

Extending and adapting the concept of quality management for museums and cultural heritage attractions: A comparative study of Southern European cultural heritage managers' perceptions

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ABSTRACT

Quality in cultural heritage attractions is mainly approached from the visitors' satisfaction perspective, and the literature does not contain a clear definition of quality in the management of cultural heritage sites open to the public. The present study aims to reframe this trend. By way of theoretical contribution, we propose a definition of quality in cultural heritage attractions management based on dimensions such as the capacity of preserving the cultural assets, the ability to communicate effectively their significance, the quality of commodification for visitor use, and the ability to boost intercultural competence and promote intercultural dialogue. Based on the above, an empirical, qualitative study was conducted on the cultural heritage managers' current perceptions of quality. The results suggest that a profound asymmetry exists among practitioners' opinions and practices, and four types of cultural heritage managers were defined with regard to their perception of quality: Reactionary, Reticent, Pragmatic, Enthusiastic.

Keywords: cultural heritage management, cultural heritage attractions, quality, tourism, cultural awareness, intercultural dialogue, tourism and peace

Good ideas are not adopted automatically.

They must be driven into practice with courageous patience

(Admiral Hyman George Rickover)

Introduction

Tourism is one of those human activities that has had an impressive growth over the last 70 years. This exponential growth may present negative aspects and implications - see, for instance, the current debate about over-tourism (Milano, Cheer, & Novelli, 2017) - but this should never distract us from the opportunities that tourism, if well managed, can

offer to make this world a better place. For this very reason, debates on the contribution of tourism to human development and to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Recuero Virto, 2018; Scott, Hall, & Gössling, 2019), as well as those about the potential contribution of tourism to a culture of peace (Carbone, 2019; Wohlmuther & Wintersteiner, 2014) are on the agenda among the matters of priority. In this context, culture(s) and cultural heritage have had an increasingly key role.

Cultural activities and cultural attractions have indeed an increasing centrality in modern societies (Richards, 2001). Such a significance is reflected by the scientific trends in the field, as pointed out by Richards and Munsters (2010) and, more recently, by Timothy (2018). At the end of the twentieth century scholars preferred to consider tourism itself as a cultural expression, rather than considering culture as an object of tourism (Urry, 1990). Consequently, cultural heritage management in the context of cultural and tourist activities became a noteworthy subject of study, and work such as that by McKercher and du Cros (2012) have established the partnership between tourism and cultural heritage management. Therefore, in order to maximize the benefits of this association - Tourism and cultural heritage - defining the concept of quality in cultural heritage management appears to be a very relevant matter.

The existing literature on quality in cultural heritage attractions focuses on aspects such as the materiality of the assets (e.g. conservation) or the idea of visitor satisfaction. The topic is thus mainly approached from a demand side (visitors). Among the most recent studies, for instance, the work by Su and Teng (2018) confirm this trend by proposing the dimensions of quality in cultural heritage management based on visitor satisfaction (mostly related to the services offered), clearly reflecting the legacy of the idea of quality taken from industry and marketing. The present study reframes the current debate on quality in cultural heritage management by bringing the following innovation: 1) by adopting a Total Quality Management (TQM) perspective; 2) by approaching the subject from the supply side, namely by making sense of the opinions and perceptions of cultural heritage managers, and 3) by considering the current debate on the social role of tourism and cultural heritage. In order to do so, we pose the following research question(s): 1) how do cultural heritage managers perceive the idea of quality? And in this context: 2) To what extent is the capacity of promoting public participation and intercultural dialogue perceived by heritage managers as aspects of quality management in cultural heritage?

The present investigation uses the sense-making process (Weick, 1995) to outline discursive patterns in cultural heritage managers' narratives about how they "perceive" (interpret) and "do" (enact) quality. In this sense, the study connects different areas such as tourism studies, cultural heritage management studies and the theories of quality management.

In this interdisciplinary territory conceptualizing the role of the cultural heritage manager is key to understanding their perceptions and the enactment of these perceptions. In the literature, there are different terms with which those who hold responsibility in the decision-making process concerning the management of cultural heritage are indicated, such as 'cultural heritage decision makers' (Ferretti, Bottero, & Mondini, 2014) or 'cultural heritage organization managers' (Honari, Goudarzi, Heidari, & Emami, 2010). In this sense, the work of McKercher, Ho, and du Cros (2005) is particularly noteworthy since it puts tourism in direct connection with the concept of cultural heritage management. Taking into account all the above, and given the definition of cultural heritage as the sites, objects and practices that a society regards as old, important and worthy of conservation (Brumann, 2015), we thus refer to 'cultural heritage managers' as those professionals from both the private and public sector who are formally engaged in achieving a balance between developing the tourism industry, generating revenue while still conserving the authenticity of intangible heritage as well as the physical integrity of heritage sites, objects and collections (tangible heritage), promoting and celebrating their educational, historic and cultural values.

Thus, in the following sections, the context of this study will be presented and, as the theoretical framework will be outlined, the concepts of quality and cultural heritage management will converge with the debate on the renewed role of tourism and cultural heritage for society, offering the basis for the proposal of an original definition of quality in the management of cultural heritage attractions. Our conceptual proposition will be then compared with the cultural heritage managers' current perceptions of quality, outlined through a multiple case-study analysis based on a methodological "within methods" triangulation (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Casey & Murphy, 2009; Thurmond, 2001) was carried out. Based on conceptual consideration and empirical

observation, we thus propose to extend the concept of quality management when applied to cultural heritage, in the light of socio-cultural global challenges such as the preservation of local identities, on the one hand, and the use of cultural heritage as a vehicle for intercultural dialogue through tourism, on the other hand.

Significantly, the latter is in line with the debate recently launched at the 25th ICOM international assembly (August 7, 2019, Kyoto) on a new definition of the museum that could better reflect an extended role that museums may have for a more inclusive and peaceful society through the promotion of intercultural dialogue. The present work thus reflects the changes that are taking place in the cultural and tourism studies' research agenda, due to the reconsideration of culture and heritage as drivers of sustainable development and social well-being (Bertacchini & Segre, 2016, p. 69) as well as the social dimension added to the debate on conservation, management, and tourism sustainability of cultural heritage (Ross, Saxena, Correia, & Deutz, 2017).

Finally, the present study can perfectly be incorporated in today's debate on the future of the tourism sector post COVID-19 pandemic. The global health crisis we are currently experiencing represents a very critical moment for the tourism industry, particularly from the point of view of the dramatic socioeconomic repercussion of the break imposed to the sector. Nevertheless, this crisis is also giving the tourism sector a concrete chance to reflect and restart by implementing reviewed strategies and practices, not exclusively in terms of health and safety measures, but also in order to make its contribution more effective towards a more inclusive, fair and peaceful society, eventually looking beyond neoliberal constructs that are - whether by right or not - dominating the whole industry.

1. Quality: evolution of an idea

The contemporary concept of quality is the result of reflections of theorists, consultants and managers which have taken place increasingly after the Second World War, mainly in the manufacturing industry and then, progressively, in the tertiary sector (service industries) and even the third sector (non-governmental and non-profit-making organizations or associations, including charities, voluntary and community groups, cooperatives, etc). Juran (1951), one of the early key figures in the process defining quality, and quality management, outlined two main meanings of quality:

- those features of products which meet customer needs and thereby provide customer satisfaction;
- freedom from deficiencies, freedom from errors.

Initially, the quality was based on the inspection of the physical characteristics of the final product and the statistical method was one of the tools used for control by sampling (Saraiva & Teixeira, 2009). However, other aspects of quality were explored later. For instance, the distinction between the external customer - those who acquire a product - and the internal customer - those who are involved in the production of a product (Juran, 1951; Juran & Gryna, 1988), was outlined. Moreover, Feigenbaum (1961) defined quality as the result of an effort of all individuals who work in an organisation, not just a group of technicians. This reflection laid the foundation for a paradigm shift from Quality Assurance (final control of the products) to TQM, which involves all the aspects, moments, sectors of a company, in order to support its efforts to deliver fully satisfactory products to the customer with the minimum economic effort (Calderón Perez & Casas Novas, 2009; Oakland & Sohal, 1996; Saraiva & Teixeira, 2009).

2. Quality in cultural heritage attractions management

A number of studies across extant literature in cultural tourism consider factors and/or concepts that can be broadly equated to characteristics that embody consumers' typical understandings of quality dimensions. Among them, quality-based factors applied to tourism (Li, Wang, Xia, Chen, & Chen, 2019); experience quality, perceived value and satisfaction (Chen & Chen, 2010); the idea of 'value for money' (Alberini & Longo, 2006); the link between authenticity/sincerity and perceived quality (Taheri, Gannon, Cordina, & Lochrie, 2018).

While the above-mentioned studies investigate the consumer perspective, the present work challenges the current idea of quality in cultural heritage management from the supply side in a TQM perspective. The word quality was indeed increasingly associated with cultural heritage management in the last three decades (Carbone, 2016; Drummond & Yeoman, 2001; Leask & Yeoman, 1999; Oosterbeek & Pollice, 2014; Pedersen, 2002). In this context, Manacorda (2007, p. 90) points out the necessity of internationally shared standards and methods of cultural heritage management. Quagliuolo (1998, pp. 18-19) stresses the importance of "a culture of quality in heritage management", intended as a

tendency towards on-going improvement and a constant attention to the needs of the users of heritage attractions. In this context, Conti (1998) states that the implementation of the TQM philosophy to cultural heritage would massively improve the cultural sector. Scholars such as Go and Govers (2000), Peralta da Silva (2000), Drummond and Yeoman (2001), Laws (2001), Natali (2005), Oosterbeek (2008), Lindblom (2011) and Carbone (2016), are among the increasing number of authors that have explored the link between cultural heritage management, tourism and quality.

Finally, and beyond the academic debate, it is worth mentioning the sectoral interest in the implementation of the principle of quality and quality accreditation. A variety of local, regional and national quality certifications for cultural heritage attractions were created worldwide. So far, HERITY©, an international non-governmental and not for profit organisation for the quality management of cultural heritage, is the only organisation that operates internationally, and is acknowledged by UNESCO and UNWTO. The organisation was created in 1994 and promotes a system of quality assessment and certification - the HERITY© - Global Evaluation System (GES) - for museums, monuments, churches, castles, historic buildings, villas, parks, archaeological remains, libraries, archives, itineraries, and other heritage sites open to the public. The HERITY© - GES aims to assess the practices of management based on the observation of four specific dimensions, implicitly defining the concept of quality in cultural heritage management: 1) relevance of the site; 2) state of conservation; 3) quality of communication and 4) services offered to visitors (Quagliuolo, 2014).

3. Cultural heritage management and quality from a social development perspective

The “Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments Sites” (ICOMOS, 1964) claims (art. 5) that “the conservation of monuments is always facilitated by making use of them for some socially useful purpose”. The presentation of the archaeological heritage to the general public is an essential method to promote understanding of the origins and development of modern societies (ICOMOS, 1990), and the importance of a dynamic interaction between tourism and cultural heritage (ICOMOS,

1999) is commonly acknowledged¹. The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (UNWTO, 1999), in turn, clearly recognizes the contribution of tourism to mutual understanding and respect between people and societies (Art.1). The convention on the value of cultural heritage for society by the Council-of-Europe (2005) was another important step toward an approach to cultural heritage management not related exclusively to preservation but also to its use as a resource for peaceful and democratic societies. In this sense, the strong link between tourism, cultural heritage management and the promotion of peace, is consistently claimed by Carbone (2017b, 2018, 2019).

Concerns for equality, diversity, social justice and human rights move from the margins of museum thinking and practice, to the core (Sandell & Nightingale, 2012), and the debate on local communities' participation both in tourism development and cultural heritage management, has intensified. Particular attention has also been given to the potential benefits of the encounter between local communities and tourists. In this sense, the intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1976) is widely applied to the study of the relationship between tourists and the local community. Nevertheless, new conceptual approaches are emerging that explore the link between tourism, culture and social development through new conceptual associations, such as the association between tourism and Corporate Social Responsibility (Coles, Fenclova, & Dinan, 2013; Gursoy, Boğan, Dedeoğlu, & Çalışkan, 2019) – even with specific respect to the International norm ISO 26000 (Figueira & Dias, 2011) - sustainability (McCool & Bosak, 2016; Parga Dans & Alonso González, 2019) and cultural understanding (Cooper & Hall, 2016; Stone, 2017).

In the scope of the present work, it is especially worth mentioning the convergence of cultural heritage, tourism and intercultural dialogue into the *Paideia Approach* for cultural heritage management (Carbone, Oosterbeek, & Costa, 2013). This model was inspired by the Socratic philosophy according to which the self-knowledge of an individual is the presupposition of his openness to others, and in turn related to the

¹ Nevertheless, authors such as McKercher and du Cros (2012, p. 40) state that tourists who are interested in cultural heritage do not have necessarily a good knowledge of history, and they may be travelling to have their stereotypical and romantic images of a destination possibly reinforced or (less likely) eventually challenged.

assumption that “through others we become ourselves” (Vigotskij, 1987, p. 104). The application of this model to cultural heritage management would thus involve a bridge between public participation and tourists’ cultural engagement. By doing so, on the one hand, the tourist experience would be improved (Chen & Rahman, 2017) and on the other hand, the socio-cultural benefits of tourism would be boosted. In short, the Paideia Approach to cultural heritage management suggests that cultural assets should be managed keeping in mind two specific aims: on the one side, to reinforce the identity and intercultural skills of the residents, and on the other, to promote intercultural dialogue with tourists.

From this point of view, cultural assets and their management become a key element also in the debate launched by D'Amore (1988) and concerning the association between Tourism and Peace (Carbone, 2017b). Understanding the relationship between heritage, peace and peacebuilding has never been more urgent: while not much can be done in the heat of war to protect the loss of heritage, much more can and must be done to use heritage as a vehicle for peace (Stone, 2017). Nevertheless, the contribution heritage brings to peacebuilding has been largely ignored, according to Walters, Laven, and Davis (2017), and heritage is often reduced to simply a way of encouraging community-based initiatives that have limited impact on creating conditions for sustainable change.

These debates have also had repercussions on the idea of quality in the tourist destination development. The guidelines contained in the European Commission’s handbook on Integrated Quality Management (IQM) of Urban Tourist Destinations, for instance, have promoted the concept of integrated quality management aimed at complex goals related to regional development, citizenship, growth, employment and identity (European-Commission, 2000, p. 21). As a direct consequence, one of the main skills of cultural heritage managers is to be able to grasp the complexity underlying their responsibility and role within social development, at local, regional and global level (Carbone, 2017a).

4. A definition of quality in cultural heritage and cultural heritage attractions management (theoretical contribution)

In the previous sections, we have outlined the origins of the idea of quality and its evolution, and we have analysed the way in which this concept has been applied to cultural heritage management, to date, by scholars and practitioners. Furthermore, we

have shed light on recent trends in the use of cultural assets for social and human development purposes. Reflecting on the theoretical and sectoral considerations set out above, we thus propose a definition of quality management for cultural heritage that goes beyond the current practices, and in which the traditional role of cultural heritage managers converges with the new social responsibilities internationally claimed. In sum, a definition of quality in cultural heritage management should go beyond the more traditional aspects, such as preservation and visitor satisfaction, and take into consideration the contribution that cultural heritage managers are called to give to social well-being and human development, and the potential of museums to bridge cultures.

With that in mind, and considering the gap existing in literature to date with regards to a conceptual definition of quality in cultural heritage and cultural heritage attractions management, we would therefore propose to define quality in cultural heritage management as *the complex and continuous process that aims at achieving a balance between assets' preservation and their fruition for residents and tourists by using the available resources in order to guarantee an effective communication to the public, the most appropriate range and typologies of services, and the promotion of diversity, cultural awareness and intercultural dialogue*. The main indicators of quality in cultural heritage attraction management would thus be: the capacity to preserve the authenticity of intangible cultural heritage as well as the integrity of the tangible cultural heritage; the effectiveness of communication in order to promote and celebrate their educational, historic and cultural values to the public; the services offered to enjoy cultural heritage places in the best possible way; and the capacity to boost the visitors' intercultural competence and promote intercultural dialogue between tourists and residents as a contribution to a culture of peace.

5. Problematisation and research question

Despite the growing sectorial and academic debate presented above, the meaning of quality within cultural heritage management is still vague. So far, authors essentially associate the idea of quality with two main concepts:

1. quality mainly associated with the idea of visitor satisfaction (Fernandes & Cruz, 2016)
2. quality mainly associated on aspects related to the materiality of cultural heritage,

such as its conservation and protection (de Beer & Boogaard, 2017; Litti, Audenaert, & Fabbri, 2017; Oikonomopoulou, Delegou, Sayas, & Moropoulou, 2017; Peña-Alonso, Hernández-Calvento, Pérez-Chacón, & Ariza-Solé, 2017).

By doing so, literature lacks an approach able to grasp the complexity that quality in cultural heritage management should embody. The present work aims to fill this gap by reaching a twofold objective. On the one hand, by providing the field with an original proposal of quality (theoretical contribution) which extend the concept of quality in cultural heritage management, converging both with the message spread by the Faro Convention (Council-of-Europe, 2005) on the value of cultural heritage for society and the commitment announced by the Amman Declaration to building a culture of peace by using tourism as a vehicle of intercultural dialogue. On the other hand, we empirically provide and make sense of the current perception that cultural heritage managers have about the very meaning of quality. In order to do so, we pose the following research question(s):

- how do cultural heritage managers perceive the idea of quality?

And in this context:

- To what extent is the capacity of promoting public participation and intercultural dialogue perceived by heritage managers as aspect of quality management in cultural heritage?

We finally compare and contrast our conceptual proposal and the empirical findings on the actual perception of quality of those who actually managed cultural heritage attractions.

6. Methodology

This study is ontologically based on constructionism, epistemologically referring to the interpretivist position and uses a qualitative method, namely a multiple case study relying on a methodological “within method” triangulation (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012, p. 2).

Thus, procedures used were:

- direct, participant and non-participant observation;
- content analysis and
- semi-structured interviews.

As acknowledged in the literature, researchers who are using the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods often seek experiences, understandings and perceptions of individuals for their data to uncover reality rather than rely on numbers of statistics (Nguyen & Tran Thi, 2015, p. 24). As such, in this work the process of sense-making (Weick, 1995) was used to search for discursive patterns in cultural heritage managers' narratives about how they "perceive" (interpret) and "do" (enact) quality. In the past, authors such as Nicholds, Gibney, Mabey, and Hart (2017); Riley and Hawe (2009) used sense-making for the same purpose in organizational investigations in other sectors.

A multiple case study was conducted in southern Europe, by investigating cultural attractions in Spain, Portugal and Italy. The investigation occurred between January 2013 and August 2014, and Table 1 shows in detail the eight² cultural attractions composing the multiple case study. The number of case studies selected highlights the benefits of a multi-case study analysis. Such benefits would "be limited if fewer than four cases are chosen, or more than ten" because "two or three cases do not show enough interactivity between programs and their situations" whereas more than 10 cases provide "more uniqueness of interactivity than a research team and readers can come to understand" (Stake, 2006, p. 200).

Moreover, the selected cases have a key element in common: they all hold a quality certificate issued by HERITY© - World Organization for the Certification of Quality Management of Cultural Heritage, which, as discussed above, uses quality dimensions internationally recognized by UNESCO and the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (Table 1).

Table 1: Cultural attractions investigated in the multiple case study

Spain	Portugal	Italy
(1) Ruta Caesaraugusta, Zaragoza, composed by:	(2) Interpretation Centre of Archaeology, Vila Nova da Barquinha	(6) Museo della Civiltà Romana, Rome
- Caesarugusta Forum Museum;	(3) Synagogue, Jewish Museum Abraham Zacuto,	(7) Mercati di Traiano e Museo dei Fori Imperiali, Rome

² Since the four museums belonging to the Spanish *Rota Caesaraugusta* are managed by a single team, they are considered as a single case study.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caesarugusta River Port Museum; - Caesarugusta Public Baths Museum; - Caesarugusta Theatre Museum, Zaragoza 	Tomar	(8) Museo del Mare e della Navigazione Antica, Santa Mainella (Rome)
	(4) Museum of Prehistoric Art and Sacred Valley of the Tagus, Mação	
	(5) Castle of Abrantes, Abrantes	

This methodological choice was made in order to lend more consistency to the study and to strengthen its validity since such a feature expresses a clear commitment and interest on the managers' part in the application of shared principles of quality. Direct participant observation was conducted between 2011 and 2014 at the headquarters of HERITY© - World Organization for the Certification of Quality Management of Cultural Heritage, in Rome (Italy). The main aim of this part of the study was to gather information about the practices and conceptual approach adopted by the only institution acknowledged globally by authoritative supranational cultural and tourism bodies such as UNESCO and UNWTO.

In addition, a total of 13 interviews were conducted during the investigation of the specific case studies in Italy, Spain and Portugal. Detailed description is shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Detailed description of the interviews conducted, participants involved and their role.

MAIN CASE STUDIES			
SPAIN	1	ES-INT-1	Key official: Departments of Museums and Expositions, "Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza", Spain
	2	ES-INT-2	Key official: Services of Culture, "Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza", Spain
	3	ES-INT-3	Key official: "Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza", Spain
PORTUGAL	4	PT-INT-1	Key official: CIAAR, Vila Nova da Barquinha, Portugal
	5	PT-INT-2	Key official: CIAAR Founding member and officer, Vila Nova da Barquinha, Portugal
	6	PT-INT-3	Key official: Office of Planning and Strategic Development of the "Comunidade Intermunicipal do Médio Tejo", Tomar, Portugal
	7	PT-INT-4	Key official: "Museu de Arte Pré-Histórica e do Sagrado no Vale do Tejo", Mação, Portugal
	8	PT-INT-5	Key official: Abrantes Municipality and "Comunidade Intermunicipal do Médio Tejo", Abrantes, Portugal
ITALY	9	IT-INT-1B	Key official: "Museo della Civiltà Romana", Rome, Italy
	10	IT-INT-2	Key official: "Museo della Civiltà Romana", Rome, Italy
	11	IT-INT-3	Key official: "Museo del Mare e della Navigazione Antica", Santa Marinella, Italy
	12	IT-INT-5	Key official: Zètema, department of "customer care and quality", Rome, Italy
AKWNOLEDGED EXPERTS AND KEY AGENT IN CULTURAL HERITAGE QUALITY MANAGEMENT			
	13	IT-INT-4	Key official: HERITY INTERNATIONAL, Rome, Italy

The rationale behind the selection of the interviewees is related to their roles in the museums. Namely, interviewees were selected based on their role in decision-making process with regards to overall management, in general, and the implementation of quality management (thus its perception and interpretation), in particular. In this sense, the most influential and determinants figures were selected for the interviews. Due to ethical concerns, and in order to guarantee anonymity of the interviewees, in Table 2 any reference to their identity and/or specific institutional role has been removed.

The number of semi-structured interviews with cultural heritage managers (13) is directly dependent on methodological conclusions reached by previous authors, concerning the “theoretical saturation” (Punch, 2005, pp. 214-215) and “qualitative isomorphism” (Ford, 1975), well acknowledged in literature, guarantees the reliability of the study with regards to the number of interviews conducted, information gathered and conclusion reached after the discussion.

Besides the semi-structured interviews, qualitative data were also collected through direct participant observation, and document analysis. The data gathered through direct observation were collected in the form of a research diary and a photographic archive through an observation grid. The latter was developed based on the parameters of observation used to award the recognition of “European Museum of the Year” for outstanding achievements for public quality and excellence. Content analysis focused on the following source: monographic publications; printed and digital press archives; institutional documents; and grey literature (Debachere, 1995, p. 95). Finally, it is worth mentioning that methodological triangulation was already used in other studies related to management and quality in cultural heritage. Lindblom (2011), for instance, applies methodological triangulation which includes the use of text analyses, surveys and semi-structured interviews in order to investigate the trend of the growth of quality in cultural heritage management in Norway. Research instruments, namely interview protocol and observation grid, are attached as appendix 1 and 2 of this article.

7. Findings

The empirical study provided us with a clear idea about the cultural heritage managers’ perception about quality and about their role as promoters of intercultural dialogue. The

interviews aimed to capture an overview of opinions on this subject. An illustrative sample of the main opinions expressed is exposed below.

6.1 Cultural heritage managers' opinions and attitudes toward the concept of quality

Opinions collected in order to identify and make sense of cultural heritage managers' views were very heterogeneous. In some cases, interviews revealed scepticism and even a sort of stigmatization on the part of cultural heritage managers towards the idea of quality. This attitude has proved to be common in those participants who admitted not to feel comfortable in talking about "management" / "quality management" when referring to cultural heritage. In their opinion, those concepts lead back directly to the economic, for-profit commercial sector, thus distant from the mission and the values of the cultural sector, even antithetical. This evidence matches others collected through observation and content analysis, such as the following idea expressed by the Italian Ministry of Heritage Cultural Activities and Tourism talking about museums directors:

"Do not call them managers, otherwise it seems that we want to hire someone who was good in selling drinks or iron rods" (Zanini, 2014, p. 4)

The concept of manager is thus simplistically juxtaposed on the concept of seller. In this sense, a participant observed:

"The level of culture of quality is generally low. Particularly from the theoretical point of view, as from the practical point of view we probably have a better situation. In fact, some heritage managers told us: we used to make quality and did not even know it!"

Other informants appear to concur with this view:

"In the end of the day, what does quality mean? if you are a well-organized person and you work well, this is quality!"

"Quality? What is quality about, finally? Honestly speaking there are more important things to think about. (...) If someone acts in this direction, it is just for pure and mere passion, but it is an individual effort, or the good will of external volunteers"

Other common perceptions expressed by cultural heritage managers about quality refer to the work related to the implementation of a quality system:

"quality is something that just causes more unnecessary work"

Though, a minority exists among participants that expressed a positive view towards quality by acknowledging the advantages it can bring, although mostly referring to quality as a process mainly related to administrative management, on the one hand, and visitor satisfaction, on the other. Very few participants showed a broader and more inclusive idea of quality.

6.2 Cultural heritage, quality and intercultural dialogue

With regards to the link between cultural heritage, tourism and the promotion of intercultural dialogue, and the possibility to consider this relationship as a dimension of quality in cultural heritage management, the opinions collected differ profoundly, and in this sense one of the participants stated:

“This debate is actually far from an end. In my experience, sometimes in my meetings I still meet cultural heritage managers and experts affirming that culture should remain a resource limited to a small elite”

The opinions gathered occupy positions on a continuum that goes from a conservative to a more inclusive and social value-minded vision of cultural heritage management. So, while some participants expressed views that are very well represented by the following statement:

“Sorry, but I really cannot see what relation can exist between local community and tourist! We do not care about the encounter between tourists and local community in a museum. We do not even have money for this, and, honestly, if I would receive other funds I would anyway use them to buy other research tools, not to promote intercultural dialogue”

Others expressed a very different opinion:

“We actually tried to involve the people of the city in this sense, for instance inviting them to be guides into our museums for domestic and international tourists”

“A museum has to contribute to the organization of a territory, because other spaces that in the past used to fulfil this function today are not effective anymore, like the Church or, on the other hand, Schools, which should have this role, but they haven't. (...) Therefore, museums have this territorial responsibility nowadays, and in this sense, they have to represent places of encounter”

In the latter case, it is fully recognised the social value of cultural heritage and the responsibility of the managers to make cultural heritage attractions a space of encounter both for tourists and, even more importantly, for the local community. Therefore, these informants completely acknowledge the importance to include the social value of cultural heritage into the practice of management and eventually within the dimension of quality.

Finally, it was possible to identify in-between positions, where managers recognise the social value of cultural institutions, though they consider it as implicit, and for this reason, it would not be necessary to associate it with the idea of management or quality in cultural heritage:

“This (the social role) is something that naturally belong to a museum.... What does this have to do with quality? A museum is a social space by itself”

8. Discussion

The analysis of the information collected has led to the definition of a conceptual continuum which has as one of its extreme end a social value-minded and genuine, enthusiastic openness towards the idea of quality and, on the opposite side, an attitude that we will define as *reactionary* towards any association of the concept of quality with cultural heritage management.

The scepticism towards the idea of quality and, in some cases, the abhorrence of the conceptual juxtaposition of the concept of quality and cultural heritage management presents similarities with the studies conducted on behaviours and views of managers operating in other fields, such as not for profit and charities. In those contexts, indeed, studies shows an initial negative perception of the concept of quality management, as their managers and members “were proud in being freed from the taints of commercialism and of being above sordid factors such as financial results, and for this reasons they rejected the concept of management (...) as closely associated with the profit sector” (Drucker, 2001, pp. 40-41). Later on, however, those organisations finally acknowledged they actually “need quality management even more than the business sector, precisely because they do not have the discipline of financial results: they understood that good intentions are not a substitute for organization, leadership, responsibility, performances

and results” (Drucker, 2001, p. 41).

It is thus safe to say that evidence suggests the existence of a strong symmetry between the evolution of the perception of quality and its acceptance in cultural heritage management and that observed in other fields of both non for profit (Drucker, 2001, p. 41) and for profit sectors (Pinto & Soares, 2009, p. 26). Such a parallelism allows us to mark a precise chronological phase in the conceptual evolution of quality in cultural heritage.

With regards to the awareness and acceptance of the social role of cultural heritage managers, evidence show that the principles promoted by the Faro Convention in 2005 are, in the reality, still a controversial. The present research has highlighted the existence of a small minority of managers who express a great openness to the idea of quality by conferring it quite a broad sense that includes the social role of cultural heritage. Indeed, those participants’ answers revealed an approach to cultural attractions as places to boost visitors’ intercultural competence³ and to promote intercultural dialogue. The importance of leadership was another aspect that arose from the study. In this sense, the finding can be theoretically traced back to the affirmation according to which quality management “leads to an increased focus on leadership, culture and values of the organization; continuous improvement, involving the area of human resources and influencing processes, being applicable to all types of organized human activity, both in the sphere of profit as in the non-profit (Conti, 1998, p. 30). Finally, other participants placed their views in an in-between position of this continuum, by acknowledging the role of quality in cultural heritage, though merely in the perspective of visitor satisfaction.

By analysing the information extrapolated from the interviews and through their triangulation with the results of other data collection techniques (content analysis and direct observation) one of the main finding was the characterization of behavioural similarities, conceptual and/or semantic patterns among participants. Variables such as the discourse on the importance (or not) of quality within cultural heritage management;

³ Intercultural competence is the ability to develop targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to visible behaviour and communication that are both effective and appropriate in intercultural interactions (Deardorff, 2006). Cultural self-awareness, on the one side, and attitudes such as respect and openness towards others’ cultures on the other side, are some of the constituent elements of the intercultural competence.

the opinion on the relationship between quality and continuous improvement in heritage management; or the relationship between quality and social function of the cultural heritage sites, have been taken into consideration. The range of opinions and perceptions collected has thus given us the possibility to proceed to a Weberian typification by establishing four categories representing the main positions outlined along the continuum described above, from the cultural heritage managers' *reactionary* attitude to the enthusiastic one (Table 3). The table describes the common characteristic of each category.

Table 3: Proposed Heritage managers' Weberian Types towards Quality

Type	Description
Reactionary	He/she had contacts with processes related to quality. Quality, however, continues to be perceived as an accessory, something not important. The important work of the museum (preserve, study and disseminate the historical and cultural content), is not tied to a quality system, and is understood as a coded system. The quality is perceived as bureaucracy and almost useless. This type also proves to be "individualistic": he or she sees the creation of a Qualitative Cultural Offer as a "personal mission", something very subjective, non-coded. In the same way, the social function of the heritage manager is a personal issue, not linked with quality or management model. It is perceived as a subjective matter. There is a lack of leadership in relation to quality.
Reticent	He/she shows great inclination towards research. Understands and agrees with the appropriate aims of quality, but he does not implement it. He/she believes that quality is ancillary to the research, and the latter has to prevail. He/she deliberately keeps away from the social dimension, which s/he recognizes as important, and maybe even a possible dimension of quality management but, again, not enough to dedicate the time and investment, especially when budgets are tight. Furthermore, by triangulating the information gathered through the interview and the direct observation conducted during the study, it is safe to affirm that this specific type shows a limited capacity of leadership.
Pragmatic	He/she sees in a very pragmatic way the implementation of Quality. Normally the basic training that characterizes this type is not culturally-bound. The idea of quality is therefore much more tied to the classic concept of the companies (standard and quality control). However, he/she thinks it is possible to apply these principles to the management of cultural resources. He/she has a clear idea also about the economic effort and the political conditions required by a

	concrete and efficient implementation of quality systems. This type sees in quality a source of many benefits. However, he/she does not consider the involvement of the local population as a dimension of quality within heritage management. On the contrary, tourism is perceived as a vehicle for economic growth, and the quality of the cultural offer is particularly important for this reason. The triangulation of information collected suggests the presence of a great capacity for leadership.
Enthusiastic	This type totally embraces the innovation of quality applied to the heritage management. He/she applies the principles of quality to his/her work, and encourages staff to follow him/her in this practice, also by disseminating the positive results. He/she “lives” the quality in a critical, constructive and positive way. He/she follows proactively the evolution of the concept of quality itself, as a duty of a manager/operator of cultural heritage. The triangulation of information collected suggests the presence of transversal competences, strong sensibility and strong capacity of leadership in this specific profile.

As a final consideration, evidence also shows that cultural heritage managers associate the idea of quality with the idea of added cost, due to what is defined in literature as the cost of quality (Crosby, 1979), as outlined in our theoretical framework. A parallelism can be established between our study and those carried out since the 1970s in the manufacturing industry by Crosby (1979). The latter affirmed that, contrary to what the managers thought, quality is free, because the costs of the lack of quality are indeed much higher. Based on the evidence collected from our study we can affirm that quality in cultural heritage is free, but, in addition to Crosby’s statement, it is also necessary to consider, for cultural heritage, the social costs of poor management, or *non-quality*. It is therefore conceptually safe to affirm that quality in cultural heritage management⁴ is free, while non-quality entails economic and social costs.

Conclusion

Quality in cultural heritage management has mainly been studied from the demand side (visitor satisfaction) or from the point of view of the capacity to preserve cultural heritage. The present work aims to fill this theoretical gap, by approaching the topic from a supply side and through a TQM perspective. We propose a definition of quality in cultural heritage management that extends the traditional concept of quality (related with the

⁴ As defined in this work (theoretical contribution)

preservation of the cultural assets and visitor satisfaction) and reflects the most recent debate about the role of cultural heritage for society. Furthermore, we make sense of the cultural heritage managers' perceptions and opinions about quality, comparing and contrasting our theoretical reflections with the empirical results.

In sum, we propose an idea of quality in cultural heritage management that includes not only the preservation of cultural heritage and its promotion as a vehicle of socio-economic growth, but also its sociocultural role within the complex process to achieve an effective intercultural dialogue through tourism. In this sense, the present work aligns itself with the recent proposal by ICOM for a new definition of the museum as a “democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the past and the future (...) addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present”, and contributes to the creation of a shared vision for cultural heritage attractions management in the new era.

There are several theoretical and sectoral implications. The present work sets the stage for further significant theoretical progress in the area of quality in cultural heritage management and tourism. The definition proposed as well as the categorisation of cultural heritage managers based on their perception of quality represent cutting edge suggestions for future research. We thus expect to stimulate further academic and non-academic debate with arguments for and against the proposal presented in this paper. From the sectoral point of view, our proposal of a clear definition of quality in which the traditional approach meets the new sociocultural challenges can be debated and applied worldwide in the field of cultural heritage management, and promotes the idea of cultural heritage attractions as places to boost cultural awareness, intercultural capacities and to promote intercultural dialogue, in particular among tourists and local communities. Also, the categorisation of cultural heritage managers' profiles can lead to deep reflection both in terms of human resources management, staff selection and training, and in terms of curricula for higher education in the area of cultural heritage management and tourism. As suggested by Reed (2016), in order to maximize the impact of our research, we dedicated some time to identify further stakeholders potentially interested in our work, even if not directly. Among them we have identified the school communities - teachers and students - that could be made aware of the social role of cultural heritage and therefore promote greater public participation, with consequences such as strengthening local

identities and consequent reinforcement of the destination's personality and competitiveness.

Our proposal makes a difference in the way quality in cultural heritage is perceived, defined and managed for the benefit of both locals and tourists and to contribute effectively to using cultural heritage and tourism as a means to build a more respectful and inclusive society, and a sustainable future. The relevance and possible implications of these reflexions are - now more than ever – particularly valuable if incorporated in the current debates on the future of tourism post-COVID19, namely with respect to the way of management of cultural heritage and the value of cultural tourism for the society.

Limitation of the research and future studies

This research has been carried out taking into consideration cultural attractions, namely archaeological museums, situated in southern Europe. It would be of great interest to extend the comparative capacity also to northern Europe. Furthermore, the proposal of Weberian typologies of cultural heritage managers according to their approach to quality, seems to be relevant in the overall discourse on the expansion of the meaning of quality, but we consider it worth further, autonomous research. Another objective for future research will be to further the focus on the relationship between the management of cultural heritage and the use of tourism as a vehicle for peace, and the possible repercussions of this association on the idea of quality. It would represent a contribution for tourism to effectively be a powerful tool for engaging and interacting with other cultures and contribute to a peaceful society.

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