ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand post-pandemic policies currently being applied within museums. Our research was conducted with a mixed-method approach using an online survey and a content analysis of assorted museums in which the COVID-19 policies, procedures, and reopening plans of 24 different museums were analyzed (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Large-scale museums located around the world were selected to generate a holistic sense of what pandemic policies can be found globally. After coding and analysis, some of the most common policies and procedures established by museums were found to be social distancing, mask mandates, hand sanitizer stations, increased cleaning, policy signage, Flexiglass shields in transaction locations, and controlled traffic patterns.

REVIEW OF LIT

POST-PANDEMIC DESIGN - Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, public gatherings have decreased and, at times, have been prohibited.
• Museums rely on the gathering of people and have struggled to adapt.
• Social distancing is effective because it “avoids or decreases contact between individuals who may carry or be susceptible to pathogens that are commutable and contagious” (Kunjir & Patil, 2020).
• Technology such as Mobile Augmented Reality (MAR) allows visitors to interact with an exhibit while spaced apart; “using MAR, visitors can engage with objects on a deeper level while spaced apart; “using MAR, visitors can engage with objects on a deeper level points of view” (Kunjir & Patil, 2020, p. 4).

METHODOLOGY

This content analysis collected data about museum COVID-19 reopening plans using an excel document.

24 various museums were analyzed from around the world, including Historical (5), Children’s (1), Art (13), Science (2), Heritage (2), and Botanical (1) museums.

POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Policies/procedures were recorded under six themes: spatial, sanitary, capacities, staff health assessments, and staff health assessments.

RESULTS - The leading attendance/admittance policies include pre-purchased tickets for timed slots, limited capacities, and staff health assessments.

MEANINGS - Results of this study suggest that some of the most important museum COVID-19 policies and procedures are social distancing, policy signage, Flexiglass shields, touchless features, integrated technology, and controlled wayfinding.

APPLICATIONS - These results indicate that elements such as flexible furniture, cleanable materials, touchless features, integrated technology, and controlled wayfinding can support a pandemic-safe museum design.

WEAKNESSES - Museum policies and procedures were limited to what they stated on their public website; furthermore, a relatively small sample of museums were analyzed.

RECOMMENDATIONS - In the future, we recommend gathering information from more museums and contacting museum directors for more policy and procedure information.