CLIENT SATISFACTION WITH RESEARCH PROVISION SERVICES AT THE INTER-MUNICIPAL HISTORICAL ARCHIVES VALJEVO

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Abstract

In modern times and the process of globalization, the greatest challenge to successful business of each organization is the satisfaction and meeting the expectations of clients. This also applies to cultural institutions. One of the main goals of the Intergovernmental Historical Archives Valjevo is the satisfaction of users and researchers of archival material. The huge potential of this institution of culture is reflected in the quality of professional work, the disposal of cultural goods of great importance, the application of contemporary theories in the fields of management, marketing, human resources, business decision-making and all this is a precondition for reaching positive results on the cultural map of Serbia. A survey conducted in the Inter-Municipal Historical Archives of Valjevo provided the guidelines that the cultural institutions in Serbia should follow.

Key words: cultural institutions, archive material, professional archival work, cultural goods of exceptional significance

Contact: fdjokovic@singidunum.ac.rs. The author declares that he has no relevant or material financial interests that relate to the research described in this paper. Also, the author declares that the submitted paper is his original work and that, upon publication, nothing contained in it will not constitute an infringement of any copyright. Paper received 18.03.2018. Approved 10.05.2018. This paper is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derives 3.0. License. This paper is published with Open Access at www.socioeconomica.info. The author would like to thank the reviewers of this journal for their valuable comments and suggestions on the earlier version of this paper. The quality of this paper has greatly improved from those comments.
1. Introductory considerations

Inter-municipal Historical Archives Valjevo (hereinafter IHAV) represents a cultural institution with a long tradition and activity in the territory of the Kolubara District. IHAV authority extends to six municipalities: Valjevo, Osečina, Mionica, Lajkovac, Ub, Ljig. The archives has over 400 catalogued fonds and collections of different cultural and historical value and significance in its possession. Difficulties in functioning due to the lack of financial resources represent a common feature of all cultural institutions in the Republic of Serbia, the IHAV being no exception. However, what is typical of people in this region can also be attributed to managers and those employed in the field of culture, and that is enthusiasm and will to enhance ways of doing business and the very functioning of home institutions.

During seventy year of its existence, the IHAV has improved its business in all areas. Today, it consists of 6 facilities of about 1,000 m². Great work has been done in terms of improvement and application of modern technologies in archival activities. Technological development per se has contributed to a larger number of scientific resources, better organization of the archival material and a more comprehensive database. This has created better conditions for service provision and cooperation with both authorities of the Republic of Serbia and individual users and researchers of the archival material.

The archival material encompasses written, drawn, printed, photographed, filmed or phonographed material as well as the original or reproduced documentary material recorded in any other way and which is of special significance for history, culture and other social needs. This material stemmed from the work of state authorities and organizations, socio-political organizations and communities and their bodies, organizations of associated labor and other organizations, legal entities and individuals regardless of where and when it originated and whether it is within a protection organization or not [Popović 1987, p. 296].

The work of the IHAV has been improved in all areas regardless of the unfavorable circumstances that have accompanied this cultural institution through history. One of the basic aspects of business is cooperation with users and researchers of archival material. One of the primary goals of the IHAV is that the researchers and users of archival material are highly satisfied with the service provided.

Since its foundation, the emphasis has always been put on client relations and provision of professional assistance of high quality. It is important to accentuate that the IHAV, a non-profit organization mostly financed by the state, has accepted modern concepts of business and common rules shared by all successful organizations from various fields of work, that is that a client is always attended to in the right way and satisfied with the service provided.
This paper provides the analysis of the research related to satisfaction of users and researchers with the services provided by the IHAV when using the archival material. Furthermore, the results of the research conducted among a large number of archival users and researchers will be shown as well. Primarily, the aim of this paper is to materialize where the institution currently is in terms of service quality. The information will offer an insight into what business parameters are good and should be kept and improved, but also what its weaknesses are and where there is a need for additional activities aimed at bringing this institution’s business to an even higher level.

2. Marketing concepts in culture

A company defines its goals through the prism of gain because this is considered to be a standard accepted by owners, managers, entrepreneurs, and eventually employees [Zavišić 2011, p. 12].

The goals in the field of marketing are also used in the field of culture regardless of different goal applications. When it comes to economic organizations the goals are mostly financial, whereas they are educational and cultural within cultural institutions. The final goal is to attract as many people as possible and offer them rich content.

Archives in Serbia represent pillars of cultural heritage and a priceless source of information from different eras of national history. However, the business philosophy of the Archives was wrong due to the fact it had been functioning as a closed system and had a minimum level of communication with the environment it operated in. Despite the progress made in the past few years, it will take a lot of time and marketing activities to bring the activity of the Archives as a cultural institution closer to the public.

First of all, any organization whose goal is to be successful must have a well-developed marketing strategy. The IHAV is a positive example of a cultural institution that has accepted the rules of modern business and functioning in the market and which has positioned itself on the cultural map of Serbia through certain business moves. The IHAV has always had high-quality content and archival material of exceptional value, but there has always been a problem related to engaging people and attracting specific target groups.

Also, the problem of human resources is constant because employees are trained to perform specific tasks in the field of archival science. Thus, a certain level of knowledge in the fields of management, marketing and human resources is required.
All these obstacles did not prevent the IHAV from significantly improving its business, relevance and public influence through certain promotional activities. One of these activities is related to a number of exhibits that have attracted a large number of people with their content. Some of them are: Old book and periodicals until 1900 at the library of the Historical Archive of Valjevo, Two Centuries of the Valjevo Court, The Suffering and Humanism of Valjevo Hospital 1914-1915, The Archpriest's Letters on the occasion of the 240th anniversary of Prota Mateje Nenadovic’s birth, Treasure of the Centuries and the Light of the New Age within the Pustinja Monastery. Numerous people attended these exhibitions - state representatives and high officials, ambassadors from different countries, various organizations, primary and secondary schools and other educational institutions and individual visits.

One of the elements that distinguishes the IHAV from other cultural institutions and is used in a positive way is the magazine Gazette, which has been published since 1966. So far, 50 issues of this magazine have been published with a large number of articles related to local and national history. Gazette is a newspaper in which the works of a number of prominent figures from the fields of archival science, history, law, economics, sociology, philosophy, political science and many others have been published. This contributes to the magazine’s cultural and intellectual significance and value. The IHAV has issued, independently or in co-publication, over 30 books and publications that are predominantly of a historical character, thereby establishing cooperation with archival users and researchers.

Besides activities that involve cultural promotion, there has been progress in the field of professional work i.e. archival activity. It is much easier to perform tasks, thanks to the purchase of technical equipment as a modern means of work. There has been an increase in the number of scientific resources used for providing services to researchers and users of archival material as well as for better fonds management. A great deal of work has been done in terms of digitization of records of deaths, marriages and births used by our researchers in order to determine family background and define the family tree.

The very improvement of professional work leads to a better organisation of archival material and thus to better customer service, which contributes to positive image that this institution has in the territory of Kolubara District and throughout Serbia. There is no better advertising and marketing for an institution than high-quality professional work and the ability to successfully resolve clients’ requests regardless of whether they are legal or natural persons.

The IHAV works for the benefit of the community and the education of the population. Socially responsible business practice implies that an enterprise adopts and applies discretionary business practices and investments that support social goals in order to promote communal welfare and environmental protection. Welfare can refer to health and safety, but also to psychological and emotional needs of people [Zivkovic 2017, p. 21].
Unfortunately, the IHAV does not have the financial funds that are necessary for investing in projects of social importance, but this cultural institution is constantly working on further development of the community through education about national and world history. In doing so, it raises awareness about the brightest moments from national history, important historical events and historical figures that marked different eras. A lot of effort is invested in maintaining a positive idea through strengthening national identity, patriotism, national consciousness, which leads to meeting different needs, especially the cultural ones. What is important to emphasize is that IHAV does not charge its services related to lectures on the work and history of the institution as well as the exhibitions organized by it. In addition, a range of services provided by the institution are free of charge.

When it comes to IHAV’s digital marketing activities, it can be noted that progress has been made in that field as well. It is a site that specializes in archival activities and provides a large number of different information. The site displays information related to the core activity of the institution, then work programs, work reports, public procurement rules, statute. In this way, site visitors can learn about the rules of functioning of the institution, results and plans for the future, as well as the results of previous operations.

The content is the reason the website is visited, be it products, services, informative or educational texts. The way the content is written is of vital importance for the success of the site and accomplishing its goals. The site ranking in search engines, and therefore the number of visits depend on whether the content is of a good quality or not. Good content should engage buyers, encourage them to take action and make them interested in visiting the site again [Jevremović, Radovanović i Šarac 2015, p 102].

The IHAV site is rich in information of different types. It is a digitalized material in the form of a bibliography of texts published in the archive newspaper and magazine Gazette, where the bibliography is presented by numbers and authors. The site itself provides information on various fonds and collections. The institution’s website provides information on the rules concerning the usage of archival material with precisely determined instructions, and requirements for the use of archival material. Another very important aspect of IHAV’s functioning includes publishing activity. A significant part of the site is dedicated to the publishing activity of the institution where various IHAV editions are displayed. Prior to visiting the institution itself, a large number of people are introduced to its work through the website. Therefore, it is essential that the site is information-rich. When it comes to promotion via social networks, that field of digital marketing is still not applied at the IHAV. It is a rather specific topic that needs to be analyzed in detail so that this sort of promotion is in accordance with certain standards and norms given a cultural institution is being discussed.

Being a cultural institution, the IHAV pays close attention to international marketing. The activity of the institution is such that cooperation with a vast number of foreign citizens is
Damnjanović, V. & Mirković, N.  

Client Satisfaction with Research Provision Services At the Inter-Municipal Historical Archives Valjevo

ensured. The element that proves the fact is overcoming the language barrier which represents one of the main challenges in the field of international marketing.

The importance of knowing a foreign language for international marketing is multifaceted. It is a prerequisite for successful collection, assessment and understanding the information in foreign markets and it contributes to adequate adaptation in the foreign settings. Proper understanding of certain situations and the choice of an adequate solution are possible only with a good knowledge of culture and language at the highest level [Sudžuk 2008, p 41].

Most foreign citizens come to the IHAV in order to see exhibitions and meet a part of our history through them. The IHAV has improved international marketing through series of business moves and managed to overcome the challenge of language barriers. Exhibition material is presented in both Serbian and English. The content and visual structure of the panel is also in both languages. Equally important, the same rule is applied to exhibition catalogues. A new element of the exhibiting activity is a video presentation that entails a documentary film as a means of innovation. Staff members who deliver the presentation know the English language and are able to answer any question concerning not only the exhibition per se, but also the the activity of the Archives.

Every cultural institution, the IHAV being no exception, must facilitate communication with the public. Public relations (PR) represent a communicative activity that develops good relations between a company and its public through generating favorable publicity, developing positive corporate image and silencing scurrilous rumors, stories or events [Babić – Hodović, Domazet i Kurtović 2012, p 290].

The IHAV has always tried to maintain its relations at a substantial level. The media are informed about all projects that are realized within this cultural institution. In the first place, the public is informed about all important events through daily press, television, websites, invitations, catalogues, posters. All of this implies that the aforementioned aspect of marketing is applied at the IHAV.

3. Business decision-making at the IHAV

Through its seventy-year-long history, the cultural institution of IHAV has encountered a myriad of problems and challenges that required smart decision making in order to overcome them. Culture has always been marginalized and lacked facilities, financial funds, technical means of operations, personnel etc.

One can proudly state that through its history the IHAV has had a lot of knowledgeable, farsighted people capable of making decisions that contributed to the institution’s progress in all areas. All elements necessary for successful business have been improved, the most important of which are listed below: archive material storages, high-quality infrastructure for professional
archival activity, computer and other technical equipment, improvement of organizational structure, hiring trained personnel. It can be concluded that the institution has reached a significant operating level. It is important to pinpoint the fact that the people managing the IHAV in different periods were aware of the importance of business decision-making.

The division of decision-making process into stages was proposed in 1960 by a famous Nobel Prize winner Herbert A. Simon. His decision-making model encompasses three stages or rational decision-making, while the phase of implementation was subsequently added as the fourth stage:

1. intelligence
2. design is the phase in which the problem model is created
3. choice
4. implementation [Miškovic 2013, p 10]

Analyzing the categorization of decision-making processes, we can provide an example of the IHAV where the above-mentioned business-decision making stages with their accompanying element are directly applied.

For many years the IHAV has had a permanent problem with the lack of adequate space for both storing archival material and efficient functioning of the institution. What characterizes the archival profession is a constant inflow of archival material. For this reason the decision that would permanently solve this grave problem had to be reached. The first person to undertake steps towards solving this serious problem was a history professor and managing director, Milorad Mitrasinović. Namely, he initiated the phase of gathering the necessary information and faced the problem that seemed insoluble given the fact that it had lasted for three decades. Subsequently, he produced the solution by finding facilities that met all the standards of archival profession. The implementation stage was conducted with the help of local government, competent ministry and professional help of the Archives of Serbia.

The building position was supposed to be such that the warehouses, due to the sunlight, faced north or northwest in case they had windows, i.e. if they were not underground. The material the house was built of had to be moisture-resistant, fire-resistant and a poor heat conductor. It was also advisable to situate libraries and archives away from factories, railway stations etc. due to air pollutions in those areas. It was preferable they were surrounded by the grass patches and low vegetation of at least 20m wide [Radosavljević 1981, p 58].

Thanks to a high-quality business decision-making, the facilities of the former Valjevo Hospital and Hygienic Institute with a large courtyard and a park of 0.52 hectares were permanently put at the IHAV’s disposal. In this way, the professional standards in protection and preservation of library and archival material as cultural property are fulfilled.
Successful operations of a business institution are largely determined by business parameters that refer to the level of commitment and the number of visits occurring during a period of time. Archives have different operating parameters given their main activity is closely connected to managing archival material and other professional archival assignments. They also perform numerous administrative tasks and provide a large variety of services. However, this does not excuse them from not getting engaged in the activities concerning tourism visitation and tourism activity in general.

Tourist and cultural potential are recognized as a chance to overcome problems from the past and are perceived as a means of reducing the seasonal character of tourism and are seen as a form of softening economic crisis. However, just like in most industries, Serbia is falling behind in tourism (cultural tourism in particular). The consequences of the lack of decision-making or wrong decision-making in tourism policy lead to clouding what is preferable and what kind of tourist country Serbia should be [Krasojević, Tomka i Holodkov 2014, p 48].

Business decision-making has worked towards positive progress in the number of visitors who come to IHAV. In the autumn of 2015, a permanent exhibition Suffering and Humanism of Valjevo Hospital 1914-1915 was launched based on the primary historical sources i.e. archival material (documents, photographs, press etc.)

After the realization of the project, the initiative to include exhibitions and visitations to the IHAV in the offer of the Tourist Organization of Valjevo was launched. Another important decision that significantly influenced increase in the number of visitations was made by the former IHAV management. Namely, all primary schools in the territory of the Republic of Serbia were informed via e-mail about the very exhibition and its importance for the students’ education. It was decided that the entrance should be free and parking space provided.

The IHAV started to regularly take part in the event called “Night at the Museum” where a large number of visitors from around Serbia and abroad were welcomed. All of this represents a set of measures, i.e. business decisions that led to the increase in the number of visitors at the IHAV.

One of crucial factors in decision-making is the manager’s ability to reach key decisions. It is this ability that affects performance of a company. The ability to make major decisions depends on several factors, the most important of which are: manager’s knowledge and experience, their ability to grasp a problem and the ability to analyze and synthesize. Besides experience, a manager must have the support of the employees in decision-making [Tanjga, Tanjga 2014, p 35].

Besides the world market, the process of globalization of the world economy has influenced all other spheres of life including the operations of cultural institutions.
Due to significant changes in the environment of a company, changes in their functioning must be introduced as well, especially those concerning goals and strategies for their realization. In a large number of cases the adaptation to new conditions requires organizational changes so that new strategies for achieving those goals could be implemented [Mrđa 2008, p 28].

The IHAV has had managers that clearly defined business strategies and based them on resolutely determined goals that were to be achieved. All this contributed to positive results and influential position the IHAV now occupies in Kolubara District and Serbia.

### 4. Case study - Customer satisfaction when researching and using archival material at the IHAV

The primary goal of this research is to evaluate the service quality provided to users and researchers of archival material in order to improve services and business operations.

The research was conducted through surveys completed by 30 users and researchers of archival material in order to obtain feedback and attitudes towards service quality and functioning of the IHAV.

A survey is the most commonly used instrument for primary data collection using personal (structured) interview, mail or telephone interviewing. It is a set of questions put to respondents, with the gaps in which the answers are filled either by an interviewer or a respondent [Vićentić, Đurica i Hanić 2010, p 109].

Interviewed respondents, who use the services of the IHAV, provided answers necessary for the improvement of the institution and its business, which leads to better ranking on the cultural market. Each prosperous organization tends to strengthen its relation with customers. It is the only way to endure on the market regardless of the business activity and organization profile, be it a profit-making or a non-profit organization. Researchers and users of the archival material represent the IHAV and therefore it is important to hear their opinions on how the current services can be brought to an even higher level, what should be changed or kept concerning service quality.

#### 4.1 Key parameters necessary for successful functioning and developing of the IHAV

Questions used for interviewing researchers and users of the archival material have been divided into four categories.

1. Position of IHAV in the territory of Kolubara District and all of Serbia
2. Quality and type of services provided to users and researchers of archival material
3. Activities concerning cultural promotion

4.2 Suggestions for improving work of the institution

The research implies that 90% of respondents share the attitude that IHAV is a cultural institution with a long tradition and activity in the territory of Kolubara District. 5% partially agree, while the remaining 5% have no opinion, i.e. do not know. 60% completely agree that the IHAV is one of the leading institutions in Valjevo and Podrinje-Kolubara region.

60% of respondents fully agree with the statement that the IHAV is one of the leading institutions in the city of Valjevo and Podrinje-Kolubara region. 34% partially agree on the matter, while 3% have no opinion or strongly disagree with the statement. Positive image of the institution is the result of continuing high-quality work concerning both archival and economic parameters: marketing, business decision-making, service quality and personnel. One of core rules of the institution is that the client comes first and that constant effort goes into customer satisfaction.

It is important to underscore that the great majority of researchers are individuals who earned higher education degrees and built distinguished careers. There is a great many of journalists, economists, historians, sociologists, political scientists, lawyers, physicians and other intellectuals IHAV has the cooperation with. The cooperation resulted in a vast number of published books, scientific articles, PhD theses, graduation papers, seminar papers etc. Furthermore, there is a wide range of TV shows, documentary films where authors were provided with all the help from the archival point of view.

The fundamental question in this part of the research is whether the IHAV should be an institution of national interest. All respondents agree with the aforementioned statement. Also, it is stated that this cultural institution is of exceptional importance when it comes to tackling critical issues in the area of property-legal relations: confiscation, nationalization, expropriation, agrarian reform especially when the importance of restitution and further European integration are taken into consideration. In addition, there are more assets that determine the IHAV in relation to competition. There were respondents who implied that it was necessary to reorganize the institution, adopt ambitious plans and continue developing the institution.

With the increasing development of the Archives and archival services, i.e. expansion of archival activities and in order to respond to a number of relevant issues directly and indirectly related to archival material, archivists had to base their theoretical and practical knowledge on scientific research work [Popovic 1997, p. 115].

A set of questions related to the service quality and type has led to numerous conclusions: 75% of respondents fully share the opinion that the prime goal to be achieved is ensuring the cooperation with users and researchers of archival material; 25% of respondents
partially agree; 75% per cent agree that there are digitalized registers that researchers can use for their scientific work, whereas 10% partially agree and 15% have no opinion or are not informed on the matter.

The process of digitalization of records of births, deaths and marriages for the period of the 19th century led to an increase in the number of researchers and thus more efficient work of the IHAW. Researchers inspected the registers primarily when tracing a family tree.

A positive shift in digitization has enabled researchers to browse through registers from home computers and carry out research for as long as they need to.

The institution provided additional protection of registers as archival material of exceptional importance through digitalization and thus enhanced the domain of technical protection of archival material. This testifies to advantages of modern technology application in all aspects of doing business.

The importance of introducing modern technologies to the Archives is incontestable. It has also contributed to the availability of archival material. The users of archival material can reach the necessary data quickly and easily (even without coming to the Archives) and the Archives personnel can provide them with the information instantaneously, i.e. can quickly reach the necessary information [Cvetković 2010, p 2].

Besides its quality, it is essential that the service should be provided within a reasonable time. A positive trend that testifies to the success of the institution is reflected through the attitude that services provided at the IHAV are at a high level in terms of time it takes to receive and respond to clients’ requests. The same attitude is shared by 70% of respondents, while 30% partially agree.

One of basic postulates of each organization is the relation with clients concerning their requests, time necessary to respond to those requests and service quality. Cultural institutions act in accordance with the same rule and therefore it is vital that this aspect of business is perpetually improved.

One of the paramount questions was related to the activity and the ways of functioning of the information centre, one of the vital parts of the IHAV, where we reached the following conclusions: 45% of respondents expressed the opinion that the information centre fully introduces its users and researchers to the archival material at its disposal; 25% of respondents partially agreed with the aforementioned statement, while 20% had no opinion on the matter and 10% partially disagreed.
The Information Centre of the IHAV provides its users and researchers with the information on archival material, library fonds, the use of archival material within the Archive. The importance of the Information Centre is reflected in the fact that there one can gather the information on the personnel structure, technical capacity and other mandatory elements of work.

The IHAV provides services in resolving property issues, determining length of service, restitution activities (confiscation, nationalization, agrarian reforms, expropriation, agricultural land). This is by far one of the most important aspects of the archival activity. Every year a considerable number of requests are responded to and 95% of respondents completely agree and are familiar with the fact that the IHAV provides these services, which is of profound importance on the grounds it is a part of business where the intensity of cooperation with a client is the greatest. Only 5% of the respondents have no opinion or are not familiar with the matter. Throughout the cooperation, it is vital to make a positive impression and support both clients and state bodies of the Republic of Serbia.

Fruitful cooperation is ensured with the following institutions: agencies for restitution in Belgrade, Kragujevac; courts, local governments, economic organizations and companies, pension and disability insurance funds, cadastres etc.

The IHAV has put a particular emphasis on cultural promotion, which is displayed through different forms and rich content. Also, abundance of archival material is displayed
through exhibitions. The result of this work reflects in the fact that 45% of the respondents agreed with the fact that exhibitions and audience engagement through various forms of cultural-promotional activity led to familiarizing people with history of Valjevo and Kolubara District. 40% of respondents partially agreed with the statement, whereas 10% had no opinion and 5% disagreed with the information.

Opinions vary when it comes to the initiative that the building of the archives depot in which Valjevo Hospital was situated during WWI should be declared the Memorial Centre. 25% of those who took part in the survey agreed to the initiative, while 25% partially agreed. 15% had no opinion and 5% partially disagreed. What is astonishing is that 30% of the respondents disagree with the initiative. Some respondents support the initiative providing the issue of storing archival material is resolved. In doing so, basic archival activity would be ensured and afterwards the entire project launched.

On the premises of the IHAV numerous lectures have been organized for pupils, students, various organizations and individuals interested in the work and activity of this cultural institution. The main goal of the lectures is to introduce the public to the work and tradition of the IHAV. In this way, the number of visitors, researchers and other interested parties increased.

Another common matter in the operations of each institution is the one of the personnel structure. Staff members with different educational profiles work at the IHAV: an economist, historian, ethnologist, literature professor etc. However, they all have one thing in common, i.e. they have a professional and legal obligation to pass a professional archivist exam. By passing the exam, one earns the title of an archivist in case they have a higher education diploma or archival assistant if they have a secondary education diploma.

What characterizes the personnel structure of the IHAV is that it takes a lot of time for a person to become fully qualified for professional archival work. 80% of the respondents completely agreed with the fact that the quality of HR structure should be improved, 10% partially agreed, whereas 10% have no opinion. The gravest problem in reference to HR structure is that the average age of employees is 60.

Another aspect that determines modern businesses is the fact that certain changes are made with the aim to improve institution operations: 90% of interviewees agree that certain changes in the operating of the IHAV have led to significant improvement; 5% per cent partially agree, whereas 5% have no opinion.

The final part of the research process referred to the question concerning suggestions for further improvement. Most of the suggestions refer to the matter of personnel and giving young adequately educated people an employment opportunity.
The field of information technology is occupying more important role in the operations of modern enterprises and organizations. In accordance with this trend we got a proposal to hire an IT manager who would create a database for collections, enter the electronic lists, update the IHAV site etc.

When it comes to the application of the latest technologies in archival activity one of the suggestions was to digitalize all archival material and make it available to all interested parties via the Internet. Furthermore, digitalization would contribute to further protection of archival material. In the future cultural activities at the IHAV should include more exhibitions and presentations. This is what respondents consider to be one of the priorities and actions to be taken in the future. Given the IHAV is a cultural institution under the jurisdiction of the state, it is of the utmost importance that the cooperation with other state representatives is at a high level. In the first place it is essential that cooperation with other Archives is achieved with the aim to enhance archival activity and share experiences. Cooperation with the Ministry of Culture is something that needs to be cultivated due to the fact that all projects are approved by the Ministry. Archives as cultural institutions obtain certain financial funds from the ministries in order to realize multiple projects and improve their functioning, acquire technological assets for exhibitions and the process of digitalization.

It needs to be highlighted that for the successful operating of the IHAV certain infrastructure is required. Our respondents were aware of the fact and suggested that the building of archival depot should be constructed in accordance with the standards required for the protection of the cultural heritage.

5. Conclusion

We can define the IHAV as a cultural institution of exceptional significance whose main activity is to do the activities of reception, organization and processing and to adequately store archival material of the six municipalities of Kolubara District. However, the functioning of this organization is far more complex. Apart from the main activity there are series of other operational aspects needed for successful functioning of the institution that are directly related to the main activity. These include: the process of publication of archival material as cultural goods, permanent work with users and researchers of archival material, promotion of valuable cultural goods of exceptional significance through series of exhibitions, monitoring, marking important jubilees and undertaking other activities related to culture.

Analyzing the state of culture and the work of cultural institutions we can undoubtedly conclude that the IHAV is an example of a successful organization. Apart from the hard work
and devotion, one of the main secrets of success is the implementation of modern ways of doing business and the usage of modern economic principles and business rules. Despite the fact that the IHAV itself is a state institution funded by the government and that it represents a non-profit organization, certain steps that led to better functioning of the institution were taken. Knowledge from the fields of management, marketing, human resources and business decision-making is applied to the organization’s work and it led to better business parameters. High-quality marketing activities immediately undermined the popular belief that the IHAV was a closed system. A vast number of promotional activities made a lot of people interested in the organization’s work and that influenced the introduction of cultural goods of the IHAV to the public. There was an improvement in the field of technical innovations needed for professional archival work. This resulted in improvement of services provided to users and researchers of archival material, which respondents acknowledged during the research process. Other aspects of business were improved as well, which influenced acquiring a high reputation.

Business decision-making led to solving a number of problems that were threatening the main activity of this organization. However, making good strategic decisions instigated the improvement of working conditions and cultural activity. First and foremost, these included resolving the issue of storing archival material, technical and computer equipment acquisition, digitalization of archival material and improving personnel structure. Decisions made in the past resulted in the fact that today the IHAV represents a serious organization that works on the highest level in terms of infrastructure, technology, organization and staff. It is necessary to reinforce positive trends and work on further improvement of all parameters required for successful functioning.

The research into satisfaction of users and researchers of archival material led to certain conclusions. The organization’s high level of integrity can be highlighted, both in the Podrinje-Kolubara region and in the rest of the country. Also, it is very important to point out the fact that a lot of people think that the IHAV deserves to be an organization of national interest. Cooperation with users and researchers of archival material represents one of the main goals of the institution. Special attention was devoted to this domain in the survey. The respondents rated the IHAV’s work with the highest marks highlighting the professionalism of the employees and the time needed for users’ requests to be dealt with. Different aspects of the archival profession were analyzed – digitalized register books, the work of the information centre, library, dealing with users’ requests regarding property-legal relations, determining years of service, restitution methods and other examples of confiscation in all six municipalities of the Kolubara District.

The research into this matter represented a huge challenge for the IHAV because it assessed the work of this cultural institution. Never has anyone conducted a survey regarding the organization’s work in seventy years of its existence. We are certain that these results will have a major impact on overall improvement of the entire organization functioning starting with its management all the way to the employees. Contributions of our research are towards presenting the IHAV as an organization that, besides professional archival work, applies certain economic principles in its functioning and towards the fact that this combination has proved to be a success.
Client Satisfaction with Research Provision Services At the Inter-Municipal Historical Archives Valjevo

in achieving goals, which is confirmed by users and researchers of archival material as cultural goods.

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