of the overall commercial communication approaches of Greek Museums by tracking certain tendencies, strengths limitations and challenges.

Additionally, expanding the examination of the strategies of both public and private museums enriches the existing literature. It illuminates more factors that might affect and differentiate the strategies of museums of different legal entities.

Furthermore, the cultural context in which Greek museums operate may drastically influence their marketing and communication tactics. Thus, the study can better clarify certain aspects of how the cultural elements influence these practices and allow to detect the reasons behind Greek museums' slow adoption of innovative tactics. This also offers a rare chance for cross-cultural comparison with museums in other countries.

Lastly, the study, through examining and evaluating patterns and trends regarding their commercial communication techniques, helps to fully understand the methods used to publicize Greek museums and draw tourists. By doing this, benchmarks and best practices can be established and used by other museums.

### 6.3 Practical contribution

This study has several managerial and practical implications. The results bring to notice some innovative approaches and effective tactics applied by museum managers to reinforce their position in the tourism industry and increase visitor numbers. The presentation of these tactics can offer directions and suggestions to other museum professionals towards improving their marketing communication efforts.

One could emphasize the importance of proceeding to changes in the organizational structure of museums. The existence of distinct marketing and communication departments is essential for the efficient distribution of responsibilities. At the same time, the theory has shown that marketing responsibilities must be undertaken by qualified staff who run these departments. Such rearrangements will help ensure that the implemented practices result from strategic planning, not random decisions.

Museum managers in Greece should make efforts to invest more in digital marketing. Nowadays, e-marketing communication tools are an integral part of successful organizations in the tourism industry due to the increasing reliance of travelers on search engines for specific recommendations (Labanauskaitė et al., 2020). COVID-19 offered opportunities to many large museums, mainly in urban centers, to reinvent their communication strategies and enter the post-digital era. However, many smaller museums still fall short in this respect. The study highlighted the importance of a more solid online presence, and the practices of museums with advanced online strategies could inspire museum managers. Museum practitioners could focus more on improving the online visitors' experience by creating easy-to-use websites, engaging social media accounts with eye-catching and enriching content and ensuring a multilingual environment for the international audience.

In addition, this research can serve as a guide to managers on allocating their resources more efficiently and focusing on areas that resonate with visitors. This may involve investing in practices that create meaningful and unique experiences for the museum audience. The use of interactive and participatory elements, edutainment, and immersive experiences with the application of Virtual and Augmented Reality, gamification activities and experiential marketing techniques are among these.

Lastly, the study underlined the significance of strategic partnerships and collaborations. Museum managers can explore opportunities to expand and reach new audiences by working more closely with various cultural and tourism stakeholders. Consistent investment in formulating partnerships will enable museum professionals to exchange ideas and learn from other experienced museum managers, organize joint events of a larger scale, and create solid networks that can bring long-term results and increase their visibility.

## 6.4 Limitations

Despite its valuable contribution, the study displays some limitations that have to be deliberated and taken into consideration.

One fundamental limitation is that the study may be subject to subjective bias. The interpretations and preconceptions of the participants about effective marketing communication strategies can affect the results. Distorted results might also be produced since their respondents are influenced by their convictions and preferences. The researcher has access only to the information and dimensions that the participants decide to disclose and are willing to share (Isari, Pourkos, 2015). Additionally, occasionally, museums prefer to keep their marketing information private, and accurate and detailed data can be hard to obtain. Access to internal and relevant data and proprietary information may be restricted, limiting the depth of analysis and the insights that can be derived from it.

Moreover, even though including both private and public museums can contribute to a more comprehensive exploration of marketing in the museum sector and significantly enriches the wealth of information, it creates a relative lack of homogeneity in the sample. As illustrated by the results, the degree of dependence on the state is often a critical factor in innovation development. Private and public museums often have different goals, needs and resources, which can tremendously influence their marketing approaches. Since most museums in Greece are public, a larger sample of government-run museums could contribute to drawing safer conclusions regarding the current marketing landscape of museums in Greece.

Another limitation to be taken into consideration is the geographical representation of the sample. Despite the efforts of the researcher to arrange interviews with museums of different sizes and located

in different parts of Greece, there were challenges encountered due to the museums' limited participation. The data collected were limited to museums located in six different cities in Greece, which restricts the generalization of the findings. Therefore, the results might not wholly represent the broader museum spectrum in Greece. Museums located in bigger cities and cities that attract a large number of tourists every year possibly have much more potential and capability to develop structured marketing strategies than small museums located in smaller cities and islands.

Consequently, the research results may not apply to museums located in smaller provincial towns. Finally, one last limitation to be reported is related to the nature of the data. Due to the lack of previous research in the literature, the researcher decided through the study to cover the broader spectrum of traditional and innovative marketing and communication approaches and tactics that Greek museums have adopted to attract visitors. This broader exploration of strategies would undoubtedly improve by examining a specific marketing strategy and evaluating the results of its implementation.

## 6.5 Future research

Considering the limitations that have arisen through no fault of the researcher of this study, future studies could further advance the study at hand.

First of all, it would be noteworthy that future research is conducted among a bigger number of museums. Including a larger sample of public museums would elevate trustworthiness and lead to general conclusions with worthier results. Additionally, it would be recommended that future studies use a methodological triangulation by combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. This would increase the validity and credibility of the study and allow the collection of data on sturdier ground.

Furthermore, to further analyze the overall state of the marketing communication strategies of museums in Greece, future research may extend a comparative analysis of museums in Greece and museums in other countries. A comparative approach will showcase potential similarities and differences in the marketing strategies of museums of different countries and clarify how these strategies might be affected by different cultural, social and economic factors. Such an approach could provide a more comprehensive understanding of effective marketing strategies in different cultural contexts (Qin, 2022).

Additionally, future research may investigate sustainable marketing practices in Greek museums. Considering how museums can align their marketing practices with sustainability goals can contribute to a broader debate about responsible museum management.

Future research may also focus on long-term impact assessments to comprehensively understand marketing communication strategies. This may include conducting longitudinal research to track changes in museum attendance, visitor demographics, revenue generation and overall sustainability over time. By assessing the long-term impact of marketing efforts, museums can make informed decisions and assess return on investment (Anderson et al., 2007).

Furthermore, museums are gradually becoming more visitor-oriented and turning into places of experience consumption. Therefore, the visitors' perceptions should constitute a central factor in the decision-making process of museum managers and marketers. Future research may focus on evaluating the impact of marketing strategies on visitor experience and satisfaction in Greek museums. Visitor surveys, interviews and observations could be used as methodological tools to understand the contribution of marketing practices to visitors' perceptions of the museum, the interaction between visitors and the museum exhibits, and the overall levels of visitor satisfaction with the provided services and experiences. This research could help museum managers detect the most efficient practices and develop strategies to upgrade visitor experience (Kirchberg & Tröndle, 2012).

Lastly, the particular study explored the overall state of the marketing communication strategies applied by Greek museums rather than a particular marketing approach. Future studies could delve into the topic more deeply by examining and evaluating a particular strategy and its efficiency in the marketing communication efforts of Greek museums. For example, future studies could investigate the long-term impacts and benefits of strategic partnerships with different cultural and tourism stakeholders and sponsors. Museums can optimize their collaborative efforts by assessing the success factors and challenges associated with such partnerships (Maloney & Hill, 2016).



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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Interview Structure

Topic	Source in the literature	Interview Question	Purpose of the question
<b>Introductory Questions</b>			
The legal status of the Museum		What is the legal status of the museum?	It is essential to make this distinction since the legal status of the Museums might have a significant impact on their marketing and communication strategies.
Demographics		Could you please provide demographic data on the museum visitors (nationality, age, gender)?	This question intends to distinguish between the different categories of museum visitors and have an approximate number of international visitors to see how wider-spread the museum is among tourists.
<b>Marketing Strategies</b>			
The necessity of marketing strategies and their compatibility with the museum's mission.	Li, 2020	What is your opinion on the use of marketing strategies by museums nowadays?	Marketing has been considered by many as incompatible with the museum's mission. Given that many museums in Greece lag in marketing, it would be interesting to examine the perception of museum managers regarding the necessity of marketing application in the museum context.

The strategic dimensions of marketing.	Capriotti, 2013	What is the structure of your marketing strategies?	To examine whether Greek museums have a marketing department with specialized staff, whether they set specific objectives, have a specific budget, and evaluate the results of their marketing strategies.
	Mudzanani, 2017	Could you tell me a few things about your main marketing communication tools?	
The significance of partnerships	Silberberg, 1995; Takalani Mudzanani, 2017	What kind of partnerships does the Museum implement, and what is their role in promoting the Museum?	This question explores how museums can benefit from partnering with other cultural organizations and operators to attract more tourists.
Digital marketing strategies of Greek museums.	Liew & Loh, 2007; Theocharidis et al., 2014;	What is your opinion on using the Internet and new communication tools to attract domestic and foreign visitors?	Given the relatively slow development of digital marketing in the context of Greek museums, the question aims to explore the managers' perceptions regarding using digital channels to attract more visitors.
Content		What content must be published online to attract Greek and foreign visitors to the Museum?	It is vital to examine the perceptions of museum managers regarding the content published on the Internet.
Interaction and engagement	Camarero et al, 2016; Chung et al., 2014	How do you try to interact more actively with your audience on online platforms?	According to Theocharidis et al. (2014), online interaction between museums and virtual visitors can create a positive relationship between the two parts and increase the

			opportunities for offline involvement of online users.
The influence of the pandemic	Noehrer et al., 2021	What changes may the pandemic have brought to your museum's overall communication strategies? Are they still in force today?	This question aims to investigate whether covid-19 had a long-term effect on museums' marketing and communication strategies in Greece.
Creating unique visitor experiences	Li, 2020; Rentschler, 2014	To what extent have you tried to upgrade the Museum's practices in recent years to provide new experiences for visitors during their visit?	Marketing application as part of the museum's management practices can enhance the experiences offered to visitors (Rentschler, 2014). Therefore, it would be interesting to examine what marketing strategies Greek museums apply to generate remarkable on-site experiences for their visitors.
Market research	Cole, 2008	How do you gain feedback and measure the visitors' satisfaction with the on-site experiences?	Market research constitutes part of the relationship marketing of the Museum and helps to increase the visitors' commitment (customer retention) towards the Museum.
<b>Challenges</b>			
Challenges	Garezou, Keramidas, 2017; Boutsiouki & Polydora, 2020	What are your main difficulties or constraints in promoting your museum to tourists?	There are a few references in the literature regarding the challenges and limitations that make Greek museums need to catch up regarding marketing and branding strategies. Therefore it is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the sources of these challenges.





## Appendix B: Number of museum visitors

January — December 2022	
Public Museums	2022
Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum	105.200
Museum of Ancient Olympia	85.179
Archaeological museum of Rhodes	76.430
Chania Archaeological Museum	55.195
Drama Archaeological Museum	1.484
National Museum of Contemporary Art	—
The Metropolitan Organisation of Museums of Visual Arts of Thessaloniki-MOMus	—
Private Museums	Number of visitors in 2022
B&E Goulandris Foundation-Modern Art Museum	67.500
Museum of Cycladic Art	—
B&M Theodorakis Foundation for the Fine Arts and Music	—
Kotsanas Museum of Ancient Greek Technology	—
Herakleidon Museum	Approx. 25.000
Athens City Museum	3.998
Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki	Approx. 30.000
Museum of Macedonian Struggle	—
Noesis-Thessaloniki Science Center and Technology Museum	—
Seikilo Museum	Approx. 40-50 visitors per month



## Appendix C: Museums' Social Media

Museums		Website	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	YouTube channel
<b>Public Museums</b>						
1	Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Museum of Ancient Olympia	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
3	Archaeological Museum of Rhodes	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
4	Chania Archaeological Museum	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
5	National Museum of Contemporary Art	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	The Metropolitan Organisation of Museums of Visual Arts of Thessaloniki-MOMus	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Archaeological Museum of Drama	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
<b>Private Museums</b>						
8	B&E Goulandris Foundation-Modern Art Museum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
9	Museum of Cycladic Art	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	B&M Theocharakis Foundation for the Fine Arts and Music	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Kotsanas Museum of Ancient Greek Technology	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Herakleidon Museum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Athens City Museum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Museum of Macedonian Struggle	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓

<b>16</b>	Noesis-Thessaloniki Science Center and Technology Museum	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
<b>17</b>	Seikilo Museum	✓	✓	✓	X	✓

## Appendix D: Coding

### **A: Organizational structure of marketing communication strategies**

A1: Public museums under the control of the Regional Antiquities Department

A2: Public museums that have a Board of Directors

A3: Private museums

A4: Museums that receive state funding

A5: Museums that do not receive state funding

A6: Museums that receive NSRF

A7: Seasonality of tourism

A8: Higher number of international tourists

A9: Equal number of national and international visitors

A10: Change in the profile of visitors

A11: Museums with a communication department or director

A12: Museums with a marketing department

A13: Museums without communication or marketing department

A14: Ministry of Culture and Sports undertakes the marketing management

A15: The guidelines are determined by the Board of Directors

A16: Marketing is necessary

A17: Opposition to marketing strategies

A18: Special budget for marketing communication strategies

A19: No budget for marketing communication strategies

A20: Budget for large-scale projects

A21: Holistic type of communication

A22: Annual communication plan

A23: The communication strategy depends on the target audience

A24: Communication strategy depends on the SWOT analysis

A25: Communication strategy for every action

A26: The marketing strategies reflect the Museum's values

A27: Cooperation between all the Museum's departments

### **B: Marketing communication channels**

B1: Use of traditional communication tools

B2: Limited use of printed advertising

B3: Internet and SNS as communication channels

B4: E-mail marketing

B5: Events, programs, and exhibitions as communication channels

B6: Conferences and festivals as communication channels

B7: Communication campaigns

B8: Physical and online stores as communication tools

### **C: Co-operations**

C1: Co-operation with museums and cultural institutions

C2: Co-operation with tourist organizations and agencies

C3: Co-operation with hotels

C4: Co-operation with the airport

C5: Co-operation with travel providers and public transit services

C6: Co-operation with online travel agencies and platforms

C7: Co-operation with digital content creators

C8: Co-operation with foreign media

C9: Co-operation with local authorities and the municipality

C10: Co-operation with artists

C11: Co-operation with educational institutions

C12: Co-operation with companies that design special services

C13: Expansion of their activities and enhancement of their outreach efforts

C14: Exchange of content and management practices through cooperations

#### **D: Digital Strategies**

D1: Existence of an internal or external manager of social media

D2: Social media are managed by archaeologists and the Ministry of Culture and Sports

D3: Volunteers and interns have a supporting role

D4: Separate pages for the or online store on Instagram and Facebook

D5: Occasional research of different platforms

D6: Museums focus on active platforms

D7: Use of online paid advertising

D8: Co-operations with experts on digital marketing

D9: Promotion of the museum's exhibitions and activities

D10: Informative and educative content

D11: Rich audiovisual material

D12: Entertaining content

D13: Visually engaging and aesthetic content

D14: Content based on the target audience

D15: Adaptation of content according to the platform

D16: Use of amateurish practices

D17: Co-ordination between all the departments for content share

- D18: Balanced use of social media
- D19: Availability of English language on the website
- D20: Availability of English language on social media
- D21: Museums reply to user-generated content and messages
- D22: The feedback is evaluated by the competent department
- D23: Museums do not respond to negative comments
- D24: Interaction with the audience through online campaigns
- D25: Interaction through educational programs
- D26: Museums repost users' photos
- D27: Interaction through Museum's membership program
- D28: Covid-19 had an influence on the online strategies of Museums
- D29: Museums were quite prepared
- D30: Adoption of online events and activities
- D31: Adoption of virtual tours
- D32: Museums started using social media accounts
- D33: Museums digitalized their content
- D34: Museums completed their online store
- D35: Exterior professional consultancy on digital marketing
- D36: Visitors value onsite museum experience

**E: Enriching on-site experiences**

- E1: Educational activities
- E2: Scientific conferences and lectures
- E3: Recreational activities
- E4: Interactive and hands-on experiences



E5: Family activities

E6: Cultural events and festivals

E7: Outdoor activities

E8: Story-telling activities

E9: Experiential cultural tourism activities

E10: Modernizing the content of the exhibitions

E11: Renewing the content of the exhibitions

E12: Organizing temporary exhibitions

E13: Creating loyal visitors with temporary exhibitions

E14: Increasing the number of visitors with temporary exhibitions

E15: Increasing the number of tourists with temporary exhibitions

E16: Attracting domestic tourists

E17: The topic of temporary exhibitions is key in attracting tourists

E18: Digital representations and interactive screens in the museum

E19: Provision of technological devices to the visitors

E20: Creation of visitor information applications

E21: Gamification activities

E22: 3D animations

E23: Available information in English and in Greek

E24: Available information in more than two languages

E25: Supporting role of the staff

E26: Ensuring accessibility to vulnerable social groups

## **F: Audience research**

F1: Museums do not conduct surveys

- F2: Museums use visitors' impression book for feedback
- F3: Online dissemination of surveys
- F4: Museums use statistical data from SNS
- F5: Museums conduct pilot surveys
- F6: Co-operation with an agency to conduct surveys
- F7: Museums conduct small-scale surveys
- F8: Audience research through employees' interaction with the visitors

**G: Challenges and future change**

- G1: Lack of financial resources
- G2: Lack of available staff
- G3: Bureaucratic procedures
- G4: Challenge of finding sponsors
- G5: Challenge of forming co-operations
- G6: Cultural Organizations are neglected by the Government
- G7: Challenge of attracting a younger audience
- G8: Limited popularity of Museums of Modern Art
- G9: Regressive perceptions of people holding key positions
- G10: Challenges bring creativity
- G11: Targeting of cruise tourists
- G12: Improvement of the online presence
- G13: Upgrade of digital live experience
- G14: Increase of the on-site activities and experiences offered
- G15: Investment in publishing activities

## Appendix E: Data Availability

Due to their extensive length, the interview transcripts will be available by request to the author.