

Family Audience Research For Qatari Museums

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Abstract

Introduction

This paper is based on ongoing audience research that conducted on behalf of Qatar Museums. The study, which started in September 2010, focuses on families across Qatar and aims to discover their needs, motivations and interests towards visiting museums. This ongoing project, which mainly targets Qatari and Arab families, has approached its audiences' needs and wants through quantitative and qualitative methods. A quantitative methodology was employed through a broad reaching family survey which has been the base for all the following research. This bilingual survey was distributed via schools in Qatar and in return received around 1,700 responses from families representing over 4,500 children. On the other hand, qualitative methods were applied through focus groups and in-depth interviews with individual family members or family groups. These two methods were used in order to develop our understanding of the family behavior, customs and values, as well as explore their interests and needs when deciding to visit a museum. In addition, families' behaviors, attitudes and interactions were also observed in museums and fun centers in Qatar and the UAE to pay close attention to the roles played by adults and their children throughout their visits.

Findings

Through various methods employed with different family members and groups, several findings have been shown:

- o Most families and children consider museums as places for displaying precious and valuable collections that engage them with their heritage or their grandparents' era.
- o Families in Qatar are socially motivated (72% of families interviewed or surveyed are primarily motivated by social factors). Qatari and Arab Qatar-based families identify visiting museums as an opportunity to spend time together and have an entertaining time as a family.
- o Families seek appropriate facilities in the museums to meet their social and practical needs such as a family lounge or café, as well as breastfeeding and baby changing rooms.
- o Families prefer to ignore using maps or asking information desks. However, they prefer to be engaged with exhibits through guidance or even conversation with each other or the exhibits' facilitators.
- o Word of mouth is key to attracting about 60% of families to museums and fun centers, especially those with young children.
- o The research informs us of the greatest and least interesting topics that families would like to learn about.