



Creating Museum Exhibition: What the public want?

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is the identification of issues from the perspective views of museum scholars and experts toward creating direction in developing museum exhibitions in Malaysia for public learning. Recently, museums have developed a strong interest in technology as their path more towards of leisure industries. However, there are contradicting opinions arising between using “traditional” approach and “interactive” technology exhibition techniques for visitor learning. This paper initiates a search for such literature and identifies key concepts for further deliberations. Finally, these findings are intended to formulate the best-practice on learning “tool” in a museum exhibition practice.

Keywords: Museum; museum learning and museum exhibition.

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1.0 Introduction

In defining museum, Adler (2004), agreed with International Museum Association and many museum scholars and expertises had established with the decision of International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 1984 was elaborated that museums are a non-profit making, permanent institution in the service of society. ICOM elaborated the role of museum further as institution that which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits for purpose of study, educational and enjoyment, material and evidence of people and their environment at 21st General Conference in Vienna, Austria, in 2007.

In Malaysia, a museum functions are to preserve and store artefacts of national treasures, and a source of knowledge for a holistic view towards all way of life. Referring to local context, Ismail (2011) has stated that it was seen vital to gather entire material heritage in the construction of cultural identity and the civilization of a country. Tambi (2011) is supported by Ramey-Gassert, Walberg and Walberg (1994) statement acknowledging museum being part of cultural institution is an integral part of the broader learning and provide education to the public that also called '*museum learning*', playing a key role in '*lifelong learning*' and educational leisure. Museums are informal learning settings where learning is intrinsically motivated and proceeds through curiosity, observation and activity. Hence, Museums present a distinct context for informal learning, often described as '*free-choice learning*' environments and are visited by a broad range of people (Falk and Dierking, 2000, Brussel 2012).

The paper shall be divided into three sections; the manner of which the search of literature was initiated and undertaken; intellectual view in the field of museum learning issues of using the traditional approach (static) and interactive technology in exhibition and finally, further deliberations of future directions for public need to their museum.

2.0 Literature Review

Understanding the interaction of museum learning in how the adult visitors engage with artifacts in informal learning environment depending on static approach versus interactive technology exhibition. A greater understanding of these variables would contributes to the literature on solitary adult's experience in museum and would inform museum staff's and exhibit designers' understanding of what shape visitors' engagement. There were researchers who backboneed in museum learning participated on exhibition setting where their input in contribution their research publication and their guidelines for best practice to future museum exhibition such as Museum Association, Museum Department, Exhibition Consultants, Exhibits designers and others who related to the development of museum learning. As Universiti Teknologi MARA strives to achieve its aspiration as the leading university in Malaysia, there has been a momentous thrust in the development of academic sourcing via online journals (Bajunid, Abbas & Nawawi, 2012). This can be performed if one to just Google museum learning and exhibition connected with SAFE Premier, Science Direct, SciFinder Scholar, Scopus, Wiley On-Line Library and many Digital Library whereby there exist numerous journals and books from International Museum Association such as American Museum Association and International University which involved a research on

museum education or museology. Some journals and books which interested were subscribed on-line from the distributors. The paper limits the scope in specific to only museum learning within the context of Malaysia. However, in order to better understand a complete picture of its relationships, a thorough search of initial scholarly literature that frames the periphery of the museology disciplines, was undertaken.

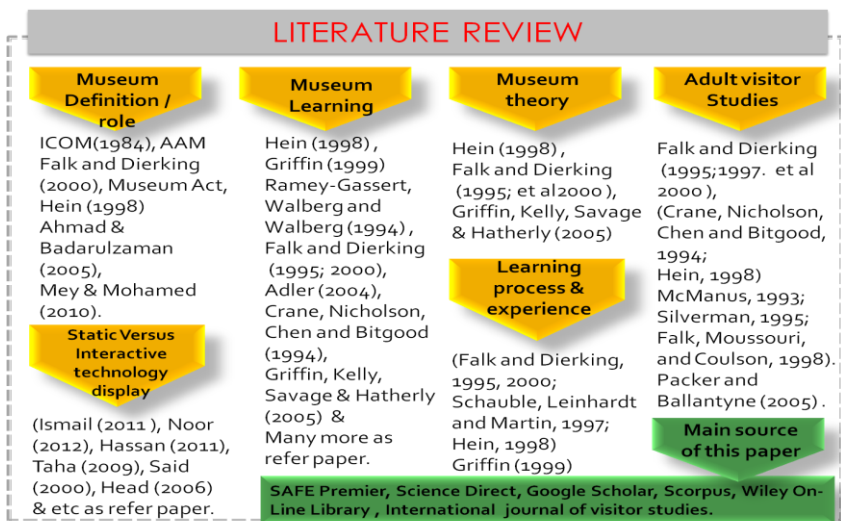


Figure 1. Illustration of literature review related the identification of issues from the perspective views of museum scholars and experts toward creating direction in developing museum exhibitions.

Table 1: UiTM's online database in direct connection to the built environment.
List of Subscribed Databases by Cluster/Faculty (Science & Technology)

Faculty of Applied Science Faculty of Computer & Mathematical Science Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying Faculty of Sport Science & Recreation Faculty of Plantation & Agrotechnology		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● American Chemical Society (ACS) ● ACM Digital Library (DL) ● Bankscope ● BLIS (Bernama Library & Infolink Service) ● CAB Direct ● Emerald Management Plus & Backfiles ● EBSCO : Academic Search Premier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food Science & Technology Abstract (FSTA) ● Health & Wellness Resource Centre ● Web of Knowledge ● IOP Science ● IndianJournals.com ● ProQuest Dissertations & Theses ● Osiris 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SAGE Journals ● Springer LINK ● Springer Protocols ● SciFinder Scholar Web ● Scopus ● Sage Research Methods Online ● Scientific.Net ● TOMES Plus Systems ● Taylor & Francis (Geography)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● EBSCO : Business Source Complete ● EBSCO : SPORTDiscus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Oxford Journal – Human Reproduction ● Science Direct & Science Direct BackFiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archives) ● Wiley Online Library ● Wiz folio
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Source: Adapted from UiTM's Online Database. Available at <http://library.uitm.edu.my/v1.0/eresources/S.html>.

Table 2: SMITHSONIAN Museology Journals Resource. Museum Studies - Information for Museum Professionals and Scholars.

N o.	Type of Journal		Web-site
1.	American Archivist Journal		http://www.archivists.org/periodicals/aa.asp
2.	Annolog: A Collaborative Annotated Bibliography Blog		http://annolog.sarcenet.org/
3.	ASTC Dimensions		http://www.astc.org/pubs/dimensions.htm
4.	Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals		http://www.altamirapress.com/RLA/Journals/Collections/
5.	Common Ground: Preserving Our Nation's Heritage		http://www.cr.nps.gov/CommonGround
6.	Conservation: The Getty Conservation Newsletter		http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/newsletters/
7.	Cultural Resources Management: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship		http://www.car.nps.gov/crm/
8.	Curator: The Museum Journal		http://www.altamirapress.com/RLA/Journals/Curator/
9.	Folklife Center News		http://loc.gov/folklife
10.	Heritage Management		http://www.lcoastpress.com/journal.php?id=7
11.	History News		http://www.aaslh.org/historynews.htm
12.	ICOM News		http://icom.museum/tematic.html
13.	ICOM Study Series		http://icom.museum/studse.html
14.	International Journal of Arts Management		http://www.hec.ca/ijam/
15.	Journal of Museum Education		http://www.lcoastpress.com/journal.php?id=3

16	Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship		http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/09647775.asp
17	Muse		http://www.museums.ca/Cma1/publications/publications.htm
18	Museuse Estudos Interdisciplinares		http://revistamidas.hypotheses.org
19	Museums & Social Issues		http://www.lcoastpress.com/journal.php?id=4
20	Museum History Journal		http://www.lcoastpress.com/journal.php?id=6
21	Museum News		http://www.aamus.org/pubs/index.cfm

Source: <http://museumstudies.si.edu/Header3.html/>.

3.0 Research Methodology

The research is based on a triangulation method.

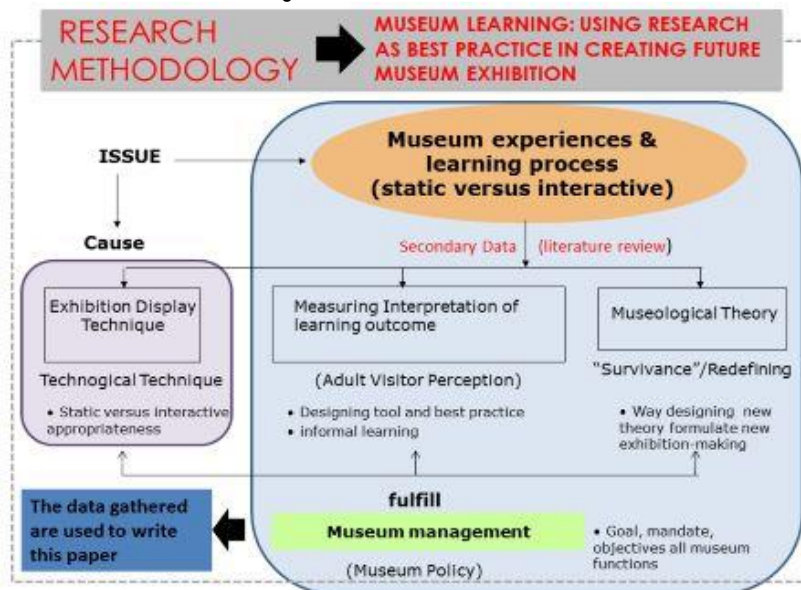


Fig. 2. Illustration of the flow diagram screening on literature review as a secondary data for the research and identifies key concepts for further deliberations.

Source: Ahmad 2013).

But for this paper only uses qualitative methods which refer the literature review in the purpose the identification of issues from the perspective views of museum scholars and experts toward creating direction in developing museum exhibitions in Malaysia for public learning. Majority of literature review are based on western scholar in knowing the scenario of museum learning within adult visitors. It would be required to further enhance the robustness of this research. This will be the foundation idea towards a study on solitary adult visitor studies in Malaysia because there is a limited study on museum exhibition using static versus interactive technology in local context.

Research Limitations

Owning to parameters set by research grant, where funds are only for site for local site activities (secondary data gatherings) within Malaysia. Therefore, any information and data regarding other countries within the current paper are totally dependent on the secondary data.

4.0 Discussion

This paper set out the interest of the key concepts to bring forwards that studying research from the scholars and experts could formulated a best-practice on learning “tool” in museum exhibition practice. This adaptation in this paper only highlights a preliminary synthesis of the sourcing narratively, identifying trend or gap with limited graphical displays towards museum learning on informal learning contexts focussed on solitary adults’ visitor in static exhibition approach versus interactive technology exhibition setting in Malaysia.

Packer and Ballantyne (2005) found adult solitary visitors which being alone contributed to their learning are consistent with self-determination theories of motivation and constructivist theories of learning, and might speculatively be elaborated as follows:

- i. solitary visitors have greater perceived autonomy or self sufficiency , which enhances motivation;
- ii. they engage with information at a deeper cognitive level; and
- iii. they are free to select learning experiences that are consistent with their individual interests
and preferred learning styles.

Thus solitary visitors benefited from the freedom to choose how they would allocate their time and attention, and were able to engage in deeper personal reflection.

4.1 Museum Learning in Informal Learning Context

In museums, visitors choose their experiences, ideas may not necessarily be met in any particular sequence, and opportunities for learning may be fragmentary and unstructured. The informal nature of the setting means that museum professionals cannot determine the specific content to which learners are exposed.

Table 3: The idea of formal and informal in museum learning behind the study was to develop programs that would improve the experiences of visitors

Term	Description
Formal	Structured, systematic, regimented settings, definite right and wrong answers, teacher/expert has power and choice over what is acquired. Also organised and systematic.
Informal	Self-led, self-paced, self-motivated, connects to "real" experience, learner/visitor has power and choice to direct interactions, people are empowered.
Museum	Collections and research-based, hands-off, presenting "static" artefacts rather than ideas or activities.
Learning	Reflective, relevant, physical, social, choice, something that is applied in the future, enjoyable, experiential and "owned" by the learner.

(Source: Adapted from Kelly, 2007, p.69; Rowe, 1998, p.11-13, 16-17).

4.2 Museum Learning: Adult as Learning Educator

Numerous studies have examined way in which adults shape children 's understanding of artefact in museums ((Falk & Dierking, 2000; Puchner, 2001; Stanton, 1999; Kelly, 2007; Rubenson, 2000; Benjamin et al., 2010; Callanan & Braswell, 2006; Callanan, Jipson & Soennichson,2002; Crowley, Callanan, Jipson, et al. 2001; Crowley, Callanan, Tonenbaum, & Allen, 2001, Tonenbaum et al., 2010) that described about adult is a motivator for individual learning as follows (Braswell, 2012):

- Adult of families are used to learning together and developed a range of personel learning behaviours and practices enhanced by their culture of sharing knowledge and experiences.
- Parents can be effective facilitators for their children's learning when exhibitions are designed with collaborative learning in mind and when adults feel comfortable with the content and experiences provided in the museum.
- Children stayed longer at exhibits and learned more when they were accompanied by an adult who was actively involved in the activities.
- Mothers and fathers took on different roles within a visit. Mothers more concerned with the logistics of the visit, and fathers seeing museums as "*family business*". Work on literacy and adult learning suggested that an orientation to "*life-long learning*" and readiness to learn in later life was strongly linked to the family.
- Morrissey (2002), may shape children's reaction to artefacts by adult explanation shape children understanding of an artefacts.

4.3 Museum Learning Scenario in Malaysia

In Malaysia, museum visiting culture within the society are not as great as in European countries. This opinion was supported by Ismail (2011) where the museum is uncommon preference as a family visit as vacation destinations and shopping centres. In contrast with other countries, museums are listed in the places that compulsory visited by foreigners.

Although Malaysia now has more than 150 museums under the supervision of the Department of Museum and Antiquities of Malaysia, state governments, private and private parties by displays of artefacts and exhibits, it is still failed to attract people to visit museum (New Strait Times Press, March 2012). According to Noor (2012), this problem has occurred because the presentation of artefacts and exhibits are still the concept of "traditional" offering a "dead" or "static" approach is to be among the factors that failed to attract the people. Significant to this problem, he stressed the patterns of thinking and way of life of today people are different from the way of people who live past.

Presently, due to the development of science and technology, information gathering culture are only on their finger tips with mobile screen to get a reference (Ismail, 2011). The developments in technology offered a variety home entertainment additionally to the emergence of digital toys and technology media may lead the public not interested in what is in the museums offered.

These challenges demand the museums to be more creative and innovative in creating contents that can encourage the society to visit the museum institutions. An exhibition with the latest techniques such as interactive or 3D is proven effective that can captivate the public, including people from outside the country visiting the museum (Hassan, 2011). Museums in United Kingdom (Said, 2000), are now in the mode of delivery, such as "hands-on", "minds-on", "multimedia", "squeezer" and others. However, he discovered engaging of "hands on" that too much may cause excessive information received. He believed there must be a balance using static and interactive technology approach of information or education and entertainment in museum exhibition.

4.4 Global Research of Museum Exhibition Approach

Nowadays, museums are increasingly positioning themselves in the market as places for rich learning and experiences in the way of mission statements that highlight their main duty in public learning and education responsibility. Most people visited museums for the 'learning' and "experience" reason. "Free-choice learning" such as hand-on, mind-on, multimedia technology and other type technological devices has a position to perform "life-long learning" and "educational leisure" through an exhibition techniques.

There are many opinion was released by international scholars on the impact of using exhibition techniques in application of "static" approach and "interactive" technology towards comprehend an exhibition techniques. In early 1900s, there are a conflict evolved about the widespread use of novelty, gadgetry, three-dimensionality, and illusion as well as digital technology is blurring the line between the traditional public museum and commercial theme park and retail complex that mostly generic space of "edutainment". There was remarked that too technological sometimes gave a description of an artefact with an object label resulting

the biased perspective of someone from a different time, place, gender, ethnicity, culture or politic bent.

In contrast, some science museums have been successfully entertaining their public, mainly facilitated by the nature of the objects they showed. They engaged the visitor by transforming visitor from the passive viewer or “static” into participant by uses of “interactive” devices. Technology penetration extends far beyond physical location.

Head (2006) has expressed that the museums have a public duty to make a provision for all parts of society consists all ages, social cultural and educational backgrounds. The challenges in the 21st century museums must cater for different learning abilities and without the use of technology, it's difficult for museums to modify content according to the needs of particular learners. The museums should not to follow any set of syllabus but it's should create activities of exhibition may be exploratory and experiential for effectual understand learning and attracting visitors. Museum exhibition display will be more effective way to use of technology to enhance the learning experience also expressed a positive opinion on using new technology in museum such as:

- i. Positive behaviour of technology communicating well at an exhibit;
- ii. People will enquire and question to go deeper into the subject;
- iii. Positive action is taken by accessing further information;
- iv. Discussion between groups of visitors about the display takes place; and,
- v. Other people are invited to join in.

However, some critics and caution that today's media technology entertains at the expense of accuracy, which it distracts from real knowledge and undermine the educational experience. Even though that technique is best but it's creating a window dressing and became worse because it's grossly misinforms.

5.0 Conclusion

The literature studies on previous and recent scholars' ideas portrays a 'trend' on museum learning scenario in Malaysia for adults visitors through static exhibition approach versus interactive technology exhibition. There seem to be a gap that clearly presented that there are a same conflict and viewpoints between local and international museum scholar regarding the issues of museum exhibits. The study adds to this body of research by comparing adults visitor engagement on static exhibition versus interactive exhibition technology by complementing qualitative study of engaging quantitative data (Brusswell 2012) may give potential tool in best-practice for future museum exhibition setting to suit the public need.

6.0 Recommendation

Additional research must be conducted (Brusswell, 2012) may address several issues that are beyond of the scope of the present study. For example, the examine the long term effects various type of engagement with artifacts and with exhibits with repeated visits. Identifying

this phenomenon empirically shall contribute enormously to the corpus knowledge of museum practitioners, museum staff and exhibit designers.

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