unidirectional understanding of a subject matter positively affect comprehension and can also unleash creativity (Nuòez-Ramos & Lorenzo, 1997; Russo et al., 2009). Hence, museums can use the potential of humorous content to influence comprehension, attitudes and behavior of the audience (Wood et al., 2011). Nevertheless, given the role of museums within the community, the important thing is to judiciously balance the humorous and non-humorous parts of the communication (Wood et al., 2011) to avoid risking a decrease of respect due to overusing the jocose component (Powell & Andresen, 1985). Moreover, a particular status of a museum and its thematic scope may completely exclude humor as being in conflict with accepted social norms (Gulas & Weinberger, 2006) – in the collected material not a single example of a humorous utterance was found among martyrdom or military museums.

Among the investigated 15 museums in just two institutions using humor in social media communication could be described as regular and with a strategic intent. Other museums reached for humorous utterances rather occasionally, leaving an impression of an ad-hoc decision, yet involving a pre-produced content. In case of the National Museum in Krakow, which exhibited the highest intensity and creativity in humorous content production, the observed practice reflected a well thought-out communication strategy in which the use of humor had a specific place and function. Importantly, the museum properly aligned the level of creativity in posted messages to its audience, bearing in mind that too creative humor may fail due to misinterpretation, misunderstanding and thus lack of, or negative response (Bell, 2013). Another museum that exhibited a continuous reliance on humorous communication was the Zwierzyniecki House in Krakow. Unlike the previous example, that museum posted mainly funny photos (Shifman, 2007) with a cat, which additionally was presented as a narrator and manager of the website. Such practice complies with a global popularity and appreciation of jokes involving animals acting as humans (Shifman, 2007). However, intentional use of such humorous content by a museum induces considering the type and form of audience's reaction. Given the popular animal-theme, it was not a surprise to observe relatively high numbers of likes and comments provided. Nevertheless, posted comments referred almost exclusively to a cat and scarcely to the merits of a message. Hence, the attention was drawn to peripheral information rather than to important concepts entailed in a message (Martin, 2007). The framing which was used enhanced affiliation more than the comprehension. That finding closely corresponds with arguments on careful selection of the area the humor should refer to, when attempting to use humor intentionally or for educational purposes (Wood et al., 2011). Generally, humorous communication aiming at comprehension advancement and distance minimization was observed among artistic and science-oriented institutions (e.g. National Museum in Krakow, Princes Czartoryski Palace in Krakow, Jagiellonian University Museum in Krakow), while using playful content to build interpersonal relationships and strengthen open communication on locally important issues was more often practiced by smaller museums with rather limited collections (e.g. Tatra Museum in Zakopane, Zwierzyniecki House in Krakow; Niepolomickie Museum in Niepolomice). When considering actual conversation occurring in the comment section, humorous tone in museums' utterances was rather uncommon. A few cases we observed confirmed the potential of non-staged, off-script humor for addressing critique in a subtle manner, enhancing understanding for certain actions, releasing tension, and fostering socialization (Grugulis, 2002). Again, the National Museum in Krakow, which exhibited the most professional, cohesive approach to social media communication, provided most examples of conversational humor. Hence, it recalls the basic

premise of contemporary museum communication – if the museum aims to engage audiences, it should firstly engage itself (Camarero, Garrido & San Jose, 2018).

Conclusions

This study provided a rich evidence informing that introducing a non-serious discourse in the museum narration can be a viable and beneficial approach. The extant literature highlights the importance of an audience-oriented museum and "edutainment", however the presented discussions refer to those concepts predominantly in the context of traditional museum exhibitions (Budge & Burness, 2018; Addis, 2005). This research broadens the literature on museums and communication by looking at the humorous communication of museums in the specific context of social media. It provides insights into various forms of humor utterances used by museums on their social media profiles, which reflect diverse intents and functions in the communication process. Moreover, the results we obtained also illustrate the differences in audiences' reaction to particular types of humorous content provided by museums. Hence, these insights shed more light on the way humor may enhance advancing the collective understanding of culture.

The study has potential limitations, which refer to the regional scope of the research and the limited timeframe. The chosen region of Malopolska represents one of the 16 regions in Poland, hence, the research sample might be affected by a regional bias. However, Malopolska is characterized by a highly diversified population of museums, and thus allows an inference about practices of museums of regional, national, and international importance. Moreover, the analysis covered the whole population of museums operating in Malopolska. Regarding the second limitation, the two-and-a-half-month period of investigation was conveniently selected as representing peak tourist season and further because a relatively short period of data collection minimizes the risk of possible content changes. Therefore, the defined time-frame enhanced the reliability of the data collected for this study. However, further research conducted in a periodic manner over a longer time could provide more evidence regarding behavioral patterns and strategic approaches in the area of humorous communication of museums through social media.

Funding

References

Addis, M. (2005). New technologies and cultural consumption- edutainment is born! *European Journal of Marketing. 39*(7-8), 729-736.

Anderson, G. (2012). *Reinventing the Museum: The Evolving Conversation on the Paradigm Shift*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Baker, A., & Cooley, A. (2018). Breaking through the language barrier- bringing 'dead' languages to life through sensory and narrative engagement. *Museum Management and Curatorship. 33*(5), 428-446.

Balloffet, P., Courvoisier, F.H., & Lagier, J. (2014). From Museum to Amusement Park: The Opportunities and Risks of Edutainment. *International Journal of Arts Management. 16*(2), 4-17.

Bell, N. (2013). Responses to incomprehensible humor. *Journal of Pragmatics*. 57, 176–189.

Bergeron, J., & Vachon, M.-A. (2008). The effects of humour usage by financial advisors in sales encounters. *International Journal of Bank Marketing. 26*(6), 376-398.

Bira, M. (2018). Communicating Museums: A Textual Analysis of Content and Interaction Management. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation. 14*(4), 63-80.

Budge, K., & Burness, A. (2018). Museum objects and Instagram: Agency and communication in digital engagement. *Continuum. 32*(2), 137-150.

Camarero, C., & Garrido, M.-J. (2012). Fostering Innovation in Cultural Contexts: Market Orientation, Service Orientation, and Innovations in Museums. *Journal of Service Research. 15* (1), 39-58.

Camarero, C., Garrido, M-J., & San Jose, R. (2018). What Works in Facebook Content Versus Relational Communication: A Study of their Effectiveness in the Context of Museums. *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction. 34*(12), 1119-1134.

Curry, O., & Dunbar, R. (2013). Sharing a joke: The effects of a similar sense of humor on affiliation and altruism. *Evolution and Human Behavior*. *34*(2), 125–129.

Evans, J., Bridson, K., & Rentschler, R. (2012). Drivers, impediments and manifestation of brand orientation: An international museum study. *European Journal of Marketing. 46*(11-12), 1457-1475.

Falk, J., Dierking, L., & Adams, M. (2006). Living in a Learning Society: Museums and Free-Choice Learning. In S. Macdonald. (Ed.). *A Companion to Museum Studies* (pp.323-339). Oxford: Blackwell.

Fletcher, A., & Lee, M.J. (2012). Current Social Media Uses and Evaluations in American Museums. *Museum Management and Curatorship. 27*(5), 505-521.

Ge, J., & Gretzel, U. (2017). The Role of Humour in Driving Customer Engagement. In R. Schegg & B. Stangl. (Eds.). *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2017: Proceedings of the International Conference in Rome, Italy, January 24-26, 2017* (pp. 461-474). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Golding, V. (2013). Creolizing the Museum Humor, Art, and Young Audiences. In V. Golding & W. Modest. (Eds.). *Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections and Collaboration* (pp. 195-216). London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Greffe, X., Krebs, A., & Pflieger, S. (2017). The future of the museum in the twenty-first century: recent clues from France. *Museum Management and Curatorship*. *32*(4), 319-334.

Grugulis, I. (2002). Nothing Serious? Candidates' Use of Humour in Management Training. *Human Relations. 55*(4), 387-406.

Gulas, C. S., & Weinberger, M. G. (2006). *Humor in Advertising: A Comprehensive Analysis*. Armonk, New York: ME Sharpe.

Holdgaard, N., & Klastrup, L. (2014). Between Control and Creativity: Challenging Co- Creation and Social Media Use in a Museum Context. *Digital Creativity. 25* (3), 190–202.

Holton, A. E, & Lewis, S. C. (2011). Journalists, Social Media, and the Use of Humor on Twitter. *The Electronic Journal of Communication*. *21*(1-2), 1–21.

Hume, M. (2011). How Do We Keep Them Coming? Examining Museum Experiences Using a Services Marketing Paradigm. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing. 27*, 71-94.

Karpiñska-Krakowiak, M., & Modliñski, A. (2018). The Effects of Pranks in Social Media on Brands. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*. *58*(3), 282-290.

Kidd, J. (2014). *Museums in the New Mediascape. Transmedia, Participation, Ethics*. London: Routledge.

Kim, S. (2018). Virtual Exhibitions and Communication Factors. *Museum Management and Curatorship*. *33*(3), 243–260.

Krippendorf, K. (2004). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.

Lester, S., Strachan, A., & Derry, C. (2014) A more playful museum: exploring issues of institutional space, children's play and well-being. *International Journal of Play*. *3*(1), 24-35.

López, X., Margapoti, I., Maragliano, R., & Bove, G. (2010). The presence of Web 2.0 tools on museum web-sites: a comparative study between England, France, Spain, Italy, and the USA. *Museum Management and Curatorship. 25*(2), 235–249.

Lynch, O. H. (2002). Humorous Communication: Finding a Place for Humor in Communication Research. *Communication Theory. 12*(4), 423-445.

Martin, R. A., Puhlik-Doris, P., Larsen, G., Gray, J., & Weir, K. (2003). Individual differences in uses of humor and their relation to psychological well-being: Development of the Humor Styles Questionnaire. *Journal of Research in Personality. 37*(1), 48-75.

Martin, R. A. (2007). *The psychology of humor: An integrative approach*. Amsterdam,
Netherlands: Elsevier.

Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper & Row.

McCall, V., & Gray, C. (2014). Museums and the 'new museology': theory, practice and organisational change. *Museum Management and Curatorship. 29*(1), 19-35.

Meijer-van Mensch, L. (2011). New challenges, new priorities: analyzing ethical dilemmas from a stakeholder's perspective in the Netherlands. *Museum Management and Curatorship. 26*(2), 113–128.

Mencarelli, R., Marteaux, S., & Pulh, M. (2010). Museums, consumers, and on-site experiences. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning. 28*(3), 330-348.

Najda-Janoszka, M., & Daba-Buzoianu, C. (2018). Exploring management through qualitative research – introductory remarks. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation. 14*(4), 5-16.

Najda-Janoszka, M., & Sawczuk, M. (2018). Museum as a Research Object in the Strategic Management Field. In. A. Nalepka & A. Ujwary-Gil (Eds.). *Business and Non-profit Organizations Facing Increased Competitions and Growing Customers' Demands* (51-67). Nowy S¹cz: Wy¿sza Szkola Biznesu – National Louis University.

Nuòez-Ramos, R., & Lorenzo, G. (1997). On the aesthetic dimension of humor. *Humor- International Journal of Humor Research. 10*(1), 105-116.

Parry, R., & Sawyer, A. (2005). Space and the machine: adaptive museum, pervasive technique and the new gallery environment. In S. E. MacLeod. (Ed.). *Reshaping Museum Space* (pp. 39-52)*.* London: Routledge.

Pett, D. (2012). Use of Social Media within the British Museum and Museum Sector. In C. Bonacchi. (Ed.). *Archaeology and Digital Communication: Towards Strategies of Public Engagement* (pp. 83–102). London: Archetype Publications.

Poisson- de Haro, S., Normandin, F., & Coblence, E. (2013). The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts: Balancing International Reach and Strong Local Roots. *International Journal of Arts Management. 16*(1), 62-75.

Powell, J.P., & Andresen, L.W. (1985). Humour and teaching in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education. 10*(1),79-90.

Powell, R., & Kokkranikal, J. (2014). From history to reality- engaging with visitors in the Imperial War Museum (North). *Museum Management and Curatorship. 29*(1), 36-49.

Ramshaw, G. (2010). Living Heritage and the Sports Museum: Athletes, Legacy and the Olympic Hall of Fame and Museum, Canada Olympic Park. *Journal of Sport & Tourism. 15* (1), 45-70.

Romero, E.J., & Cruthirds, K. W. (2006). The Use of Humor in the Workplace. *Academy of Management Perspectives. 20*(2), 58-69.

Russo, A., Watkins, J., Kelly, L., & Chan, S. (2007). Social media and cultural interactive experiences in museums. *Nordisk Museologi. 1*, 19-29.

Russo, A., Watkins, J., & Groundwater- Smith, S. (2009). The impact of social media on informal learning in museums. *Educational Media International. 46*(2), 153-166.

Scheel, T., & Gockel, Ch. (2017). *Humor at Work in Teams, Leadership, Negotiations, Learning and Health*. Cham: Springer International Publishing AG.

Sheng, C-W., & Chen, M-C. (2012). A study of experience expectations of museum visitors. *Tourism Management. 33*, 53-60.

Shifman, L. (2007). Humor in the Age of Digital Reproduction: Continuity and Change in Internet-Based Comic Texts. *International Journal of Communication. 1*, 187-209.

Simpson, E. S. C., & Weiner, J. A. (1989). *The Oxford Encyclopaedic English Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Smith, L., & Campbell, G. (2015). 'The elephant in the room: heritage, affect and emotion'. In W. Logan, M. N. Craith & U. Kockel. (Eds.). *A Companion to Heritage Studies* (pp.443-460). Oxford, UK: Wiley Blackwell.

Stephen, A. (2001). The Contemporary Museum and Leisure: Recreation as a Museum Function. *Museum Management and Curatorship*. *19*(3), 297-308.

Taheri, B., & Jafari, A. (2012). Museums as Playful Venues in the Leisure Society. In R. Sharpley & P. Stone. (Eds.). *The Contemporary Tourist Experience: Concepts and Consequences* (pp. 201-215). New York: Routledge.

Tröndle, M., Wintzerith, S., Wäspe, R., & Tschacher, W. (2012). A museum for the twenty-first century: the influence of 'sociality' on art reception in museum space. *Museum Management and Curatorship. 27*(5), 461-486.

Weinberger, M.G., & Gulas, S.C. (1992). The Impact of Humor in Advertising: A Review. *Journal of Advertising. 21*(4), 35-59.

Weitz, E. (2016). Editorial: Humour and Social Media. *The European Journal of Humor Research. 4*(4), 1-4.

Winter, M. (2018). Visitor perspectives on commenting in museums. *Museum Management and Curatorship. 33*(5), 484-505.

Wood, R.E., Beckmann, N., & Rossiter, J.R. (2011). Management humor. Asset or liability? *Organizational Psychology Review. 1*(4), 316-338.

Valdecasas, A.G., Correia, V. & Correas, A. M. (2006). Museums at the crossroad: Contributing to dialogue, curiosity and wonder in natural history museums. *Museum Management and Curatorship. 21*(1), 32-43.

Zafiropoulos, K., Vrana, V., & Antoniadis K. (2015). Use of Twitter and Facebook by Top European Museums. *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing. 1*(1), 16–24.