

Exploring visitors' experience in science museum and exhibits

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Science museum is required to play a role as a place of amusement with friends and family as well as a place of learning and experiencing science. Many science museums, therefore, put efforts to provide various contents such as hands-on exhibits, outdoor exhibits, special exhibition, theater, and learning programs to gather many people. However, providing many contents is not always pleasant because it can make visitors confused and inconvenient due to complex schedule, wait-too-long experience and not-working exhibits. In particular, visitors sometimes have in trouble with hands-on exhibits since they have to understand how to use as well as knowledge related on the exhibit. Most of previous studies have focused on the role of science museum or contents they have to provide, but there is little research on what visitors have experienced in science museum and how they think about exhibits.

Under the notion, this research aims to explore visitors' overall experience in science museum and to figure out what positive and negative experience is while staying in science museum and experiencing with exhibits. For this purpose, we conducted focus group interview with 9 visitors who visited Busan National Science Museum more than 2 times. Also, 425 visitors evaluated exhibits in terms of its 'interest', 'difficulty', and 'satisfaction' on 191 science exhibits. As a result of the research, main events that influence positive and negative experience in science museum were analyzed in three stages – before visit, during visit, after visit – and expectations in perspective of visitors were figured out. Also, the ranking of exhibits in perspective of visitors' interest, understanding and satisfaction were analyzed. The findings, based on visitors' voice, can be efficiently adopted as guidelines for the development of new exhibits or refurbishment of current exhibits to make the visitors enjoy an immersive and attractive experience.