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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Innovations of Museums for Children

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**Abstract:** The importance of perceiving and knowing children visiting museums in Iran, inform researchers about the shortcoming of fundamentals in this regard, and despite the many potentials of this area, Children's visit to Museums in Iran is facing serious obstacles considering such shortages. In this regard, it seems very important to understand the importance of considering children as museum visitors. According to recent literature and perspectives advanced by experts related to this topic, all with the intent to broaden the views of museum professionals, this presentation wants to clarify the main results of these investigations which include:

- Innovations of museums for children during their visit to learn and discover cultures
- Children's criteria for visiting museums, and service quality factors (PhD thesis of researcher: Quality approach in the development of children's visit model),
- Social and cultural influences in shaping society,

The results offer a framework as a point of departure for understanding children in museums. To sum up, it can be said that museums have important entities for children's attractions, which with proper planning, attention and investment, can turn into young audiences' spotlight.

**Keywords:** Children; Museum; Attraction; Innovation.

## Introduction

The main objective of this research is to evaluate the provided services for children at the Golestan palace museum as a world heritage site in Tehran and explore their desires and satisfaction through museum experiences.

After families, the most frequent museum visitor groups are school children. Interestingly, very little research has focused on the sociocultural context of school group visits or the children's satisfaction while taking a tour of heritage museums.

Childhood is a term that exists in everyday language, is understood by the common person, and is ubiquitous. It is a state of being frequently mentioned by authors, recounted by famous individuals, and perceived as a natural part of life (Shaffer, 2020). And yet with all of its importance, the study of children in many scholarly texts, particularly those penned before the 1990s, offers few discussions or insight into childhood as a distinct concept. A few exceptions should be recognized as noteworthy, particularly in the arena of what is termed the new sociology of childhood.

According to Allison James and Alan Prout (1997), "In 1990, the sociology of childhood was only just beginning to emerge as a distinct subdiscipline" (p. ix), although there is some evidence to suggest that the early beginnings reach back to the 1970s and 1980s (Alinorozi & Moen, 2016). This seeming lack of discourse and study in the broader realm of child studies is perplexing given the unquestionable link between the term children and childhood in the minds of most people.

As awareness of early learning increases, children are gaining new status as a recognized audience within museums; they are visiting galleries and participating in programs in unprecedented numbers. The Journal of Museum Education addressed this trend in its spring 2012 issue, *Early Learning: A National Conversation* (Shaffer, ed.), opening conversations and inviting thought among museum professionals across America as well as internationally. Why are young children visiting traditional museums now more than in the past? What factors are influencing museum professionals as practitioners and changing their views of young children as valued

learners? What is society's view of childhood and expectations for children as learners? What is the value of a museum experience for a young child? Grappling with these questions and others in light of new research as well as patterns of visitation among early learners is vital for museum professionals. To analyze current trends in museums, it is critical to remember that museums are a reflection of society and that change within the museum mirrors, in many ways, change within society (Shaffer, 2020).

Museum experiences are normally related to the services provided in the museums. Customer loyalty, expressed as the intention to return to the museum and the intention to recommend the museum to others may result in satisfaction in general. Post-visit behavior is the visitors' (children in this thesis) impressions and their tendency after they visit the attraction. Their impressions may range from satisfied to dissatisfied, and they tend to revisit the site, and tendency to recommend visiting the site to their friends and relatives (Hosseini, 2019).

Museums center emphasis on their visitors by building spaces, activities, and exhibits that

promote revisiting. Also, there is speculation that the experiences children have in museums may shape their thought, beliefs, ambitions, artistic appreciation, comprehension of science, and identities throughout their lives. A new area of early childhood research that examines the impact of museum-based learning on the development of young children would have the dual benefits of understanding children's development and promoting their learning in new settings by adding museums to the traditional research settings of home and school. Such studies will also improve the awareness of the singular and collective contributions these three settings make to the holistic development of young children (Munley, 2012).

Because the experiences of adults in museums are qualitatively different from those of children, it is often difficult for adults to understand museum visits from the perspective of a child. A significant theory from developmental psychology, with results for museum programs for children, is that children carry their perspectives and world conceptions with them. These conceptions

determine how they receive what is presented to them and what they will learn from it.

Another important idea from the development psychology is that interaction is the most powerful mode of learning. Interaction is the opposite of passivity.

Elementary school children have trouble dealing with the past because their understanding of periods is incomplete. Since many museum programs and collections require an understanding of the context of historical periods, and since most children have not got this understanding worked out yet, they make the most amazing connections between things that have no relationship. As they do in certain facets of their life, children feel a sense of powerlessness in museums. Unlike other age groups, they are rarely in museums by their own choice. For the most part, adults tell children what to do; adults have control, while children wish that they did (Hosseini, 2019).

Most museums today recognize the need to segment their markets. Museums should be able to predict children's desires by splitting the population into constituent groups that share similar features in common. It enables

museums to focus resources and effort on the market segments that are most appropriate for meeting the museum's aims and objectives (Rentschler & Hede, 2007).

Considering the impact of mentioned factors, the result of this paper could help museum marketers to better understand the children's needs in palace museums, and also, it is becoming more essential for museum managers to distinguish the factors that will increase and enhance the number of visitors, such as children. It could be helpful for schools to educate teachers and ask them about interacting with children before visiting a museum to prepare a proper view for children.

### **Literature Review**

In this investigation, the functions of museums and the different museum attribute that might impact children's satisfaction are discussed. The books, which the researcher has found most important and come closest to the subject are: A study by Charnow (2007) about *The Present and Future of Children's Museums: Hotspots of Creativity and Self-Directed Learning*, moreover, an investigation by Hackett et al.,(2020) about *Early Years toolkit Weaving theory and practice: young*

children and museums Early Years toolkit which is very useful for this topic. International Thinking on Children in Museums (2020) is also another main reference to this issue. The book imparts vital knowledge about the nature of childhood and children's learning that will improve the understanding of the very youngest museum-goers. Eid (2019) is about innovation models in museums. Hosseini (2019) has studied research on the Service quality approach in the development of the children's visit model. Case study Golestan Palace Museum, Tehran, Iran which is the main part of this paper contains mentioned investigation.

### Methodology

Based on the purpose of this study and due to the proper facts, a mixed method has been chosen, based on the quantitative method and qualitative method and service quality theory of a bigger investigation which was a PhD thesis of a researcher. The necessary information regarding the children's activities discussed in this work is collected through field visits and Ph.D. thesis questionnaires in the Golestan palace museum. In this paper

different kinds of information are gathered and evaluated to conclude and discussion.

For this purpose, these 3 factors namely innovations of museums for children, children's criteria, and social-cultural impacts have been studied. This article shows:

Factors	Description
Innovations of museums for children	Could be effective in children's visit
Children's criteria for visiting museums	The satisfaction of children over their visit is not dependent on service quality factors
Social and cultural influences in shaping society	Providing an appropriate base for children is effective to inform future generations.

### Results and Conclusion

Museum Innovation encourages museums to critically reflect upon current practices and adopt new approaches to their civic responsibilities.

Museum Innovation explores the role of contemporary museums in society. It is essential reading for academics, students, and practitioners working in the museum and heritage studies field. The book's interdisciplinary nature makes it also an

interesting read to those working in business studies, digital humanities, visual culture, arts administration, and political science fields.

In recent years, innovation has become a topic of significant interest among museums and has dominated the discussion at many museum conferences, workshops, and seminars. This is probably because innovation if applied correctly, can help museums achieve their organizational mission more effectively and efficiently. In business, innovation is an important part of the process of creating value propositions in any organization.

Today, museums evaluate their practices more rigorously than ever before and seek innovation in fulfilling civic responsibility. Whether the innovation is new technology or improved technology, business model or service, museums are becoming more and more social, cultural, ecological, and political. From devastating environmental crises to human rights violations, violence, and racial and economic inequality, museums as institutions have a moral responsibility to take action to make the world a better place. The museum has also led many museum meetings, seminars, and seminars. This may be because

innovation if applied properly, can help museums perform their organizational responsibilities more effectively.

Museum innovation can help museums of different sizes, collections, management styles, and geographic locations to innovate and/or evaluate. This process uses the concepts of open innovation, social entrepreneurship, and social innovation to make museum innovations scalable, replicable, and maneuverable; obviously, these concepts overlap and should be viewed as a whole, so it could be said Museums that adopt social enterprise models and adopt open innovation strategies can promote social innovation.

### **Children's Criteria for Visiting Museums**

Because the experiences of adults in museums are qualitatively different from those of children, it is often difficult for adults to understand the museum visit from the perspective of the child. An important idea from developmental psychology, with implications for children's programming in museums, is that children bring their own experiences and conceptions of the world with them. These conceptions determine how they

receive what is presented to them and what they will learn from it. For example, Michael, 8 years old intensely interested in the Middle Ages, was taken to see the armor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. A week later he asked if people had metal in the Middle Ages. When reminded about the armor he had seen in the museum, he replied, "yes, but what does that have to do with the Middle Ages?" This question suggests that children have only the vaguest ideas about how an object gets into a museum and why it is there and even what a museum is. It illustrates how our life experiences limit our ability to understand objects in the context of a museum. It also suggests the errors in adults' assumptions about what children experience.

Elementary-school children have trouble dealing with the past because their understanding of time- periods is incomplete. Since many museum programs and collections require an understanding of the context of historical periods, and since most children have not got this understanding worked out yet, they make the most amazing connections between things that have no relationship.

Children experience a sense of powerlessness in museums, as they do in many aspects of their lives. Unlike other age- groups, they are rarely in museums by free choice. For the most part, adults tell children what to do; adults have control, while children wish that they did. By offering children choices during museum visits, such as allowing them to choose a work of art on which to focus, educators can give them some feeling of power and command over their museum experience. In addition, museum programs for children should focus on only a few objects of interest to them and present ideas about those objects that are graspable and relevant. Otherwise, the artifacts in museums will be for children like so many other things in their lives- simply there, without explanation, and outside their control. A selective and limited focus will foster in children a sense of mastery and command in a potentially strange and overwhelming setting and will increase the chance of their understanding the ideas behind the words and objects to which they are introduced (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999).

In a longitudinal study at Bank Street College in New York City, researchers found



that children remembered most about visits to museums when there were multiple visits, when the teacher linked the visit to the school curriculum by embellishing the unit with many varied classroom activities and group projects, and when there were opportunities for children to exercise choice and personalize the experience. The museum activities that allow children to interact socially with one another, talk to one another about what they were seeing and engage in related learning experiences back at school were, for the most part, the most remembered. School groups are not the only child-child groups visiting museums. Increasing numbers of school groups now regularly utilize museums. Museums are also developing intensive programs for children and youth that allow them to become involved in the activities of museums in meaningful and productive ways. One very successful apprenticeship program for low-income youth is the American Association of Science- Technology Center's YouthALIVE! The program, which is supported by the Dewitt Wallace Reader's Gigest Fund, with additional funding from the Hitachi Foundation, has made a difference in

several young people's lives throughout the country (Falk & Dierking, 2000).

The material culture most widely associated with children is of course the toy; indeed, Schlereth (1985) has stated that toys would be expected to be the most common form of material culture related to children in museums, although it has been demonstrated that this is not always the case (Brookshaw,2009). Toys have a strong association with collections relating to children because they are the adult's favorite form of childhood material culture and are therefore collected more often.

For some children or students, the most important question is when and where to eat and when to visit museum shops. Knowing this type of information before the visit can save them unnecessary trouble and also allow them to understand the route through the city. Where is the museum or the nearest toilet? A visit to the museum can introduce children to various related activities. Before the visit, they may be asked what they think they should do there. During the visit, they can write down who is taking care of the building. Most of the work is done behind the scenes, such as



registering new acquisitions, performing some restorations, decorating exhibitions, and compiling catalogs. In small museums, all this is done by curators, national museums, and experts from big cities. In each event, the museum sometimes organizes a behind-the-scenes tour of the school curriculum. In some museums, you can watch the curator's work (hosseini, 2019).

Most museums today recognize the need to segment their markets. By breaking the public down into constituent groups that have some characteristics in common, museums should be able to anticipate their needs and accordingly decide where to place efforts for audience development. It enables museums to focus resources and effort on the market segments that are most appropriate for meeting the museum's aims and objectives. Demographic trends vary from country to country. These trends will affect not only the potential visitor profile but also the potential workforce (Mclean, 2007).

Segmentation by stage in the life-cycle, which considers age and family composition, is probably one of the most useful segmentation variables for museums. The need of parents

with young children will differ markedly from older couples whose children have left home. Young families will require crèche facilities, children's facilities, and children's workshops (Hosseini, 2019).

As mentioned above, current education methods emphasize development in the learning process, focusing on the skills and actions that lead to results, rather than the results themselves. The museum provides opportunities to learn by seeing, touching, and speaking, and gives children the opportunity to learn about life (Karadeniz, 2013). These venues provide children with new information and experiences, develop their imagination and senses, and allow them to move freely and learn by experimenting, playing, and living with the applied education activities and workshop works. When children make contact with an idea, an object, or an experience in a museum, the learning process begins. Enhancing Young Children's Museum Experiences: A manual for museum staff.

Today, children's museums are designed for the coordination of visual effects, images, and spatial dialogue, as well as the perception and interpretation of life through children's eyes;

this understanding of design means organizing suitable study rooms. From the beginning of the design, it is necessary to ensure interdisciplinary work and select the content of children's exhibitions from all areas of life to create an effective space. In addition to developing children to discover, climb, crawl, try different heights and platforms, try to use materials such as soil, water, and sand, build social relations between them, and create opportunities for unity and collaboration (Silav, 2014).

In a suitable museum for children, all these needs must be considered. It should also provide heating, cooling, air conditioning, and lighting conditions based on the essential functional differences of the operating areas allocated on site. Stimulate perception and movement development and establish a space for spatial perception. The repetition of shapes, fabrics, colors, patterns, and sounds is important to ensure children's learning. B. Shape, size, and quantity, the ratio between parts (Hosseini,2019).

### **Social and Cultural Influences in Shaping Society**

According to researcher studies and experiences with visiting museums and children, she noted that there were many common issues facing museums to young children's satisfaction. The findings are organized into three areas: children, communities, and museums.

### **Children**

There is no doubt in our minds that there is a great deal of interest in museums going among schools, families, and children. For research, researchers observed a steady stream of children in museums.

Children were very attracted to visiting museums. Researchers noted that some areas sustained children's interest and assisted them in recalling aspects of their visit to the museum.

Children's visits to museums were notably more purposeful when they had a chance to interact with people while in the exhibit. The interactions, either with adults (parents, grandparents, teachers, guides) or with peers, led to children holding conversations about the content of the exhibit. The success of these interactions depends on the size of the group,

with smaller groups leading to more fruitful results.

As visitors, children connect more readily to museums if their characteristics are taken into account by the adults who accompany them. In addition, children learn through reflecting on their activity and require an adult or peer with whom they may discuss their opinion.

### **Communities**

Within the scope of the community, two main institutions care for children: the family and the school. Broadly conceived, the school community in this research consists of child primary schools. Families and schools are the first groups who utilize the museum as a place for excursions with young children.

Those families and schools who bring children to the museum clearly understand there is some distinct advantage to be reaped from participation in these venues.

Based on the researcher's observations, she has found that there is a pressing need to build a bridge between the community and the museum - a bridge that will link children, their families, and schools to the museums in a collaborative process of learning.

### **Museums**

As an observer of young children, the researcher found herself in an unusual position and took advantage of her unique opportunity to carefully examine how an important cultural institution served the youngest members of society.

In her explorations, she found that museums were willing, even eager, to build children into their programs. But she also found that cultural places such as museums need to change in some ways to make their espoused interest in children a viable reality.

Concerning the design of exhibits for young children, it would appear that there may be excellent results if a collaborative team (curators, education officers, academics, designers, policymakers, and publicity) works on the selection, design, implementation, and evaluation of an exhibit. However, various constraints (time, interdepartmental conflict, and budget) could potentially inhibit the ongoing process from achieving its highest benefits.

Golestan palace museum requires information about the kids, and their

audiences to achieve the best outcomes for learning in the museums.

To young children, design teams require an understanding of the characteristics of children, their interests, and their cultural backgrounds. Such information may be acquired through consultation with families, schools, universities, and museum educators. Golestan Museum could be in a very good position to acquire information about young visitors by establishing a research culture within its staff. All staff could become involved in building up a stronger awareness of the visitors to the museum and thus could make a valid contribution to the evolution of museum exhibitions and programs.

Museums offer learners the opportunity to make contact with ideas, objects, and events that are not available in the home or school. This privileged position puts museums at the forefront as potential innovators in community-based, informal education. Stronger links could be forged with schools and families through a joint venture program to connect the museum and its riches to the local community.

Such an initiative could be best developed as a multi-museum collaboration with involvement from user groups, community experts, and a cross-section of museum staff. Interactive exhibits for young children must be built thus durability, quality, and safety are primary considerations for museum managers.

So this research shows the important role of the Museum obviously and appropriate services for children for attracting them to the Museum. This research expresses that services quality theory partly is not proved the need of children. This means among the factors of services quality theory responsiveness, reliability, tangible and physical empathy, and assurance are known as dependent variants because it is influenced by the 4 mentioned factors completely and will be altered by varying each one of the other factors. Learning and increasing knowledge after visiting the museum, Behaviours after visits like an introduction to friends and relatives and asking the family for a museum re-visit, and also children's satisfaction level is completely under influence of 4 other factors of service quality theory.

Based on research and experience of researchers while filling the questionnaire children, visiting the museum is an attractive and pleasant factor for children spontaneously and before the visit, they are not aware of what will be earned afterward but speculation and thinking about historical events relating to the museum is observable in them.

The research shows that the satisfaction level of boys is higher than girls and it can mean that effective factors in satisfaction like reliability, assurance, and tangible and empathy factors are felt and received more strongly by girls and any kind of lack and deficiency can dissatisfy them.

Additionally, if teachers or parents ask children some questions and talk to them about the museum and their visit, the learned subjects about the museum will stabilize strongly and a new desire for visiting the same or other museums will be created.

This research offers and shows several study opportunities to researchers for instance studying differences between children's tourism and adult tourism, spending free time with children and adults and their differences, educating children tour leaders, checking the

instruction of museum personnel about children, etc.

Parents' absence beside the children under ten years old or absence of school children under ten years old in Golestan palace shows the failure of this museum Palace in marketing and attracting these people, providing temporary and frequent programs relating to children's day or one or two-day workshops for attracting of children under ten to Golestan museum is not ineffective but its temporariness is the sign of its ineffectiveness for all ages of children. The present issue is formed by three overlapping factors, museums, children, and policies. To recover from the situation must:

- 1- Recognize the common targets of these 3 factors.
- 2- Determine the resources and areas in the museum appropriate to children.
- 3- Determine the indices of a successful visit by a child.
- 4- Carry out exact studies and research to attract the children more strongly, encourage the children to re-visit museums, promote the satisfaction level of children in visiting the museums, etc.

In addition, all over the world and in Iran the number of museums is increasing but it doesn't mean they fulfill the children's wishes and demands. This is obvious and mandatory to develop children's tourism infrastructures for the next generations. Nowadays, children who are amused by computer and mobile games can be encouraged by virtual and augmented reality devices and attracted to museums.

On the other hand, employing qualified and expert personnel to interact with children and

attract them to the topic related to museums, good mood, speaking with the children's language, using auxiliary tools, good looking and good Behaviour are effective factors to interest children to visit the museums.

Based on the findings could help museum marketers to better understand children's needs in palace museums and also It is becoming more essential for museum managers to distinguish the factors that will increase the attraction and enhance the number of visitors, such as children.

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## نوآوری موزه‌ها برای مخاطبان کودک

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**چکیده:** این مطالعه برگرفته از رساله دکتری با محوریت خدمات ارائه شده در کاخ گلستان به بازدیدکنندگان کودک (گروه سنی اول تا ششم دبستان) است. در زمان انجام تحقیقات، میزان اهمیت به کودکان بازدیدکننده و شناخت ایشان به عنوان بخشی از مخاطبان موزه جهت مؤثرتر شدن این رابطه بیش از پیش برای محقق روشن شد. با بررسی‌های بعدی به نظر رسید با وجود پتانسیل‌های زیادی در این حوزه، بازدید کودکان از این موزه با کاستی‌ها و نواقصی مواجه است. هدف مقاله پیش رو شفاف‌سازی نتایج اصلی مربوط به نوآوری موزه‌ها برای کودکان است که به منظور توسعه و بهبود دیدگاه کارشناسان موزه‌ها، مدیران موزه‌ها و همچنین بازاریابان برای ایجاد رابطه ملندنی و جذب بیشتر مخاطب کودک به موزه‌ها می‌تواند بسیار مفید باشد.

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- ایجاد خلاقیت و نوآوری در مسیر بازدید بازدیدکنندگان کودک منجر به یادگیری ایشان و درک بهتر آنها از فرهنگ و کشف مفاهیم مرتبط با آن و علاقه‌مندی بیش از پیش آنها به حوزه فرهنگ خواهد شد.

- توجه جدی و در نظر گرفتن معیارها، علاقه‌مندی‌ها و توانایی‌های کودکان در بازدید و بررسی خدمات ارائه شده به کودکان با استفاده از مدل سرویس کوالیتی. مطالعه حاضر نشان می‌دهد معیارهای کودکان بسیار با معیارهای بزرگسالان در بازدید از یک مکان فرهنگی مثل موزه متفاوت بوده و همچنین میزان رضایت این دو گروه از خدمات ارائه شده نیز متفاوت است. بنابراین به نظر می‌رسد جهت ایجاد نوآوری باید به معیارهای کودکان در بازدید از موزه اشراف کامل باشد.

مهم‌ترین جنبه قابل توجه موضوع نوآوری و ابداع خلاقیت برای کودکان در موزه‌ها را می‌توان تأثیرات مثبت اجتماعی و فرهنگی در آینده دانست که می‌تواند نقش پررنگی در شکل‌گیری رویکرد و دیدگاه فرهنگی کودکان و جامعه آینده ایران شود. به نظر می‌رسد نتایج حاصل از این پژوهش چارچوبی را برای ایجاد بینشی واقعی از خواسته‌های کودکان از موزه‌ها که باعث می‌شود به عنوان یکی از گروه‌های مهم مخاطب موزه در نظر گرفته و در تصمیم‌گیری‌های گنجانده شوند ارائه می‌دهند. به‌طور خلاصه، می‌توان گفت که موزه‌هایی با شرایط موزه کاخ گلستان دارای پتانسیل جذب مخاطب کودک هستند که با برنامه‌ریزی، توجه به مقتضیات این گروه‌های سنی و اختصاص بودجه مناسب می‌توان کودکان را از مخاطبان بلقوه بودن به مخاطبان بلفعل تبدیل کرد و با بررسی رفتارهای بعد از بازدید آنها به تعداد علاقه‌مندان کودک برای بازدید از موزه افزود.

**واژه‌های کلیدی:** کودکان، کاخ موزه گلستان، مدل سرویس کوالیتی، خدمات ارائه شده، معیارهای کودکان، محوطه میراث جهانی.