



Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi

ISSN: 2148-2292

12 (2) 2025

Academic Journal of History and Idea

Araştırma Makalesi | Research Article

Geliş tarihi | Received: 10.12.2024

Kabul tarihi | Accepted: 08.04.2025

Yayın tarihi | Published: 25.04.2025

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Atıf Künyesi | Citation Info

Aliyeva, G. (2025). Management of Museum Activities. *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi*, 12 (2), 860-874. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15513857>

Management of Museum Activities

Abstract

This article analyzes the operational areas of museums and the effective management of these activities. It highlights the significant role of museums not only in preserving cultural heritage but also in education, public awareness, and community engagement. The article explores key aspects of museum management, such as strategic planning, collection management, visitor-oriented services, and financial sustainability. As a result, it is concluded that the successful functioning of modern museums depends on the implementation of efficient management models.

Keywords: Museum, Management, Cultural Heritage, Exhibition, Strategic Management

Müze Faaliyetlerinin Yönetimi

Öz

Bu makale, müzelerin faaliyet alanlarını ve bu faaliyetlerin etkin yönetimini analiz etmektedir. Müzelerin yalnızca kültürel mirasın korunmasında değil, aynı zamanda eğitim, kamu bilinci ve toplum katılımı konularında da önemli bir rol oynadığının altı çizilmektedir. Makale, müze yönetiminin stratejik planlama, koleksiyon yönetimi, ziyaretçi odaklı hizmetler ve finansal sürdürülebilirlik gibi kilit yönlerini incelemektedir. Sonuç olarak, modern müzelerin başarılı bir şekilde işleyebilmesinin, etkin yönetim modellerinin uygulanmasına bağlı olduğu sonucuna varılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Müze, Yönetim, Kültürel Miras, Sergi, Stratejik Yönetim



<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/atdd>

Introduction

Museums are scientific and cultural institutions that play a vital role in the preservation, research, and public presentation of cultural heritage. They are not merely spaces where exhibits are displayed, but also serve as platforms for education, awareness, and public dialogue. In the context of globalization, technological advancement, and the changing needs of society, the functions of museums have expanded, and their management has become more complex and multifaceted. Therefore, in the modern era, the efficient management of museums—meaning the systematic planning, organization, coordination, and supervision of their activities—holds great importance. Currently, 201 museums operate in Azerbaijan: 14 of them are art museums, 7 are dedicated to literature, 12 to history, 68 to history and regional studies, 5 to military glory, 43 are house museums, and 52 are

Heydar Aliyev museums. In addition, there are various specialized and private museums operating under the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, as well as under other ministries and organizations. Among these are the Azerbaijan State Museum of Art, the Azerbaijan History Museum, the National Museum of Azerbaijani Literature named after Nizami Ganjavi, the Azerbaijan Carpet Museum, the Azerbaijan State Theatre Museum named after Jafar Jabbarly, the State Museum of Azerbaijani Musical Culture, and the Museum of Independence of Azerbaijan.

The first museum in Baku was established in 1920, while the first memorial museum was founded in Shaki in 1938. The History Museum of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) has been serving the nation since the 1920s. This museum is located in the mansion of the famous Baku philanthropist Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev. The field of museum management is not limited to administrative oversight; it also encompasses strategic planning, human resource management, financial sustainability, the development of visitor-oriented services, and digital transformation (Ismayilov & Khalafova, 2022a). Unlike traditional museum administration, modern approaches are based more on the principles of participation, transparency, and public integration. The purpose of this article is to analyze the main directions of museum activities and to explore the role of effective management in this field. The study will focus on contemporary museum management models and their practical implementation mechanisms, based on both local and international experiences. The relevance of the research stems from the idea that museums should not act merely as passive protectors in the face of a changing society, but rather as active and continuously evolving institutions.

1. Functions and Activity Areas of Museums

Historically, museums have been formed as unique cultural institutions that preserve the memory of society and pass it on to future generations. Their primary functions are not limited to the collection and display of exhibits, but also encompass broader social, educational, and scientific domains (Ismailov & Bayramova, 2022). These functions are based on the principles established by ICOM (the International Council of Museums) at the international level and are aligned with the cultural policies of various countries.

a) Collection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage

One of the core functions of museums is the collection, documentation, scientific classification, and preservation of tangible and intangible heritage related to both national and world cultures (Balginova, Maydangalieva, Satygalieva & Mahammadli, 2018). This process encompasses archaeological, ethnographic, historical, artistic, and technological objects, as well as archival materials and audiovisual sources. The preservation of exhibits requires the application of conservation, restoration, and safeguarding technologies.

b) Enlightenment and Education

Museums operate as educational centers open to the public. They support the learning process by organizing educational programs, seminars, interactive events, and excursions for various age groups and social classes (Heydar, 2023). Both formal (in collaboration with schools and universities) and informal education models are widely applied in this area. This function of museums plays a significant role in increasing cultural literacy in society and in the formation of national identity.

c) Scientific Research Activities

Museums are not only institutions that collect exhibits, but also scientific centers. Curators and researchers conduct scientific studies on exhibits, gaining new knowledge about their history, origins, and functions (Qasımlı & Məhəmmədli, 2024a). These research findings are shared through theses, catalogs, exhibition materials, and scientific journals. Scientific research activities play a key role in forming the scientific reputation of museums and in determining the content of new exhibitions.

d) Public Participation and Cultural Dialogue

Today, museums have become interactive and open institutions, providing opportunities for active public participation. (İsmayilov, K., İsmayilov, N., & Məmmədova, 2019). Visitors are no

longer just passive spectators but become active participants in museum activities. Through social projects, discussion platforms, collaboration with local communities, and inclusive programs, museums promote social integration and the recognition of cultural diversity.

e) Tourism and Economic Role

Museums also play an important role in the development of tourism. By attracting tourists, they contribute to the economic life of the city and play a significant role in promoting the region. (İsmayilov, 2022). Especially thematic and specialized museums not only increase tourist traffic but also influence the creation of new jobs in the area.

**Explanation of Functions Based on Examples:
Collection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage – Azerbaijan National History Museum (Baku, Azerbaijan)*

The Azerbaijan National History Museum collects and preserves rare exhibits related to the country's history, archaeology, numismatics, and ethnography. The museum's collections hold over 300,000 exhibits. The conservation and restoration of material cultural heritage from ancient times to the present day are professionally carried out here (İsmayilov & Khalafova, 2023). The museum's laboratory uses modern technologies for the preservation of exhibits.

**Enlightenment and Education – British Museum (London, United Kingdom)*

The British Museum has advanced expertise in organizing educational programs (Qasimli & Məhəmmədli, 2024b). In collaboration with schools, the museum develops interactive lessons, children's programs, and exhibition guides for families (İsmayilov, Mahammadli & Gasimli, 2023a). Their website extensively features digital textbooks, virtual tours, and teaching resources. This enables the museum to fulfill its public education function on a global scale.

**Scientific Research Activities – Louvre Museum (Paris, France)*

The Louvre functions as one of the world's leading scientific research centers. Experts at the museum research a wide range of fields, from art history to archaeological and cultural analyses (İsmayilov, Mahammadli & Khudiyeva, 2022). The museum's scientific department conducts in-depth research on the origin, period, and artistic value of new exhibits, preparing presentations and scientific articles for international conferences.

**Public Participation and Inclusivity – SALT Galata (Istanbul, Turkey)*

SALT Galata stands out for its modern approach to public participation. Visitors here not only view exhibits but also engage in open discussions and seminar programs (Kushzhanov &

Dashqin, 2019a). Creative workshops for young people, meetings with artisans, and collaboration with local communities strengthen the museum's focus on social integration. Additionally, special programs for people with disabilities and accessibility measures are implemented.

**Tourism and Economic Role – Guggenheim Museum (Bilbao, Spain)*

The Guggenheim Museum has been a pivotal point in the economic and tourism development of the city of Bilbao (Ismayilov & Aliyeva, 2023). Since its opening in 1997, the museum has attracted millions of tourists, contributing to the growth of local businesses and job creation. The "Bilbao Effect," as it is called, has become a global example of how cultural institutions impact regional economies.

2. Main Directions of Museum Management

Museum management is the field of management applied to plan, direct, coordinate, and supervise the organizational and functional activities of museums. Unlike traditional management models, museum management both preserves the cultural mission and ensures sustainable development by establishing efficient operational mechanisms. Below are the main directions of this field:

a) Strategic Planning and Development-Oriented Management

The successful operation of a museum primarily relies on a clear and goal-oriented strategic plan. This plan includes the museum's mission, vision, core values, and medium-to-long-term goals. Strategic planning is crucial in terms of optimizing resources and determining the content of exhibitions (Ismayilov & Khalafova, 2022b). Modern museums also place special emphasis on visitor experience, digitization, and revenue strategies in their development plans.

b) Operational and Administrative Management

The effective organization of daily activities plays a key role in the overall management of a museum. This includes:

- Management of staff and task assignments
- Logistics of exhibitions and displays
- Security, technical services, and cleaning services
- Flexible and transparent organization of the management structure

Operational management is also responsible for the proper allocation of budget expenses and resources.

c) Visitor-Oriented Management and Public Relations

The success of museums depends largely on how they engage with their visitors. This area includes:

- Analysis of visitor behavior and needs
- Interactive exhibitions and educational programs
- Marketing and communication strategies (İsmayılov & Khudiyeva, 2023).
- Promotion through social media, websites, and digital platforms

Modern approaches indicate that museums should no longer be just "exhibitors," but rather "experience creators."

d) Digitization and Technological Innovations

The rapid development of technology has opened new opportunities for museum management. Digitization covers the following areas:

- Digital archives and online catalogs of exhibits
- Virtual tours and interactive displays
- Automated ticketing systems
- Digital art exhibitions (Nadir & Sevdal, 2022).

The shift of many museums to online platforms during the pandemic has further emphasized the importance of this area. Digital technologies expand a museum's accessibility and outreach to international audiences.

e) Sustainability and Social Responsibility

Modern museums not only serve as repositories of exhibits but also act as institutions contributing to social change. This area includes:

- Environmentally friendly exhibition designs (green museum concept)
- Social inclusivity and engagement with diverse audiences
- Collaboration with communities and the involvement of volunteers
- Inclusive programs for people with disabilities and special needs groups

This direction strengthens the social and ethical role of museums in society (İsmayılov & Məhəmmədli, 2024).

f) Scientific Management of Collections

Systematic management of exhibits involves the following processes:

- *Documentation and inventory*: A cataloging system should be established for each exhibit, including detailed information (origin, history, material, condition, etc.).

- *Collection policy*: A written document (Collection Management Policy) should be prepared, specifying the types of objects the museum collects, the criteria for accepting them, and how they are preserved.

- *Conservation and preservation*: To maintain the physical condition of the collections, measures such as climate control (temperature and humidity), lighting, and pest control should be implemented.

- *Digitization*: Creating digital archives allows the exhibits to reach a wider audience and be available for academic use.

g) Planning and Organizing Exhibitions

Exhibitions are the primary form of public activity for museums, ensuring that exhibits are meaningfully presented to visitors (Ismayilov, Mahammadli & Gasimli, 2023b). The exhibition process includes the following stages:

- *Developing thematic concepts*: The exhibition theme is selected based on the museum's mission and the content of its collections. Both scientific relevance and public interest should be considered.

- *Exhibition design and graphics*: Planning the exhibition space, lighting, and visual communication elements (information boards, maps, digital panels) are key components in shaping the visitor experience.

- *Permanent and temporary exhibitions*: Museums typically organize permanent exhibitions dedicated to core collections, as well as temporary exhibitions on current topics. This approach maintains the museum's dynamism and modernity.

- *Complementary activities*: Events accompanying the exhibition—such as lectures, masterclasses, film screenings, and interactive programs—enhance public participation and strengthen the exhibition's impact.

h) International Collaboration and Exchange Programs

Exchanges of collections and international exhibition projects facilitate global recognition and knowledge exchange for museums. These initiatives include:

- *Participation in international exhibitions*. Museums present selected exhibits from their collections for display in other countries' museums.

•*Curator exchanges and collaboration projects.* Mutual projects are implemented to allow museum staff to gain international experience and familiarize themselves with new methods.

•*Joint research and publications.* Collaborative research on collections and the publication of catalogs enhance the museum's scholarly activity.

**Example: Azerbaijan Carpet Museum (Baku)*

The Azerbaijan Carpet Museum is recognized for its advanced practices in preserving and showcasing its collections (Karabalina, Maydangalieva, Satygalieva, Ahmetalina & Mahammadli, 2018). The exhibits are kept under specific conditions to protect them from temperature and humidity. Through both permanent and thematic temporary exhibitions, the rich tradition of Azerbaijani carpet weaving is presented to visitors. International exhibitions held in collaboration with various countries also promote Azerbaijani culture on a global scale.

**Collection Management and Exhibition Organization*

The core value of museums lies in their collections. These collections are not only a set of objects of historical and cultural significance but also the main means by which the museum fulfills its mission and public function. Therefore, collection management and exhibition organization are among the key areas of museum management that require strategic and professional approaches.

3. Human Resources Management

Human resources are one of the most critical components of museum management. The museum's mission implementation, collection preservation, exhibition organization, and effective communication with visitors—all depend on a skilled and well-managed staff. Therefore, human resources management is an area that requires a systematic and strategic approach (Kazimi & Mahammadli, 2021).

a) Structure and Role of the Staff

The structure of the museum consists of various departments where staff members perform specific functions:

**Curators and Scientific Staff:* Responsible for the scientific research, documentation, and preparation of thematic exhibitions.

**Education and Public Programs Department:* Organizes educational events, tours, interactive programs, and training sessions (Muhammadli, 2023).

**Technical and Service Staff:* Works in the areas of exhibition setup, preservation, and technical maintenance (Askerova & Mammadov, 2025).

**Management and Administrative Group:* Manages the museum's strategic and operational activities, resource allocation, and financial oversight.

b) Recruitment and Selection Process

Effective staff policies should be based on the following principles:

**Professional Criteria for Selection*

Candidates should be selected based on their expertise, experience, and creative potential in the field.

**Open Competitions and Transparent Procedures:* Transparent recruitment processes increase public trust in cultural institutions.

**Support for Young Talent:* It is important to engage young people in the museum sector through internship programs and volunteer activities.

c) Training and Professional Development

Continuous education and development improve the professional skills of museum staff and help them adapt to industry innovations:

**Internal Training and Seminars*

**International Exchange Programs and Scholarships*

Online Courses and Digital Learning Resources (Kenzhebayeva, Urmurzina & Mahammadli, 2018).

Professional development programs also strengthen teamwork and motivation.

d) Motivation and Working Conditions

High motivation and job satisfaction directly improve productivity. To achieve this:

- *Transparent and Fair Salary Systems*
- *Improvement of Working Conditions*
- *Recognition and Reward for Individual Achievements*
- *Involvement in Decision-Making Processes* (Mammadov, 2022a).

Providing employees with opportunities to contribute creatively adds dynamism to museum activities.

e) Volunteers and Community Participation

Many museums engage community members through volunteer programs. This helps optimize resources and expand public relations (Khalafova & Ismailov, 2024). Volunteers can

assist in guiding tours, exhibition organization, event management, and educational program implementation.

**Example: Victoria and Albert Museum (London)*

This museum places significant emphasis on continuous staff training, individual development plans, and supporting employee initiatives (Mahamadli, 2018). It also has an extensive volunteer program, where volunteers actively participate in exhibition projects, events, and scientific research initiatives.

The efficient functioning of museums depends not only on scientific and cultural aspects but also on financial stability and sustainable management. (Məhəmmədli, 2024). Traditionally funded by the state, museums today are shifting toward more flexible, innovative, and multi-source funding models due to rising costs, a competitive cultural environment, and changing visitor behaviors. In this regard, financial management plays a crucial role in museum administration.

4. Financial Management and Sustainability (Continued)

a) Funding Sources

The financial sustainability of museums depends on various sources, which include:

- *Government Allocations:* Many museums are funded by the Ministry of Culture or other governmental bodies. This is a primary and stable source of funding, although it is often limited.
- *Visitor Revenues:* Income from ticket sales, guided tours, and events is one of the main ways museums generate revenue from their own activities (Kushzhanov & Dashgin, 2019a).
- *Sponsorship and Partnerships:* Private companies, foundations, and individual donors can fund museum projects. In exchange, companies gain brand image and advertising opportunities.
- *International Grants and Project Support:* Financial support can be obtained for heritage preservation, educational programs, and digitization projects through organizations like UNESCO, ICOM, and the European Union (Mahammadi, 2024).
- *Income from Auxiliary Activities:* Revenue from souvenir shops, cafés, exhibition catalogs, special events, and rental spaces serve as additional income sources (Mammadov, 2022b).

b) Budget Planning and Control

Museums should develop a budget strategy and optimize costs when planning their activities:

- *Preparation of Annual Budget Plans*
- *Prioritization and Monitoring of Expenses*
- *Transparency in Financial Reporting*
- *Risk Management and Cost-Saving Mechanisms*

These approaches ensure financial stability and accountability.

c) Innovative Financial Models

Changing conditions are pushing museums to seek non-traditional funding routes. These models include:

- *Membership Programs*: Regular paying members get access to special privileges and events.
- *Crowdfunding*: Public support for projects can be raised through online platforms. (Kushzhanov & Mahammadli, 2019b).
- *Creativity-Based Revenue Models*: Digital products, NFT sales (digital ownership rights), and digital ticket systems are emerging as new sources of income.

d) Sustainability and Resource Management

Museums need to operate sustainably in financial, social, and environmental terms:

- *Green Management Principles*: Reducing energy consumption, using recycled materials, and minimizing waste (Mammadov, 2013).
- *Long-Term Collaboration with Communities*: Strengthening public support through social projects and programs with local populations.
- *Efficient Use of Internal Resources*: Optimizing the distribution and management of staff, space, and technical resources.

**Example: The Louvre Museum (Paris)*

The Louvre ensures financial stability not only through government funding but also through a vast network of sponsors, membership programs, and revenue from its stores and events. Its professional financial management has made it one of the most sustainable cultural institutions globally.

Conclusion

The role of museums extends far beyond the mere preservation of historically and culturally significant objects; they are also vibrant cultural hubs that serve the development of society. Museum management, in alignment with the demands of the modern era, encompasses not only the preservation of cultural heritage but also areas such as public relations, innovative approaches, financial sustainability, and human resource management. The key areas of museum management—such as the preservation of collections, exhibition planning, staff development, efficient financial management, and sustainable development—are essential factors that ensure the successful operation of modern museums. Today, museums do not merely display exhibits; they also offer visitors enriched experiences through interactive and educational programs. In response to current demands, digitization and technological innovations have opened new opportunities for museums. Exhibitions conducted through digital platforms, virtual tours, and interactive applications bring museums closer to global audiences. Moreover, the application of sustainable development and social responsibility principles ensures that museums operate in a manner that is not only financially sound but also socially and environmentally responsible. One of the key areas that require more focus in the future is financial sustainability. In light of limited government funding, museums should take measures to increase their revenues, expand sponsorship and partnership opportunities, and explore various non-traditional funding models. Furthermore, in the future, museums can strengthen their community ties by implementing more community-based projects and volunteer activities. Museums should respond to societal needs and offer more inclusive and diverse visitor experiences. Overall, the contemporary approaches to museum management go beyond mere conservation of exhibits; they also enhance the social functions of museums in society. The continued development of these approaches will enable museums to better serve their mission of preserving cultural heritage and passing it on to future generations. This conclusion encapsulates the modern needs and future directions for museum management. If you need further revisions or adjustments, feel free to let me know!

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