

When it comes to museum innovation, size matters

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Summary

The paper presents the results of a study into the relationships between museum characteristics, innovation levels and performance. They found that larger museums were more likely to innovate in technology and organisational practices. Increased levels of public funding led to lower levels of technological and organisational innovation. They concluded that public funding probably does not incentivise innovation, though increased proportions of public funding led to greater social performance. They found that size does not directly affect economic, market or social performance. Finally, all forms of innovation identified in the survey positively affect museum's economic, market and social performance.

The authors define innovation and performance

Their definition of innovation comprises technological innovation (use of tools to enhance the museum experience or reach out to audiences); innovation in value creation (changing the way the visitor experience is understood); and organisational innovation (changes to structures and processes). Performance is measured in economic terms (revenue generation), market terms (audience satisfaction) and social terms (impact and mission).

Data were collected via a survey of museum curators in Britain, France, Spain and Italy

There were 491 responses with more than 100 from each country, representing a variety of museum types (fine art, archaeology, science etc.). Organisational

size was calculated using the number of employees, and the level of public funding by the percentage of income derived from government. Respondents used a 5-point scale to rate their museums for a range of characteristics including economic, social and market performance, management approach, and the number of new technologies deployed in the museum.

Something to keep in mind

The authors accept that the sheer variety of museums in their sample may have affected the analysis. Likewise they recognise that the data may be compromised as it was derived from the subjective opinion of museum curators reporting on their own organisations.

Keywords

innovation France survey Italy size spain museum UK

Title	How cultural organizations' size and funding influence innovation and performance: the case of museums
Author(s)	Camarero, C., Garrido, M. J. & Vicente, E.
Publication date	2011
Source	Journal of Cultural Economics, Vol 35, Iss 4, pp 247-266
Link	http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10824-011-9144-4
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By [Culture.Case](#) | 11 April 2014 | [Organisational change in arts and culture](#)



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