CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN APROACHES TO THE COMERCIALIZATION AND PROMOTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

ABORDĂRI EUROPENE CONTEMPPORANE PRIVIND COMERCIALIZAREA ȘI PROMOVAREA PATRIMONIULUI CULTURAL

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Abstract. *The primary purpose of the article is to explore the approaches implemented in contemporary Europe for the commercialization of cultural heritage. Using secondary data from policy documents, accounting standards, and case studies, three models of commercialization are examined: public-led institutions, public–private partnerships, and digital monetization. Public-led institutions prioritize conservation and inclusive access but face funding constraints and limited innovation. Public–private partnerships provide capital, operational efficiency, and marketing expertise, yet risk prioritizing profitability over authenticity and community needs. Digital monetization expands global reach and engages younger audiences at low cost, but can commodify heritage assets and exacerbate digital divides. Regulatory frameworks—including IFRS, EFRAG, IFAC, and OJEU—support transparency, sustainability, and participatory governance, mitigating these risks. Policy recommendations advocate mandatory non-financial reporting, safeguards for partnerships, and inclusive digital strategies to strengthen socio-economic value, public trust, and long-term conservation. The study contributes to understanding how European heritage institutions can balance economic objectives with cultural stewardship in an increasingly commercialized and digitized environment.*

Keywords: *Commercialization, cultural heritage, digitalization, European, public–private partnerships.*

Introduction

Background

The aspects of cultural heritage are considered as an economic resource in a nation rather than being a public property for the citizens. There are promotional strategies for the cultural heritage elements which are deployed by the institutions in a region. Strategies here include the processes of selling tickets and merchandise along with modernizing the systems. In this aspect, digitization of the systems has led to extensive promotion and increase in footfall due to improved access (Garvery et al., 2021). Such systems have been developed by implementing the strategy of public-private partnership. This helps secure funding along with effective conservation of

the cultural heritage and broadening of the access. The initiatives of reporting along with the regulatory standards such as OJEU, EFRAG, and IFRS Foundation have led to improved transparency (EFRAG, 2020). The move has also led to a relationship between the factors of stewardship and financial narratives. Further, the factors of accountability and sustainability are promoted by the strategies.

Objectives and Rationale

The main rationale to the aspect of commercialization is based on the benefits that are derived from it. The benefits include the factors of audience growth and revenue, that lead to increase in stringencies related to effective preservation of cultural heritage and maintaining authenticity. It has been opined on the existing studies that there is a significant contribution of the managerial choices along with the accounting practices and the strategies of governance on the approach of management (Golochalova & Cojocaru, 2022). Further, the values relevant to the cultural heritage are shaped according to the strategies implemented in this context. The prevailing economic theories are based on the trade-offs that are functional between the public goods and the market provision.

Materials And Methods

The evaluation has been facilitated by considering the method of secondary data analysis. The secondary data has been collected from the credible sources for increased reliability. Further, the analysis has been done by considering various themes according to the objectives of the study. The primary resources that have been integrated in the data collection method are "EFRAG Progress Report (2020), IFRS consultation paper (2020), OJEU Directive (2013), IFAC (2022)". Further, other academic studies have been considered for the analysis where the findings of the studies have been integrated into the implications. The evaluation has been done in a comparative approach where there are three cases that have been included in the collected data. This has led to a convenient identification of the impacts of conservation, mechanisms of funding, and models of commercialization.

Results And Discussions

3.1. Case 1: Public-Led Institutions and State-Funded Heritage Management

The first case study is related to the public-led institutions that have a significant prevalence in Europe and are the key players in the region. These key players have a contribution in the commercialization of the cultural heritage in Europe (Mankiw & Taylor, 2017). Here, the strategies implemented by the institutions include the methods of ticketing, merchandising, along with organizing specialized events in the form of exhibitions to showcase the cultural heritage. The strategies have led to an increase in the accessibility for the audience and has also led to an

incremental income for the sustainability of the cultural heritage (Mankiw & Taylor, 2017).

On the other hand, higher prevalence of the heritage institutions on the public budgets have led to several financial constraints which have resulted in limits on the programming. Further, limits are witnessed on the innovation when there is an intensification of the market pressures (Mankiw & Taylor, 2017). It has been determined that through there is sufficient improvement in the conservation of the cultural heritage through this aspect, there are challenges in procuring the funding streams from the supplementary sources and have led to struggle in long-term resilience.

Case 2: Public–Private Partnerships in Heritage Commercialization

The strategies of partnerships between the public and private enterprises have led to higher funding through sponsorships provided by private entrepreneurs. In this aspect, the factors of gains in efficiency and expertise of marketing strategies have been procured through this strategy (Garvery et al., 2021). The upgrades in the infrastructure are done in large scale through the finding received through such sources. However, gradually, the cultural heritage turns out to be a heritage cultural product in the market and there is a competition in the market based on such large-scale projects.

In this aspect, tensions arise in the form of protecting the non-commercial heritage and has also led to an increase in the priority towards profitability (Garvery et al., 2021). As a result, there arises tensions between the factors of inclusivity and authenticity. There is an increase in the criticality in the case of arrangements of governance which leads to a balance between social value and the financial priorities.

Case 3: Digital Monetization and Virtual Heritage Strategies

The increasing trend of digitization has been determined in the case of cultural heritage conservation across Europe and the world. In this aspect, the heritage institutions have implemented extensive usage of digital services for preserving the cultural heritage and commercializing them (EFRAG 2020; IFRS Foundation 2020; IFAC 2022). This has led to an increase in the frequency of virtual tours and e-commerce along with the factors of payments being associated with the digital content. Moreover, this has also led to the generation of low-cost content which has led to broadening of the reach and has decreased the marginal cost revenue.

As a result, there has been an improvement in the level of access among the age groups and across various borders. Further, there prevail risks based on the commodification of the assets related to the cultural heritage and has led to increased digital divisions between people (EFRAG, 2020; IFRS Foundation, 2020; IFAC, 2022). Hence, these digital offerings must be implemented by the companies by designing them according to the level of sustainability and equity required for the assets. It must also be ensured that there is a level of compatibility between the digital services and the experience of the cultural heritage with the most appropriate perception.

Implications

Table 1: Comparison between the Cases

Model of Commercialization	Strengths	Risks	Reference
Public led	Ensuring focus on conservation with improved and inclusive access. Revenue generated through ticketing and merchandising	Shortfalls in funding being persistent with limits on innovation and increased dependence on public budget	(Mankiw & Taylor, 2017)
Partnership of Public and Private Organisations	It provides capital, improves efficiency in operations and marketing expertise. Facilitates large-scale projects	Risks of priorities driven by profits along with concerns of authenticity and not considering demands of communities	(Garvery et al., 2021)
Digital Monetization	The global reach is expanded and leads to generation of low-cost revenue. It leads to appeal for the digital and younger audience	Intangible assets are commodified, and the division of the digital services are not provided. There is potential overreliance on the digital forms	(EFRAG 2020); (IFRS Foundation 2020); (IFAC 2022)

According to the findings derived from the existing studies, the significance of frameworks consisting of the accounting policies and the legal regulations have their contributions in the outcomes. Hence, in all the models of cultural heritage conservation and sustainability, the guidance of IFRS standards and EFRAG have led to the promotion of sustainability. The impacts on the sustainability of the assets are disclosed through these standards and frameworks. Further, there are demands for robust methodologies for determining the value of the assets in the form of social capital. The professional expectations pertaining in the aspect of stewardship are reinforced by the orientation of circular economy. Such aspects have been provided by the frameworks of IFAC, which has led to increased adoption of circular economy. On the other hand, the obligations to be maintained in the case of reporting the impacts on sustainability are facilitated by OJEU Directives. The success of commercialization in this aspect has been determined in the aspect of transparency in the frameworks of accounting and its activities. This leads to high level of participatory governance along with mandates for the public that have the clarity to be perceivable. If there are no safeguards for the sustainability of the cultural heritage and their reporting policies, then the financial strategies will turn out to be adverse for the conservation of the assets. Moreover, there will be a deterioration of the public trust.

Conclusions

It has been concluded from the evaluation that there prevails a lack of balance between the factors of conservation and financial profitability in the case of sustainability of the cultural heritage in Europe. This pertains to the commercialization of

the heritage and the models of commercialization that have been integrated into the assessment. Such models include partnership model, public-led model, and the digital model, where risks in the particular aspect pertains. The findings show that the policies of sustainability in reporting and the factor of inclusiveness in the governance of the preservation of the cultural heritage are the corrections in this aspect. This leads to support towards the socio-economic values and public trust in this aspect.

Recommendations based on the findings include mandating the reporting and disclosure of non-financial performance measures and integrating safeguarding for the partnerships (Fischer et al., 2022). This leads to strengthening the factor of inclusivity in the digital services and providing support to the smaller institutions and their capacity of commercializing the heritage assets (Golochalova & Cojocaru, 2022).

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