

# THE PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC ORIENTATION IN TOURIST DESTINATION: MANAGING THE COMPLEXITY OF COMMUNITY AND TOURISM ORIENTATION

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Public libraries are non-profit organisations that should meet the needs of their users and create value for society. They are faced with many changes in the library domain: international trends of the modern information world and above all changes in users' needs. Scholars suggest that libraries should adopt a market-orientated strategy and implement marketing orientation to successfully manage the impact of these changes.

Management of public libraries in tourist destinations are even more complex: public libraries should be a social place as well as information and entertainment place for local people and tourists. Some of them are (or have potential to become) tourist attractions and part of destination cultural identity. The research on complexity of strategic orientation of library in tourist destination has received scant attention and a case study of Zadar Public Library that is located in one of Croatian most successful tourist destination, addresses this gap. This paper presents a model of multiple strategic issues in public libraries in tourist destinations.

**Key words:** public library, strategic orientation, marketing orientation, tourist destination, case study

## Introduction

Strategic orientation has received wide spread attention from management, marketing, and entrepreneurship scholars, but there is no universally accepted definition of strategic orientation. (Obeidat, 2016) Strategic orientation is the guiding principle that influences a firm's marketing and strategy making activities and it reflects the strategic directions implemented by a firm to create the proper behaviours that lead to superior performance (Altunats G. et al. (2013). Sen (2014) argued that is important for an organization to implement an appropriate strategic orientation to ensure success measured by profitability for business and survival for nonprofit organizations. For libraries, adopting an appropriate strategic orientation could aid change management and ensure survival Sen (2014).

In this paper, strategic orientation is viewed as principles that direct and influence the activities of a firm and generate the behaviours intended to ensure the viability and performance of the organization. A growing stream of studies today endorse the adoption of different strategic orientations such as market orientation, innovation orientation, technology orientation, entrepreneurial orientation, quality orientation, and productivity orientation (Obeidat, 2016). For the purpose of this study market orientation will be looked into further.

Market orientation generates benefits in various direct and indirect patterns involving innovativeness, customer loyalty, product quality and ultimately firm performance (Altunats G. et al. (2013) and according to Narver and Slater (1990) market orientation consists of three behavioural components: customer orientation, competitor orientation, and inter functional coordination. Sen (2014) points out that, according to Corey, Corey and Callanan (2011), two key aspects to community oriented organisations are „(1) the community as the focus of attention, and (2) the community itself being a source of solutions to problems“.

Despite the fact that market orientation is one of the most investigated methods founded on marketing conception (Tomášková, 2009) it shouldn't be seen not only through marketing concepts lenses. Kumar et al (2002) states that although the marketing function is important to being market oriented, market orientation involves the integration of all functions with marketing being only one of those functions.

Shontz et. al (2004), in their paper state that there is an extensive, international literature on library marketing “a literature review revealed that there were misunderstandings about marketing and a belief among some librarians that marketing was either not applicable or not appropriate for libraries” but they also emphasised that “no empirical study could be found that actually surveyed a substantial sample of public librarians to determine either their knowledge of, or attitudes toward, marketing.”.

### Methodology

This article presents the case study of Zadar Public Library and results of survey regarding the employees’ attitudes toward tourism orientation. The questions of interest (see questionnaire in appendix) included the questions about current strategic orientation, marketing tactics and tourism support system. The questionnaire consisted of five-point, Likert-scaled items asking respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements about tourism orientation. There were also several items that asked about the degree to which certain items and activities are important to their library. The main purpose of this questionnaire is to give a deeper insight through lenses of library staff about reasons for lack of tourism orientation in Zadar Public Library that is situated in city of Zadar, one of most successful tourist destination.

### Zadar Public Library

Zadar Public Library is a community oriented organisations has been so far very engaged in various social and marketing activities. Successful activation of marketing potential and application in non-profit organizations in Croatia depends on strategic analysis results, perceived utility from marketing by the managers of non-profit organisations, trends in marketing, positive social climate, marketing orientation and general and special marketing education development (Pavicic, 2001). This library recognized importance of marketing, so it is rational to assume that it is placed in tourist destination is logic precondition to strategic orientation toward tourism. SWOT analysis is conducted to realize if that could be achievable option for the Library.

### SWOT analysis of Zadar Public Library

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Zadar Public Library is recognized as polyfunctional center of Zadar - cultural, information, educational, multimedia, social and communication</li> <li>➤ 20% of Zadar citizens are active members of Zadar Public Library, which is almost twice the average in Republic of Croatia (11%)</li> <li>➤ Large number of library materials</li> <li>➤ Four subsidiaries (Arbanasi, Bili Brig, Crno and Ploče), two dispensaries (Olib and Silba) and two bibliobuses covering a total of 71 places in Zadar Region</li> <li>➤ Location near city centre</li> <li>➤ The attraction and the arrangement of the external environment, internal courtyard and a central building</li> <li>➤ Educated and polite staff which has the possibility of training and further education in the excellent libraries around the world</li> <li>➤ Cooperation with a number of schools, associations and institutions at home and abroad</li> <li>➤ Zadar Public Library in its premises organise numerous events, more than 300 each year</li> <li>➤ Good cooperation and support by the media</li> <li>➤ Promotion of volunteering - more than 70 volunteers participate in 6 different programs in Library</li> <li>➤ Continuously organizing exhibitions of amateurs and hobbyists who otherwise would not have the opportunity to display their work</li> <li>➤ Possibility of reservation and extension of books and other library materials via the Internet</li> <li>➤ Catering facility LiBar in the Library building offers possibility of socializing and reading books of library fund</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Shelf overcrowding in departments and storage due to lack of space</li> <li>➤ Lack of funds for arranging 764 m<sup>2</sup> of adjacent building and 205 m<sup>2</sup> of space between the two buildings for the warm passage that Library had got to use</li> <li>➤ Library does not have its own parking, but the users and employees park on an improvised public area that does not have a sufficient number of parking spaces</li> <li>➤ Insufficient number of computers for users</li> <li>➤ Theft and destruction of library materials</li> <li>➤ Because of lower functioning of school libraries, a large part of the money goes to perusal instead of the more recent fiction and popular-scientific literature</li> <li>➤ Insufficient capacity utilization of both bibliobuses which are working only in the morning shift</li> <li>➤ Need for garaging bibliobuses which would extend the life of vehicles and library fund - bibliobuses are currently located in the open air in the courtyard of the Police State Zadar</li> <li>➤ Due to less visits, subsidiaries Crno and Ploče have recently switched to part-time work.</li> <li>➤ Overcrowding and lack of space in the subsidiary Bili Brig</li> <li>➤ Need for security guards due to behavior of problematic users</li> <li>➤ Night gathering of socially excluded young people around the library building behind which every morning remain unfavorable reminders such as bottles, cigarette butts, junkie needles and so on.</li> </ul>

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Increase in demand for culture and cultural tourism</li> <li>➤ Development of new technologies in the world of librarianship such as e-books allows development and innovation in library business</li> <li>➤ Possibility of raising the current level of excellence</li> <li>➤ Good reputation of Library in the community opens the possibility of cooperation with a number of individuals and companies who can support the action of Library by donations</li> <li>➤ Possibility of expansion and refinement of existing facilities and design and development of new programs due to effects of an increasing number of volunteers</li> <li>➤ Knowledge and experience of staff in writing projects for EU funding allows further withdraw funds for larger projects</li> <li>➤ Success of two dispensaries and a large library collection gives a possibility of further opening dispensaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Weakening of interest for reading among young people who are increasingly turning to new technologies</li> <li>➤ Bad economic situation</li> <li>➤ Political and structural changes negatively affect the mood and the social activity of citizens</li> <li>➤ Slow improvement of software program CROLIST which library uses in its work because of the incompatibility of the Consortium CROLIST and owner of software company</li> <li>➤ Complex documentation procedures to apply for EU accession funds hinders the Library application for numerous programs</li> <li>➤ Lag of Library in acquiring e-books because of the unresolved problems of legal regulation of e-books in the Republic of Croatia comparing to other EU countries</li> </ul>

Source: Irina Karuza "Marketing management in non-profit organisations: the case study of Public Library Zadar", Master thesis, Zadar, 2016.

It is notable that Zadar Public library is facing many challenges: shifting of customer needs or changes in environment, but it is in a same time vital organization ready to overcome threats and to take advantage of opportunities. One of great opportunity is increase in demand for culture and cultural tourism and Library should shift is orientation toward tourism.

Since public libraries are non-profit organisations, customer orientation is component that has major influence on organization performance. Two studies about client satisfaction were conducted recently. In both studies respondents were very satisfied with services and amenities offered by Public Library Zadar, which is shown by the mean score for each element. Total score of Library was high in both surveys: 2001. it was 4.13, and 4.00 in 2009. Users perceive library staff as friendly, motivated and professional, and the space of Library as pleasant and modern. They are very satisfied with the collection of books in the Croatian language, but some of them are less satisfied with the available fund in foreign languages. In the view of the user, in the future it would be important to expand the main building, especially Reading room and Room for reading newspapers, as well as to employ a larger number of employees.

For libraries to continue to achieve their role and purpose they must respond to the digital, financial and societal changes by similarly challenging their own ways of working. (Wade, 2011). In Zadar Public Library management together with library staff are aware of that facts and they responds to that challenges, primarily with its numerous projects. The most important projects in Public Library Zadar are:

1. **Sea Tuesday** – One of the oldest programs in Library that is active since 2003. year. It is designed in the form of lectures, exhibitions, book readings, panel discussions and book presentations associated with the sea. It takes place on average once or twice a month in the evening on Tuesdays.
2. **Flying book** – Project Flying book constitutes the first form of cooperation between Public Library Zadar and Zadar Airport. The library provided books in English and took care of the graphic design of the project, and Airport provided a space for hundreds of books that are available to passengers while waiting for international flights. The basic idea is that passengers are free to take books, read them on the journey and return them to the address stated in the book, give a friend or simply leave on another place that is included in this project. On a shelf at the airport passengers can also leave books that are taken on any other bookcrossing place in Croatia or in the world.
3. **Exhibitions** - In the past 17 years, the library has organized more than 600 exhibitions of various themes and techniques, from pencil drawings, oil paintings, pastels, mosaics to jewelry. Library cedes its space for free to citizens, but also others, professionals and amateurs. In that way more than 1500 people per day can see their work.
4. **Digitization project Delmata** - The project was launched in 2009 in collaboration with maestro Ljubo Stipišić. Its aim is digitizing his books, notes, audio recordings and painting so it would be preserved for future generations as important cultural heritage. Croatian Ministry of Culture and Raiffeisen Bank helped launching the project.

5. **Zadar reads** – The project emphasizes the importance of books and reading in different age groups and it is focused at users of all ages: babies, preschoolers, elementary and secondary schools, students, adults and seniors. During the week of the event a large number of events is organized, such as public readings, literary meetings, workshops, literary quizzes, exhibitions of books, photo competition on the theme of reading and the like.
6. **Reading clubs** – A group of a dozen book lovers makes a reading club and they meet once a month to share their thoughts and opinions about the book they all read. Through the years, the number of users who are interested in reading clubs grew, and now in the Library operates eight clubs: five in the Central Library and three in the branches. Reading groups are designed for different age groups, so there are reading clubs for children, teenagers, young people and adults.
7. **„Read to me!“** – „Read to me!“ is the first national campaign for promoting reading aloud to children from their birth. The aim of campaign is to encourage parents and other adults to start reading aloud to their child from its birth which will create a special emotional bond between a child and an adult who reads to him. An equally important goal is to encourage parents of the youngest children to start coming into the local public library as soon possible. Public Library Zadar has joined the campaign in different ways.
8. **„How yes no“** - The series of workshops is launched in 2011. in cooperation with the Student Counseling of the University of Zadar, and it continues today with the aim to teach children the techniques of effective learning. Volunteers, students that are studying psychology, teach children motivation, concentration, planning, learning and overcoming stage fright. The program is not designed exclusively for children with learning disabilities, but for all those who want to improve their learning techniques.
9. **Ask librarians** – Public Library Zadar is one of 19 public libraries involved in the project Ask librarians. In that project librarians respond to different questions that users ask, creating a knowledge base. It is an online service which aims to offer selected and quality sources of literature on the requested topic.
10. **Reading mentors** - Throughout the school year students of the Department of Teacher Education Studies of the University of Zadar practiced reading with children in lower grades of elementary school who have problems with reading. At the end of the year evaluation showed that the students successfully improved their reading skills, as well as gained valuable experience of working with children.

### The library in tourist destination

According to Jelincic and Zovic (2012) cultural tourism needs to be systematically introduced to certain aspects of the library business and is „another example of underutilized potential in creating a cultural tourism policy“. Tokic (2014) points out several forms of involvement of libraries in tourism, namely: information role, educational role, cultural function and tourist attraction. Author states that cultural function in tourism refers to the fact that the library is an area of intercultural interaction between visitors and locals. Since Zadar Public Library isn't historically valuable site, a point of tourist route and library building doesn't appear as an attraction it could become attractive to tourist because of its recognized importance to the overall cultural, scientific and educational levels.

### Results

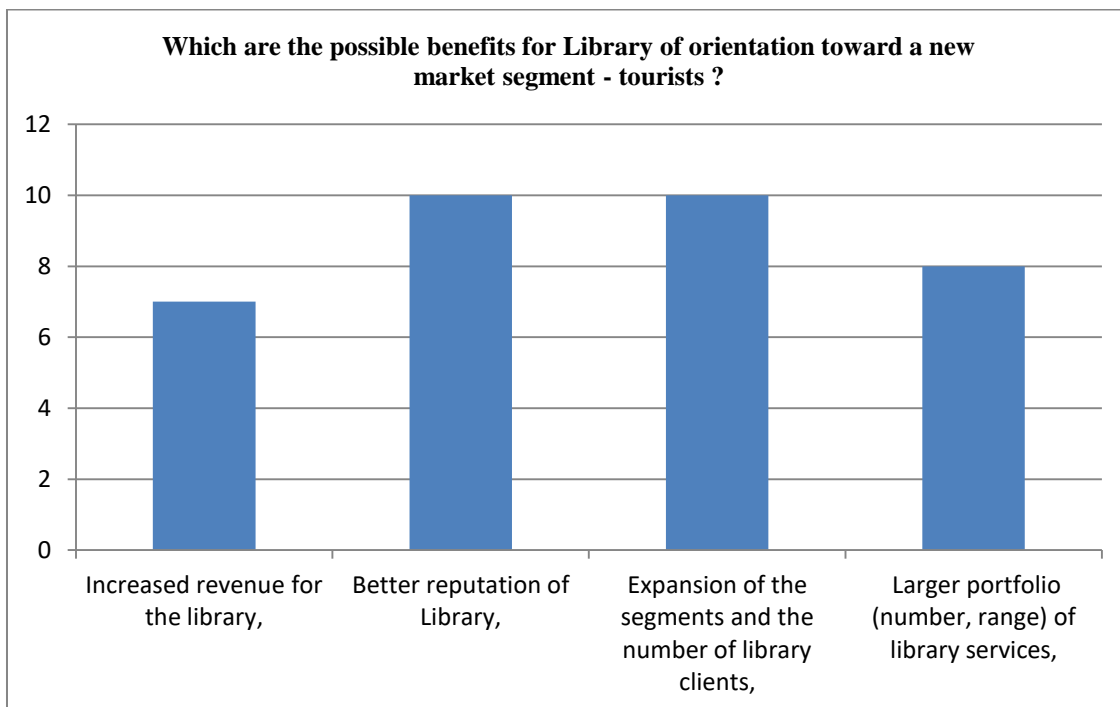
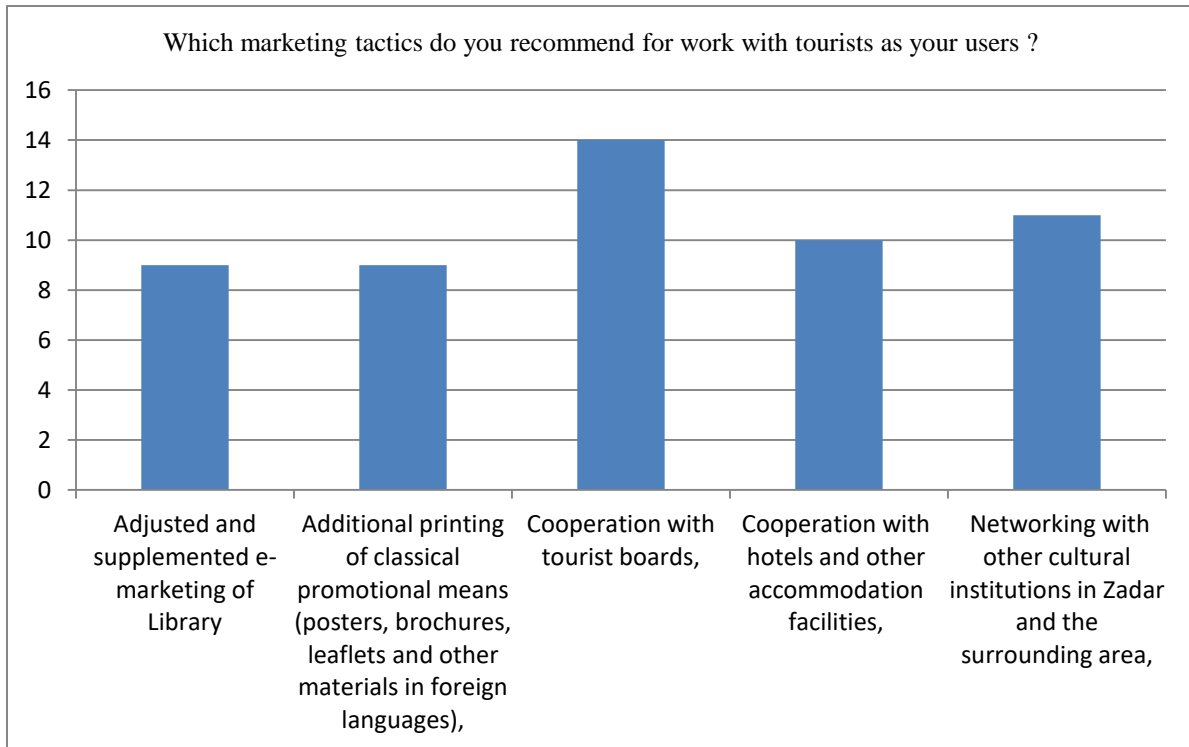
Recommendations for the development of public libraries in cultural tourism are set on the basis of new library system structures, introduction of new services and cultural management. (Jelinčić and Zović, 2012) The question “is Zadar Public Library ready to play an active role in cultural tourism” requires a deeper insight in the questionnaire result. Number of respondents was 16 of 30 submitted questionnaires, and they answered as follows.

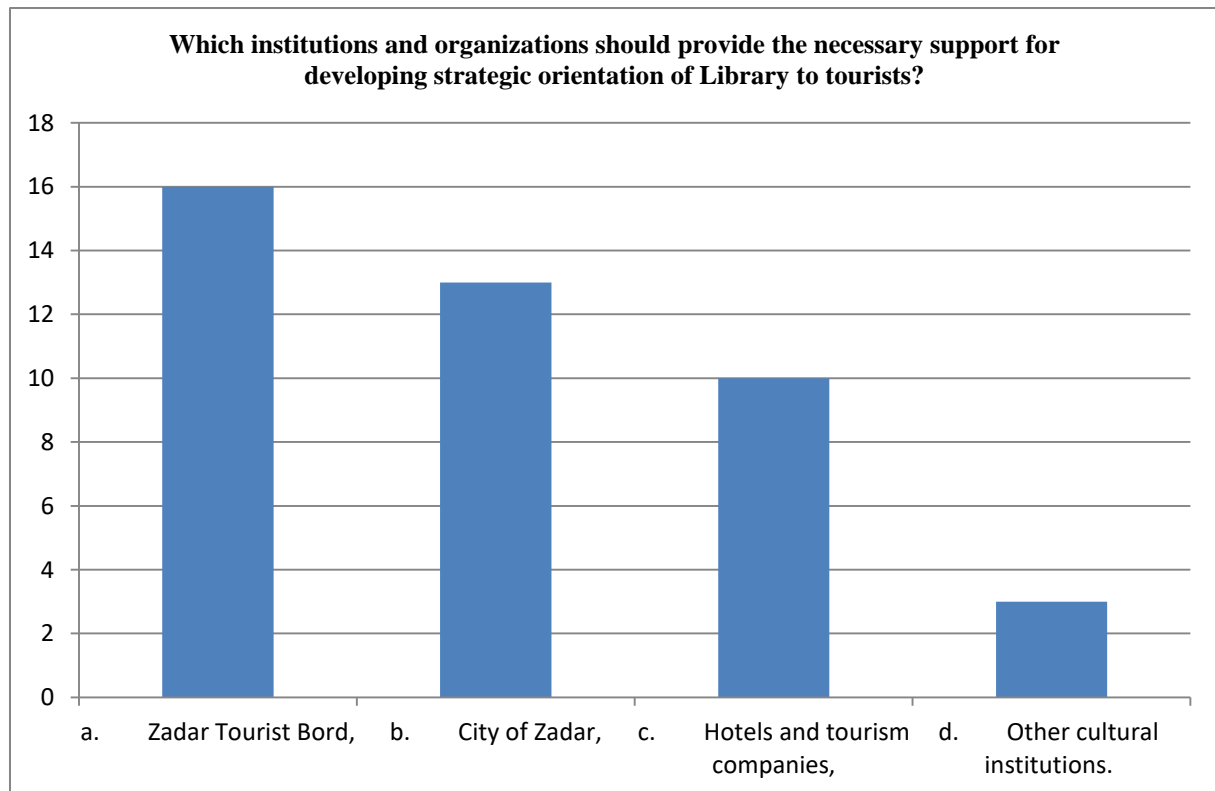
Question	frequency distribution	
	yes	no
1. Does Public Library use strategic customer orientation?	100%	0%
5. Is the value of the Library as a possible tourist attraction recognized?	0%	100%
6. Are you strategically oriented towards tourists?	19%	81%
16. Do you think that support from the others is significant for developing strategic orientation of Library to tourists?	93,75%	6,25%
17. Do you think that, in the case of additional orientation towards tourist visitors, Library needs to hire additional staff (during the tourist season)?	100%	0%

In Library strategic customer orientation is strongly presented but only toward local customers. Tourists are not part of Library strategic orientation and Library has not been seen as a possible tourist attraction.

Question	the most frequent answers
3. Do you think that tourists are desirable market segment in your library? Rate the importance on scale (1-5), importance of tourists as a market segment:	2 - moderately important
4. In what extent is Public Library Zadar included in the tourist offer of Zadar?	2 - insufficiently included
8. In your opinion, how important is the location of Library for tourist visitors?	4 -very important
9. How important is collaboration with other institutions in the culture of Zadar and the surrounding area for successful marketing of Library toward tourist visitors?	5 - extremely important
10. How important is collaboration with hotels and other accommodation facilities in Zadar and the surrounding area for successful marketing of Library toward tourist visitors?	4 -very important
14. Evaluate the interest of tourists for reading books and using other services - content of Library during their stay.	3-moderate
15. Evaluate the possibility of developing a specific program for specific segments of tourists in Library (children, young people, elderly people, etc.).	3-moderate
18. Do you think that orientation of Library towards tourists, as well as specific programs in Library for tourists would add value to the City of Zadar as a tourist destination?	4 - a lot

There is not clear vision about creation of the product and services for tourist. Special projects and offer for tourist are not considered and need for that kind of projects is not recognized. There is no initiative from the Library side to become part of cultural tourism, but there is a willing to participate in specific programs for tourist if some other organizations initiate them. This could be partly due to the awareness of the Library weaknesses – mainly of human resource insufficiency.





It is pointed out that Zadar Tourist Board should play the main role in providing the necessary support for developing strategic orientation of Library to tourists. This shows a necessity of stronger involvement of destination management organizations.

### Conclusion

The community and tourism orientation for libraries is a very complex issue. Public libraries are part of the cultural institution networks but their primary objective is to serve the local community. Strategic change toward market orientation is presented but innovativeness, customer loyalty and product quality are mainly restricted to the community. Marketing programmes and various activities are not part of library strategy to attract tourists to use library services. Public libraries should enable interaction among their users - locals and tourists and take an active part in tourist offer creation. If destination management is dedicated to cultural tourism development, tourism support system should be active. Multiple strategic issues in public libraries in tourist destinations deserve attention of cultural tourism policy promoters, but public libraries should be more innovative and should consider creation of the needs for their services for tourists before, during their stay and after they leave the destination.

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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

In Public Library Zadar you are employed as:

- a. employee
- b. manager (lower level)
- c. manager (higher level)

1. Does Public Library use strategic customer orientation? YES NO

If yes, in which of the following it appears:

- 1 Commitment to customers
- 2 Creating offers that represent value for clients
- 3 Understanding needs of the users
- 4 In fact that customer satisfaction is our main goal
- 5 Measuring customer satisfaction
- 6 All of the above

If you circled number 5, please briefly state how are you doing it.

2. Who are your clients?
- 1 Locals only
  - 2 Locals mostly, and to a lesser extent tourists
  - 3 Locals and tourists equally
3. Do you think that tourists are desirable market segment in your library? Rate the importance on scale (1-5), importance of tourists as a market segment:
- 1 not important
  - 2 moderately important
  - 3 important
  - 4 very important
  - 5 extremely important
4. In what extent is Public Library Zadar included in the tourist offer of Zadar?
- 1 not included
  - 2 insufficiently included
  - 3 moderately included
  - 4 very included
  - 5 completely included
5. Is the value of the Library as a possible tourist attraction recognized? YES NO
6. Are you strategically oriented towards tourists? YES NO
- 1 If not, why?
  - 2 If yes, to what extent – is it built into the mission and vision of the Library?
  - 3 Do you think that such a strategic orientation would led to:
    - i. acceptance by employees
    - ii. acceptance by employees, but with additional motivation
    - iii. employee resistance because of (give a possible reason /reasons)
7. Which marketing tactics do you recommend for work with tourists as your users (you can choose more than one answer):
- a. Adjusted and supplemented e-marketing of Library,
  - b. Additional printing of classical promotional means (posters, brochures, leaflets and other materials in foreign languages),
  - c. Cooperation with tourist boards,
  - d. Cooperation with hotels and other accommodation facilities,
  - e. Networking with other cultural institutions in Zadar and the surrounding area,
  - f. Something else
8. In your opinion, how important is the location of Library for tourist visitors?
1. not important
  2. moderately important
  3. important
  4. very important
  5. extremely important
9. How important is collaboration with other institutions in the culture of Zadar and the surrounding area for successful marketing of Library toward tourist visitors?

1. not important
  2. moderately important
  3. important
  4. very important
  5. extremely important
10. How important is collaboration with hotels and other accommodation facilities in Zadar and the surrounding area for successful marketing of Library toward tourist visitors?
1. not important
  2. moderately important
  3. important
  4. very important
  5. extremely important
11. Circle the possible benefits for Library of orientation toward a new market segment - tourists (you can choose more answers):
- a. Increased revenue for the library,
  - b. Better reputation of Library,
  - c. Expansion of the segments and the number of library clients,
  - d. Larger portfolio (number, range) of library services,
  - e. Something else:
12. Do you think that (would) orientation of Library toward tourists bring (brought) some disadvantages - problems in the work of the library as well? If yes, state which.
13. What are, in your opinion, the most important limitations for market orientation of Library to a new segment of customers - tourists?
14. Evaluate the interest of tourists for reading books and using other services - content of Library during their stay.
- 1 not exist
  - 2 insignificant
  - 3 moderate
  - 4 high
  - 5 extremely high
15. Evaluate the possibility of developing a specific program for specific segments of tourists in Library (children, young people, elderly people, etc.).
- 1 extremely small
  - 2 small
  - 3 moderate
  - 4 large
  - 5 very large
16. Do you think that support from the others is significant for developing strategic orientation of Library to tourists? Circle the answer: YES NO  
If you choose yes, please state which institutions and organizations should provide the necessary support (you can choose more answers):
- a. Zadar Tourist Bord,
  - b. City of Zadar,
  - c. Hotels and tourism companies,
  - d. Other cultural institutions. Which?
  - e. Someone else:
17. Do you think that, in the case of additional orientation towards tourist visitors, Library needs to hire additional staff (during the tourist season)? YES NO
18. Do you think that orientation of Library towards tourists, as well as specific programs in Library for tourists would add value to the City of Zadar as a tourist destination??
1. not at all
  2. little
  3. moderate
  4. a lot
  5. extremely lot
19. Your comments and suggestions.