

Understanding the emotional response to museum activities

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This research was conducted by **Carmen Camarero-Izquierdo, María José Garrido-Samaniego** and **Rebeca Silva-García** at the **University of Valladolid, Spain**.

Summary

Museum activities can be positive and pleasurable experiences, which generate emotions. However, there is little research about how and why activities taking place in the museum impact upon visitors' feelings. This study found that group size and level of interaction impacts upon emotions, as does the use of new technologies and having the activity take place outside the museum.

Aspects of museum activities have differing effects on emotions

A questionnaire was sent to a Museum Friends Association in Spain between October and December 2008 asking people to rate an activity they had previously participated in. Their emotion was measured using a scale of pleasure. Statistical analysis revealed the relationship between the activities and emotions experienced. Individuals felt more pleasure in larger sized groups and when they participated actively or interacted with other people in the group. Taking part with friends or family also had a positive impact on the emotions experienced. People also experienced greater pleasure when they used new technologies. Activities outside the museum were more highly valued than those conducted on site. The duration of the activity, not having previous knowledge of the topic, and having taken part in similar activities before did not have an effect on the emotions experienced.

Organisers should encourage interaction amongst participants

Making individuals feel like they are an active part of the learning process leads to greater emotions than when people are merely supplied with information. Large group size and interactive activities would be a good way to engage tourists who want to interact with others during their museum visits. Museums should enable participants to communicate with each other during and after the activities have taken place. Further research is needed on the impact of demographics (age, gender, etc.) and different museum locations on visitors' emotional experience.

This summary is by **Tanya Graham, King's Knowledge Exchange Associate**

Keywords

audience **technology** **museum** **spain** **engagement**

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