Leadership Mindset and Skills for Wellbeing in Museums

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Museums must adapt to the increasing demand for wellbeing experiences that promote personal growth, requiring specific leadership skills and mindsets. This study explores: (1) museums' role in promoting wellbeing, (2) leadership skills needed for wellbeing initiatives, and (3) the influence of a growth mindset. We conducted interviews and a leadership mindset survey with eight Croatian museum leaders. Results show leaders view museums as "third places" – a physical location other than work or home where conversation and social gathering are the primary activities – and believe they an expanding role in societal wellbeing. Nine key leadership skills were identified which leaders believe can be developed through training. Recommendations for fostering a growth mindset and leadership skills are provided.

Keywords: leadership mindset; museum; wellbeing; growth mindset; leadership skills

Introduction

Wellbeing is becoming a buzzword for museum studies. Even before the pandemic, museums were studied as places for the restoration of mental energy,[1] psychological wellbeing[2] and subjective wellbeing.[3] After the pandemic, the research on the museum's therapeutic potential blossomed further.[4] It became clear that museums need to adapt to the new wave of visitors seeking transformational museum experiences which they expect to promote their

[1] PACKER, Jan, BOND, Nigel. Museums as restorative environments. In: *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 53(4), 2010, pp. 421–436.
[2] CHATTERJEE, Helen, NOBLE, Guy. *Museums, health and well-being*. London: Routledge, 2016.
[3] JELINČIĆ, Daniela. A., MATEČIĆ, Ingeborg. Broken but Well: Healing Dimensions of Cultural Tourism Experiences. In: *Sustainability*, 13(2), 2021, pp. 966.
[4] ŠVEB DRAGIJA, Marta, JELINČIĆ, Daniela A. Can Museums Help Visitors Thrive? Review of Studies on Psychological Wellbeing in Museums. In: *Behavioral Sciences*, 12(11), 2022, pp. 458.

wellbeing.[5] However, this unavoidable change in the public's expectations may be challenging for museums and their leaders and requires a specific set of skills to enable its implementation.[6] Moreover, whether such skills are developed or not may depend on the mindset leaders hold. Implicit theories suggest that if leaders believe their skills are malleable and trainable, they hold a growth mindset which is directly connected to the resilience and flexibility needed to implement changes. On the other hand, if a leader holds a fixed mindset, she/he believes skills are determined and cannot be trainable, which will have a direct impact on whether that leader will engage in the development of specific skills necessary for the implementation of innovations and wellbeing experiences.[7]

Hence, this paper aims to detect 1) the role of museums in promoting wellbeing, 2) which leadership skills are required for implementing wellbeing into museums, and 3) the role that a growth leadership mindset has in this process. To do so, we conducted a study focusing on the Croatian context using a mixed methodology involving the Leadership Mindset Scale (LMS)[8] and interviews with museum leaders. In this paper, we begin by describing what wellbeing activities in museums entail and what is known about leadership mindset; we then analyse the results of the surveys and interviews conducted with museum leaders to determine which specific set of skills are necessary for implementing wellbeing in the museums; and finally, we provide recommendations for development of a (museum) leadership mindset.

Wellbeing in Museums

Until recently, museums represented educational hubs that offer a quick escape from everyday life and offer hedonic benefits in the form of positive emotions, such as happiness, pleasure and satisfaction.[9] Although hedonic wellbeing, which may be defined by the presence of positive emotions and the absence of negative ones,[10] is important for the general wellbeing of visitors, the rise of the experience economy opened the doors for the design of museum experiences that are meaningful and have longer-term transformative effects on visitors beyond pleasure.[11] These consequently increase the psychological wellbeing of visitors through self-development and growth.[12] This was further reiterated after COVID-19, which deteriorated the health and wellbeing of the public. Several research studies have demonstrated the long-term benefits museums can have for the wellbeing of visitors, which include reduced social isolation, learning opportunities, decreased anxiety, increased positive emotions, higher self-

[5] ŠVEB DRAGIJA, Marta, VAN ZOMEREN, Martijn, HANSEN, Nina. *The Anticipation of a Eudaimonic or Hedonic Wellbeing Experience: The Case of Museum Experiences*. [Manuscript submitted for publication]. Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences, University of Groningen, 2024.

[6] GILIS, Anne-Marie, HORJAN, Goranka, MORIARTY, Lizzy. *Museum Leadership - Taking the Pulse 2021. Paris: The International Council of Museums*. Accessed at https://intercom.mini.icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/sites/62/2022/04/PULSE-2021-ENG_compressed_compressed-compressed.pdf, 2021.

[7] DWECK, Carol. What having a "growth mindset" actually means. In: *Harvard business review*, 13(2), 2016, pp. 2–5.

[8] KANGAS, Nathan M., KUMAR, Krishna V., MOORE, Bestsy J., FLICKINGER, Christopher A., BARNETT, Jennifer L. Development of a Leadership Mindset Scale. In: *Journal of Leadership Education*, 22(1), 2023, pp. 77.

[9] JELINČIĆ, Daniela. A., ŠVEB, Marta, STEWART, Alan E. Designing sensory museum experiences for visitors' emotional responses. In: *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 37(5), 2021, pp. 513–530.

[10] DIENER, Ed. Subjective well-being. In: *Psychological bulletin*, 95(3), 1984, pp. 542.

[11] PINE, Joseph B., GILMORE, James H. The experience economy: past, present and future. In: *Handbook on the experience economy*, the Lypiatts: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013, pp. 21–44.

[12] RYFF, Carol D. Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. In: *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 57(6), 1989, pp. 1069.

esteem, fostering a sense of identity, and providing opportunities for meaning-making.[13] Museums are also becoming recognized as "caring spaces", where visitors when engaging in community projects can experience higher self-worth.[14] Even museums' online platforms can benefit visitors' wellbeing, as was especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic.[15] A review conducted by Cotter and Pawelski indicates that going to art museums is linked to decreases in negative outcomes and boosts in positive ones, which may lead to flourishing.[16] Moreover, it has been shown that initiatives aimed at promoting positive outcomes among clinical or vulnerable groups (such as individuals with dementia or older adults) demonstrate benefits for participants.[17]

For these reasons, researchers and practitioners nowadays recognise the importance of museums for public wellbeing. For example, New Zealand and Scotland have both created wellbeing national policy frameworks which stimulate museums to design wellbeing programs that generate positive returns for society beyond economic growth.[18] Furthermore, in the UK, there is a social prescribing program created through the strategic partnership between museums and health providers in which local physicians prescribe museum visits to the patients. In addition, several museums across the world have incorporated wellbeing activities and programs into their offer. For example, some of the most prominent programs include the Arts for Health and Wellbeing program in Louvre Abu Dhabi that offers wellbeing webinar series, kayaking around the museum and yoga; the Being Well initiative from the Peabody Essex Museum in the UK, which offers yoga and breathing exercises while observing art; Calm Room in the National Gallery in Singapore, which enables visitors to have a sensory-free rest; and the Mindfulness program in the Getty Museum, Los Angeles, which guides visitors to contemplate art through breathing exercises.

In Croatia, which is the focus of our study, museums have mostly engaged in incorporating wellbeing into their approach to visitors instead of designing specific wellbeing programs/initiatives. For example, some museums view wellbeing as their core business (e.g., the Museum of Broken Relationships), while some put all their endeavours into ensuring each museum visit is meaningful, mindful and promotes wellbeing (e.g., Vukovar Municipal Museum, the Museum of Chocolate). Some have days or programs dedicated to mental health (e.g., Ethnographic Museum Zagreb, National Museum Zadar, Maritime and History Museum of the Croatian Littoral), others use art therapy in the museum setting (e.g., Museum of the Psychiatric Clinic Vrapče) or are developing plans for incorporating object handling to stimulate reflection (e.g., Archaeological Museum Zagreb).

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[13] CHATTERJEE, Helen J., CAMIC, Paul M. The health and well-being potential of museums and art galleries. In: *Arts and Health*, 7(3), 2015, pp. 183–186.

[14] WALLEN, Linnea, DOCHERTY-HUGHES, John R. Caring Spaces: Individual and Social Wellbeing in Museum Community Engagement Experiences. In: *Journal of Museum Education*, 47(1), 2022, pp. 93–102.

[15] LUCK, Amy, SAYER, Faye. Digital Engagement and Wellbeing: The Impact of Museum Digital Resources on User Wellbeing During COVID-19. In: *Heritage & Society*, 17, 2023, pp. 1–22.

[16] COTTER, Katherine N., PAWELSKI, James O. Art museums as institutions for human flourishing. In: *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 17(2), 2021.

[17] COTTER, Katherine N. Art museums …

[18] LAWLER, Natalie, TISSOT, Ambre. Preserving the intangible and immeasurable: Exploring wellbeing frameworks in the museum context. In: *Journal of the Institute of Conservation*, 44(3), 2021, pp. 248–259.

Leadership Skills in Museums

However, in general, across the world, wellbeing programs in museums are lacking. One of the reasons for this could be that implementation of such innovation is challenging and requires a specific set of skills which leaders yet need to develop.[19] Studies on museum leadership skills are not huge in number, but the importance of a museum leader's skillset has been recognised for more than two decades. Sherene Suchy connects the experience of flow to museum leadership,[20] arguing that museum managers can be in a flow state – a state of being fully involved with the task at hand – when they master the art of museum leadership skills. One of these skills is being passionate about the product, which enables them to "act as visual translators, creating meaningful museum experiences for the public".[21] Another important skill is a commitment to social principles, which means designing museums as spaces for the development of the community. To do so, strong language skills are a prerequisite. Suchy also emphasises the need for a leader's passion for education, through which he/she engages in building trusting relationships with others, and passion for entrepreneurship (innovation), which enables her/him to seek innovative means of financing. Lastly, Suchy suggests leaders should be appreciative of diversity.[22] Mastering these skills leads to the experience of flow, a total immersion into leadership which increases the leader's wellbeing and enables effective decision making. Ebitz adds skills in teamwork, project management, strategic planning, and budgeting as essential in the museum context. [23] Baldwin and Ackerson also highlight that passion is mandatory for museum leadership.[24] They further stress the importance of leaders being effective fundraisers and financiers, as well as diligent and skilful politicians. According to them, because such skills take time to develop, museums tend to have problems with finding talented managers. M. L. Semmel, from the American Alliance of Museums, proposes six core skills which museum leaders need to develop to thrive in the new hyper-connected world.[25] Firstly, leaders need to have strategic agility which requires "a comfort level with ambiguity, flexibility, and the ability to look at problems from different perspectives."[26] In other words, they need to engage in emergent leadership. Secondly, they need to be comfortable and authentic in building and sustaining relationships with current and potential stakeholders both inside and outside the museum. This requires a dose of mental and emotional proximity with employees, visitors and other stakeholders. Another skill, which builds on the previous one, is communication. Semmel accentuates the value of effective communication in strategic planning, exhibition, program and museum design, as well as in successful funding bids and the formation of community partnerships.[27] In addition to communication, managers also need to be skilled at data fluency

[19] GILIS, Anne-Marie. Museum Leadership …

[20] SUCHY, Sherene. Emotional intelligence, passion and museum leadership. In: *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 18(1), 1999, pp 57–71.

[21] SUCHY, Sherene. Emotional intelligence…, pp. 242.

[22] SUCHY, Sherene. Emotional intelligence…

[23] EBITZ, David. Qualifications and the Professional Preparation and Development of Art Museum Educators. In: *Studies in Art Education*, 46(2), 2005, pp. 150- 169.

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[26] SEMMEL, M. L. Museum leadership in a hyper-connected World …, pp. 1.

[27] SEMMEL, M. L. Museum leadership in a hyper-connected World …

(implementing benchmarks) and rapid prototyping (evaluating new programs). Finally, leaders need to engage in systems leadership in which they recognise the importance of partnerships inside and beyond the museum. Butcher et al. also add openness to digitisation as a necessary skill for thriving in the hyper-connected world.[28]

A newer study on museum leadership skills by Gillis et al. focuses on the leadership skills necessary for navigating changes brought about by issues such as climate change, political tensions and COVID-19. Their results show the significance of people management and innovative leadership, noting that "the museum leader of tomorrow puts teams of people as well as the institution's strategic mission at the heart of their work."[29] To achieve this, leaders need to be open to rethinking the role of museums and skilled at digital thinking, strategic planning, building networks and partnerships, effective and innovative fundraising, remaining calm under pressure and communicating. Gillis et al. regard leadership training and leadership coaching as a way to build museum leadership skills.[30]

Leadership Mindset for Wellbeing in Museums

For leadership training to be successful, leaders need to believe their skills are trainable. In other words, they need to have a growth leadership mindset.[31] Studies have shown that leadership training tends to be fruitless in cases where leaders do not believe in their own growth.[32] Leaders who believe that abilities in various fields can be developed (i.e., have a growth leadership mindset) tend to be more successful than leaders who believe their abilities are innate (i.e., have a fixed leadership mindset), hence leadership mindset is a critical component of a leader's effectiveness.[33] Specifically, a growth mindset motivates leaders to practice and learn, as well as seek feedback, which helps them deal with setbacks and leads to better performance.[34] On the other hand, those with a fixed mindset believe that leadership talent is fixed and there is no need for effort and practice because their level of leadership ability cannot be changed. Moreover, among those with a fixed mindset, the need to put in effort signals a lack of ability so they are less likely to ask for feedback and less adequate at dealing with setbacks, which are a crucial part of leading in challenging times.[35]

Although implicit theories of leadership mindset have a long history, they have not yet been examined in the museum context in relation to the skills necessary for implementing innovations. Wellbeing in museums is an innovation that may require additional leadership skills that leaders view as fixed or trainable. In today's challenging times, it is of paramount importance to determine which leadership skills are necessary to implement wellbeing in museums. But for successful leadership training to take place, it is also necessary for leaders to believe these new skills are trainable. If they do not believe these skills are trainable, it may be

[28] BUTCHER, Kirsten R., POWER, Mitchell J., LARSON, Madlyn, ORR, Matthew P., VELÁSQUEZ-FRANCO, Susana, HUDSON, Michelle A., BAILEY, Vanessa J. Museum leadership for engaging, equitable education: the transformative potential of digitised collections for authentic learning experiences. In: *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 64(2), 2021, pp. 383–402.

[29] GILIS, Anne-Marie. Museum Leadership … pp. 19.

[30] GILIS, Anne-Marie. Museum Leadership …

[31] DWECK, Carol. What having a "growth mindset" actually means …

[32] DWECK, Carol S., YEAGER, David S. Mindsets: A view from two eras. In: *Perspectives on Psychological science*, 14(3), 2019, pp. 481–496.

[33] DWECK, Carol. What having a "growth mindset" actually means …

[34] DWECK, Carol S., YEAGER, David S. Mindsets: A view from two eras …

[35] DWECK, Carol S., YEAGER, David S. Mindsets: A view from two eras …

necessary first to implement growth mindset training to equip leaders with confidence in the trainability of their leadership skills.

Method

As stated in the Introduction, this study aims to answer three research questions: (1) What is the role of museums in promoting wellbeing? (2) Which leadership skills are required for implementing wellbeing in museums? (3) What is the role of a growth leadership mindset in this process? To do that, we conducted a study focusing on the Croatian context using a mixed methodology employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. First, desk research was conducted to ground the study. As there is a substantial void on the topic in question in the academic literature, all the articles whose theoretical concepts are analysed in the previous section were considered. Because this was a non-interventional study, ethical approval was not required. All participants provided verbal informed consent.

After thorough desk research, we selected eight case studies of Croatian museums or private organisations (whose names include the word "museum" although they do not have the official status of museum) which formed the subject of our research. Case studies were selected based on prior wellbeing-related activities carried out on the institution's premises, for example, because they had presented exhibitions that were thematically related to wellbeing, or were a museum within a hospital managed by a medical professional. The final sample included museums from different cities and regions in Croatia. The names of the museums are not displayed, as we opted for anonymous research in order to make it easier for participants to communicate freely. The museums were first approached by telephone, informed about the research study, and asked if they would like to participate. If they expressed interest, an appropriate representative from their institution was sought. Since our research focused on leadership skills, this had to be someone whose position within the museum allowed them to express such skills. Thus, either museum directors or curators/organisers of specific activities related to wellbeing were selected.

Two research methods were then applied: 1) a quantitative survey to identify participants' traits and detect their leadership mindset and 2) a qualitative semi-structured interview. To explore participant's leadership mindset, the Leadership Mindset Scale (LMS) was used.[36] The LMS measures beliefs about whether leadership skills are trainable; it has high internal consistency reliability of $r = 0.80$. For example, one of the items in the scale is "Great leaders are born" and participants are required to state, using a five-point Likert scale, to what extent they agree with that statement (1 = do not agree at all to 5 = completely agree). The goal in applying this method was to examine participants' mindsets with regard to to leadership skills. This information served as a basis for the interviews. The interview focused on the leader's perceptions of 1) the museum's role in increasing visitors' wellbeing, 2) the skills necessary for implementing wellbeing in museums, and 3) the malleability of those skills. The goal of the interviews was dual: to gather opinions on the role of museums in promoting wellbeing, and to detect leadership skills required for implementing wellbeing into museums, thus responding to the first and second research questions.

Although the survey method is typically used to gather data on large groups, which was not the case here, in our study it was applied to gain general details about the participants' leadership-related mindset and to help prepare for more focused, in-depth research using

[36] KANGAS, Nathan M. Development of a Leadership Mindset Scale …

interviews.[37] Psychological surveys related to specific leadership characteristics already exist and these came in handy when applied to museum-related research. Interviews were selected as a method since they are appropriate for the collection of in-depth information on participants' thoughts, opinions, experiences and feelings, and are useful for complex questioning.[38] The two methods were selected to complement each others' results in a way that also served to answer the third research question: What role does a growth leadership mindset have in the process of implementing wellbeing-related programs in museums?

The survey was prepared online and the link was sent to participants. The data were then analysed using the statistical software SPSS. Interviews were conducted by the primary author by way of a video call, or face-to-face when possible, and lasted for approximately 30 minutes. This part of the research was conducted in late February/early March 2023. The interview included questions such as "Which leadership skills did you use when organising a wellbeing initiative in your museum?" and "Do you think these skills can be trainable?"

The interviews were transcribed in Croatian and then translated into English. Thematic analysis, which enables in-depth interpretation of data, was used.[39] We first read all the transcripts repeatedly, gaining familiarity and understanding of our data. We then used open coding within each interview to record key observations from the data and these observations were grouped in a manner that represented initial codes.[40] Our approach combined deductive reasoning – examining existing conceptualisations of leadership skills from the literature (described in the Introduction) – with inductive analysis to uncover novel or less explored aspects specific to the context of wellbeing initiatives in museums. Initially, we integrated selected definitions of leadership skills from the literature into broader frameworks to compare previous work with our findings. We then applied concepts and themes from previous research to our interview data in a deductive coding process. Additionally, we introduced new codes or split existing ones if we encountered aspects not previously addressed in the literature or identified particularly meaningful aspects emphasised by multiple participants. Following the initial coding round, we refined the coding scheme by eliminating highly specific codes that occurred infrequently. The remaining codes were then grouped into themes. Coding was performed by the primary author and interpretations were reviewed by the second author. Finally, illustrative quotes best representing each theme were chosen to be represented in the results.

Results

Participants in the research were directors, associate directors, department heads or curators/organisers of specific wellbeing activities of eight museums in Croatia. There were five female and three male participants. In the following sections, we focus on answering the three research questions, by first analysing the qualitative data followed by the quantitative data.

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[37] JONES, Thomas L., BAXTER, Mark A., KHANDUJA, Vikas. A quick guide to survey research. In: *The Annals of The Royal College of Surgeons of England*, 95(1), 2013, pp. 5–7.

[38] EASWARAMOORTHY, M., ZARINPOUSH, Fataneh. Interviewing for research. In: *Imagine Canada*. Accessed at https://sectorsource.ca/sites/default/files/resources/files/tipsheet6_interviewing_for_research_en_0.pdf, 2006.

[39] HUBERMAN, Michael A., MILES, Mathew B. Data management and analysis methods. In: *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1994, pp. 428–444.

[40] HUBERMAN, Michael A. Data management and analysis methods …

Qualitative Data

The Museum's Role in Wellbeing

The results showed that the role of museums in promoting wellbeing is emerging. Museum leaders believe museums should have a social role and be so-called "third places", which refers to a physical location other than work or home where conversation and social gathering are the primary activities. Specifically, as one museum leader put it, "there is a loss of third places, and museums have to take that role because they are a better place of gathering than a bar, people gather there around content that stimulates reflection." The same individual added that this is a "contemporary role that enables museums to adapt to the social, political, and technical situation."

Another museum leader emphasised the need for museums to be in service to society by "not only protecting the past, but also by engaging in the present moment and cultivating topics that are of interest to all groups of society, including marginalised groups." This was further emphasised by another leader, who noted that "Museums have a social role and responsibility to collect and interpret heritage, but also to find ways to engage visitors in this process", adding that "Museums should have a mission to enrich the lives of visitors".

All the leaders agreed on the need for wellbeing initiatives in the museums. However, they did not necessarily feel that wellbeing could only be promoted in museums through the creation of specific wellbeing programs; rather it was seen as an aspect of the museum's approach to society and the way its collections and exhibitions are structured and interpreted. As one leader stated, "Wellbeing in museums shouldn't be a trend, museum leaders should notice what is right in front of them and use their museum content as a polygon for happiness and reflection. It is not about creating programs or activities that have nothing to do with your museum, but it is rather about taking what you have and presenting it in a way that stimulates wellbeing." If the activities are designed, they should be designed in such a way to encourage "connection to oneself and personal growth".

Another theme that emerged in interviews was the durability of wellbeing. Leaders differentiated between hedonic, short-term wellbeing and eudaimonic, longer-term wellbeing. They emphasised that to achieve eudaimonic effects it is necessary to have longer-term contact with visitors. As one leader put it, "when children come to museums from a young age, they learn about everything that museums offer, and you build relationships with them that enables you to increase their wellbeing. That is why it is important to educate children about going to museums." Another leader gave an example of a "Museum Night" as a hedonistic experience, as it increases visitor's happiness and sense of euphoria from being a part of a collective event; however, due to the large crowds attending there is no opportunity for deeper engagement with the museum, hence no boost to eudaimonic wellbeing. The same happens when visitors see the Mona Lisa but are not able to approach it due to the crowd surrounding it.

Although museum leaders encourage museums to implement wellbeing, they also stress the lack of wellbeing initiatives in Croatian museums. One of the leaders said "No programs in museums are being created with the intention to promote wellbeing. Wellbeing is still a long way from being in museums because there is a lack of awareness that museums can contribute to mental health." Another leader noted that "because of digitisation there is a lack of third places, and because of that museums need to be dedicated to increasing the wellbeing of the community through offering innovative approaches, such as allowing artefacts to be touched,

which may stimulate reflectivity. Museums' potential is not currently being used in the best way."

Leadership Skills for Wellbeing in Museums

Nine leadership skills required for implementing wellbeing in museums were identified: 1) digital thinking, 2) openness to innovation, 3) strategic planning, 4) networking, 5) communication, 6) emotional intelligence, 7) creativity, 8) authenticity, and 9) talent management. Each of these themes is elaborated upon with illustrative quotes in the following sections.

Digital Thinking. Museum leaders need to be skilled in digital technologies, or at least skilled at thinking digitally. Digital technologies offer an effective way to promote museum programs but also to interpret museum exhibits and wellbeing initiatives using innovative and engaging approaches. One of the leaders pointed out that "New technologies can help wellbeing in museums through interpretation." It is also necessary to have "a great team of employees who are constantly following and developing trends". Another leader referred to the use of social media when promoting wellbeing initiatives by saying "We try to catch a live stream of the moment because those moments tend to be emotional and unrepeatable, so photos don't do them justice." Museum leaders must think digitally because "it makes access to museums easier, especially in times when it is not possible to go to museums". Managing media promotion is also a required skill for leaders, because "if you want media to report on your museum event you need to promote hedonic programs, but if you are skilled, you can also try to promote elements of meaningful visitor development."

Openness to Innovation. Being open to innovation entails the promotion of innovation in the design of museum space by leaders as well as innovative approaches to interpretation. It also involves an innovative attitude toward the role of museums and ongoing evaluation of the success of the museum. Innovation also necessarily involves adaptability. It entails going beyond maximising the number of visitors to analysing the meaningful effect the museum has on visitors. In other words, it means evaluating the performance and success of the museum by measuring the wellbeing effect the museum has on visitors. As one leader illustrated, "a leader has to be a person who won't look at what he/she has invested and expect a quick material return: by tackling wellbeing in museums you probably won't get financially rich, but you will be enriched in a broader and better way."

Strategic Planning. Strategic planning is a skill that is equally important across all management domains. According to the museum leaders in our study, strategic planning of wellbeing in museums entails "having a vision of how you will coordinate your programs in order to support to programs that cover relevant topics for the public and that can have a positive influence on the public. To do that, it is necessary to determine the target group, give support to the author team, and reduce program activities." Quality strategic planning is also necessary because wellbeing programs tend to take longer to "hook the public". Other aspects of management where strategic planning skills come in handy include allocating tasks, managing infrastructure (some programs designed for marginalised groups must be organised when there are no other visitors in the museums), fostering a culture of museum attendance and generating income.

Networking. Museum leaders need to be skilled in networking because creating partnerships is especially important for wellbeing initiatives, which tend to be co-created in partnerships between museums and civil society organisations, individuals, hospitals or schools. One museum leader summed up the importance of networking, saying that "partnerships are a

prerequisite for better productivity, they open the new doors and create opportunities for visitor engagement; partnerships are a great asset in engaging visitors who typically do not go to museums". Therefore, networking and making acquaintances is a mandatory skill for leaders implementing wellbeing in museums.

Communication. Museum leaders' communication skills entail communicating with and listening to employees and visitors. Communication with employees needs to be honest and engaging. Leaders need to be able to deal with critics and "must be the one who gathers, and not the one who scatters." Communication with visitors is a two-way street. As one leader stated, "the museum talks, but it also needs to listen", meaning the museum leader should listen to the wants and needs of the public and adapt accordingly. Visitors expect leaders to be knowledgeable but they also want them to be relatable, because "they are engaging in the same experience". When it comes to partnerships, museum leaders need to "obtain a synergetic effect so that everyone feels as if they contribute equally, that everyone is equally visible, and that different interests are reconciled".

Emotional Intelligence. According to Goleman,[41] emotional intelligence refers to the skill of being aware of and managing one's own emotions, as well as recognising and influencing the emotions of others. Emotional intelligence involves self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills – all of which were mentioned by museum leaders as important skills needed to cultivate to implement wellbeing in museums. For example, one leader observed that "calmness is important, good nerves. It is a micro-community that spreads concentrically towards the administration, the city, the county, and the artists. It is important to act in a calm manner and to try to understand. You need to avoid dramatizing." Another emphasised: "It is important not to let negative emotions rule."

Leaders further stressed the importance of being intrinsically motivated: "In everything I do, I find some kind of personal motivation and when I do it well, it makes me satisfied." Empathy is key to successful leadership, as one leader pointed out: "The most important thing is to develop empathy for other people, because if you have that, you can overcome anything". Finally, the value of strong social skills is best represented with the following quote: "It is necessary to reconcile different characters, moods, age groups and recognise different affinities and ambitions within the museum in a way that everyone feels that they contribute equally. Everyone has some skills that can be used in the best possible way." Mindfulness is closely connected to emotional intelligence and is useful because "leaders need to be present in the moment and not entirely focused on goals."

Creativity. Being creative was identified as another important skill that museum leaders should have. It is closely connected to other skills such as innovative thinking, and it impacts various domains of museum leadership. Museum leaders need to be creative in "ensuring that the team in the museum radiates the energy that we want to convey to the audience; in order for the audience to experience what they have consumed, the employees must be simulative." Moreover, a leader should be able to stimulate creativity in his/her employees: "whenever possible, goals should be set, but it is necessary to let the employees reach the goal in any way they want, thus leaving the room for creativity." It is also a useful skill for creating revenue, as "a lack of finances in museums encourages creativity."

Authenticity. Museum leaders should aim to be authentic. When it comes to promoting wellbeing in museums, "authenticity is important because when manager is not authentic and

[41] GOLEMAN, Daniel. *Leadership: The power of emotional intelligence.* Massachusetts: More Than Sound LLC, 2021.

does not genuinely care about the wellbeing of visitors, he/she cannot then positively affect the wellbeing of visitors." It is also important to "connect authentically with visitors": "you need to be present and open" and "you need to be charismatic, take care of your facial expressions, gesticulations, posture, and how you dress." An authentic leader also knows how to interact with his/her employees, as one leader pointed out: "The point is that you need to believe in what you are doing, and you need to be able to explain why the path to the goal can be bumpy. There should be authenticity and confidence in the goals." Finally, "a real leader leads by example.

Talent Management. Museum leaders concurred that the promotion of wellbeing in museums also includes ensuring the wellbeing of employees, which can be achieved through high-quality talent management. It also includes investing in employees' development through specialised training (e.g., in wellbeing). Talent management is "the duty of the leader" because "people are the greatest asset museums have". However, talent management can also be challenging. As one leader explained:

> the problem with leadership is when you have conflicting interests. What can be a problem in museums is having people who came to work in the museum with the goal of scientific improvement without a focus on the audience. Working with visitors can distract from scientific work, it goes against employees' personal interests. The most important thing is to find their motivation and find a way for the employees to develop and to consider the wishes of the audience.

It is also necessary to recognise employees' talents because "the basic task is to optimally use the talents that the collective has at its disposal" and "when we recognise the talents in our employees, we have to provide support for their development in order to help them become experts in the field." On top of recognising talent, leaders should encourage employees' development and help bring their talents to the fore. For example, "new employees should be given coaching. Coaching allows the employee to develop his/her talent, which is supplemented by experiences and skills. Mistakes are not a problem, the way you correct them is much more important." Leaders should take care of employee wellbeing because museum staff want to "have support from the colleagues and the leader, be a part of the flexible team and have good work atmosphere." In addition, museum leaders agree that if an employee is not thriving in their current position, another position which suits their talents and ambitions better should be found.

Quantitative Data

Leadership Mindset

Participants' leadership mindset was measured using quantitative and qualitative methods. The Leadership Mindset Scale was used to measure three dimensions of the leadership mindset: (1) teachability, which refers to the belief that leadership skills can be taught, (2) improvability, which refers to the belief that leadership skills can be improved over time, and (3) predictability, which refers to the belief that leadership ability cannot be predicted at an early age. Higher scores on teachability and improvability and lower scores on predictability represent a growth mindset. On the other hand, lower scores on teachability and improvability and higher scores on predictability represent a fixed mindset. After reverse scoring certain items, scales were

created to pertain to the three dimensions of leadership mindset. On average, our sample scored the highest on improvability ($M = 3.94$, $SD = 0.95$), followed by teachability ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.52$) and lastly predictability ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.79$). Hence, on average museum leaders in our sample have a higher growth mindset ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.68$) than fixed mindset ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.75$). No further statistical tests were conducted because the data was collected solely to describe our sample.

We further asked museum leaders about the malleability of leadership skills needed for wellbeing in museums during the interviews. The results reflected the findings from the survey. Generally, museum leaders tended to agree that museum leadership skills can be improved and taught if there is a certain level of leadership talent present. They tended to agree more on the improvement of existing talent than on teachability when there is no obvious talent. Some of them emphasised that leadership talent can be observed from a young age, saying that "truly top leaders are born, and they can hone their skills" and that "talent is necessary, openness to learn and change is necessary and it can certainly be learned, the only question is how much it can be learned", noting that those who do not have an obvious leadership talent "have limits which cannot be trained past".

The museum leaders further stressed that there was a lack of leadership and wellbeing training: "There is no education about wellbeing in museums in a formal sense, so there are no programs. Museum attendance depends on the programs that museums provide. You need to upgrade, the leader needs to be upgraded first, then the museum."

Discussion

The findings of our research can be summarised as follows: museums' role in promoting wellbeing is emerging and important. Specifically, museums should become a "third place" beyond the home or work space where visitors can gather and enjoy wellbeing benefits. Respondents spoke of nine museum leadership skills needed for implementing wellbeing in museums: digital thinking, openness to innovation, strategic planning, networking, communication, emotional intelligence, creativity, authenticity, and talent management. We found that the museum leaders we spoke to generally displayed a growth mindset, although some felt that certain skills could not be taught effectively where underlying talent in that skill was completely lacking.

More specifically, according to the museum leaders in our study, museums have an important role in promoting wellbeing in society by becoming "third places", physical spaces other than work or home where visitors can be socially engaged. In terms of the durability of wellbeing experiences, museums can offer both short-term wellbeing experiences, mostly promoted through hedonic activities, and long-term wellbeing experiences, qualifying as eudaimonic activities, potentially impacting personal transformation. Moreover, to enhance the wellbeing of the communities they provide for, longer-term contact with visitors that provides opportunities for a more meaningful and longer-term impact should be enabled. Such findings are in line with those of Pine and Gilmore, who urge for the design of experiences that are meaningful and have longer-term, transformative effects on visitors beyond mere pleasure.[42]

[42] PINE, Joseph B., GILMORE, James H. The experience economy: past, present and future …

The majority of the museum leadership skills our study identified have been confirmed by other studies: digital thinking,[43] openness to innovation[44], strategic planning,[45] communication,[46] emotional intelligence[47] and authenticity[48]. Some of these skills are related to leadership in general, for example, strategic planning (in line with Ebitz),[49] communication (in line with Semmel),[50] and digital thinking[51] and can be more easily learned, while some of them, such as emotional intelligence, may be put in relation to a museum leader's emotional drive and engagement (in line with Suchy),[52] which can be more difficult to learn. In addition, museum leaders emphasised creativity and talent management as skills necessary for implementing wellbeing in museums. Although there is a lack of studies on creative leadership in museums, creative leadership has been confirmed in other leadership domains as a critical skill for ensuring the wellbeing of employees. Creative leadership is characterised by its focus on developing human capital and forging an environment that promotes creativity and innovation, which enables employees' flourishing and mission-driven work – which may, in turn, promote the wellbeing of visitors.[53] Moreover, across the leadership domains, talent management is consistently confirmed as the top priority leadership skill that puts the human resources of the company at the heart of its work and progress. As Gallardo-Gallardo, Thunnissen and Scullion emphasised, it can be defined as:

> the activities and processes that involve the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement, retention, and deployment of those talents which are of particular value to an organisation to create strategic sustainable success.[54]

Hence, talent management may be the drive for the wellbeing of employees and visitors.

One aspect of talent management is having a growth leadership mindset –a belief that skills and talents can be trainable. The lack of a growth leadership mindset comes with a belief that people have a fixed level of talent which cannot be changed or trained. Such leaders do not engage in training or talent management of their personnel.[55] Our findings confirmed that leaders who cultivate a growth mindset tend to be open to innovation and creative approaches

[43] BUTCHER. Museum leadership for engaging …; GILIS. Museum Leadership …

[44] GILIS. Museum Leadership …; SEMMEL. Museum leadership in a hyper-connected World …; SUCHY. Emotional intelligence …

[45] BALDWIN. Who's next? …; EBITZ. Qualifications and the Professional Preparation …; GILIS. Museum Leadership …; SEMMEL. Museum leadership in a hyper-connected World …

[46] SUCHY. Emotional intelligence …; BALDWIN. Who's next? …; SEMMEL. Museum leadership in a hyper-connected World …; GILIS. Museum Leadership …

[47] GILIS. Museum Leadership …; SEMMEL. Museum leadership in a hyper-connected World …; SUCHY. Emotional intelligence …

[48] SEMMEL. Museum leadership in a hyper-connected World …

[49] EBITZ. Qualifications and the Professional Preparation …

[50] SEMMEL. Museum leadership in a hyper-connected World …

[51] BUTCHER. Museum leadership for engaging …; GILIS. Museum Leadership …

[52] SUCHY. Emotional intelligence …

[53] HEYNS, Marita M., MCCALLAGHAN, Sean, ROOS, Charlene E. Creative leadership and employee work wellness: Supervisor support as a mediator. In: *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 31(1), 2021, pp. 12–18.

[54] GALLARDO-GALLARDO, Eva, THUNNISSEN, Marian, SCULLION, Hugh. Talent management: context matters. In: *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 31(4), 2020, pp. 457–473.

[55] DWECK, Carol. What having a "growth mindset" …

to the museum's role in society, which is in line with Dweck[56] and Dweck and Yeager[57]. Thus, to engage in the new wellbeing role that museums are growing into, leaders need to first cultivate a growth leadership mindset (believe their own and their staff's skills are trainable) if they are to develop the necessary skills for implementing wellbeing in museums. As mentioned, the growth leadership mindset entails a belief that leadership skills can be improved over time, and our participants' highest score related to this dimension. They scored second highest in the teachability dimension (a belief that leadership skills can be taught), additionally confirming that, as a group, they displayed a growth leadership mindset as per the Leadership Mindset Scale. This reinforces the arguments for the appropriate selection of research participants who themselves have the growth leadership mindset, which may be one of the reasons why the selected case studies are the best in promoting wellbeing in Croatia.

Apart from that, museums should also aim to approach visitor wellbeing through innovative presentation and interpretation of their exhibits and space design. This enables personal growth and is in line with Ryff`s psychological wellbeing theories[58] and Packer and Bond, who suggest that the museum can be a restorative environment by controlling the temperature, lighting, noise and wayfinding, as well as providing rest areas where visitors can disengage and reflect on their experience.[59]

Our study further discovered that in contrast to New Zealand and Scotland, which have national wellbeing policy frameworks based on which museums create their programs,[60] Croatian museums lack a focus on wellbeing. Theoretical works on museum leadership skills[61] showed political skills, political strains and systems leadership to be of importance in achieving an impact. In this sense, policy frameworks, alongside skilful museum leaders, may lead to the successful implementation of wellbeing activities in museums. This is not the case in Croatia, as the missing policy frameworks negatively impact the efforts of the studied individual best practice examples, which remain insufficiently valued and seen in communities as they lack integration into larger institutional wellbeing frameworks. Conversely, contexts characterised by strong policy support – such as New Zealand, which has a Wellbeing Budget that guides the government and museum spending – illustrate how the presence of governmental or institutional support may stimulate broader recognition and sustainability of wellbeing initiatives, which are then easier to implement.

Although our sample consisted of eight museum leaders who can be considered leaders of the wellbeing initiative in museums across Croatia, the findings have to be confirmed in the other settings with a larger number of museum leaders, because the opportunities and challenges in implementing wellbeing in museums may differ across countries. Hence, the extent to which our conclusions regarding essential leadership competencies can be generalised to other national or cultural contexts remains uncertain and should be tested in different contexts with varying levels of institutional support. Future studies could also explore in more depth how the growth leadership mindset affects museum leadership and how it may be used to stimulate the wellbeing of employees and visitors.

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[56] DWECK, Carol. What having a "growth mindset" …

[57] DWECK, YEAGER. Mindsets …

[58] RYFF, C. D. Happiness is everything, or is it? …

[59] PACKER, Jan, BOND, Nigel. Museums as restorative environments …

[60] LAWLER, Natalie, TISSOT, Ambre. Preserving the intangible and immeasurable …

[61] BALDWIN. Who's next? …; SEMMEL. Museum leadership in a hyper-connected World …; GILIS. Museum Leadership …

Finally, the recommendations from this study go towards training leaders for a growth leadership mindset and providing leaders with opportunities to train their skills. For example, before managerial training in talent management, leaders could have a workshop on growth vs fixed mindsets to generate awareness of the impacts these attitudes have and to help them cultivate a growth mindset. Only when leaders believe their skills are malleable can skills training can be successful. Leaders in museums should also have opportunities to learn about wellbeing, so collaborations between museums and psychologists or art therapists could be fruitful. Finally, museum leaders should cultivate a growth mindset atmosphere in the museum by focusing on their own growth, employees' growth and visitors' growth, to stimulate a wellbeing culture in the museum.

Conclusion

The study focused on the emerging subject of museums as providers of wellbeing, which is very topical given the social and political environment we live in today. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, wars, rising migrations and natural disasters are visible in the rising need for psychological support. Often, mental healthcare provision is not entirely sufficient, so museums, assuming the role of the third places, have started to play a role as community wellbeing providers. While this does not mean that they are a substitute for professional healthcare support, they can provide soft activities which can alleviate everyday difficulties among members of the community they serve face. However, to implement wellbeing activities in museums, museum managers' skills are needed; if museums are passing through this transition from mere collectors and curators of exhibits to third places, it will require new managerial skills and possibly also new museum professions. These new skills include not only "classical" managerial skills but also emotional intelligence and engagement, as well as inclination to bring about such transformation. In this sense, museum managers should consider not only the wellbeing of their visitors but also their employees. To achieve this, managers should have a growth leadership mindset, believing that their employees' talents must be cherished and may be improved. In this way, the doors to museum wellbeing activities are more easily opened.

There are also other factors influencing wellbeing in museums, for example, the presentation of wellbeing-related content as well as curators' interpretation skills. Alongside working in interdisciplinary teams, it is essential to ensure cooperation with healthcare providers, among others. This will entail appropriate policy provisions which offer a broader framework for concrete and more successful activities. Without such frameworks, museum wellbeing activities are dependent on the proactive behaviour of individuals and museum managers, thus they are highly dependent on with their managerial skills and mindset. The already-existing policy provisions in some countries (e.g. New Zealand and the UK) include stimulative measures for the design of wellbeing programs in museums and introduce a so-called prescriptive culture – a healthcare measure involving cultural activities which are seen to be useful for patients with mild psychological disturbances (e.g. anxiety, loneliness). While this study did not focus on the investigation of policy frameworks in that respect, but did detect the need for museum managers' leadership skills in political and strategic thinking, further studies may focus on researching the link between policy frameworks, museum leadership skills, and wellbeing activities in museums.

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