

Youth Participation in Museums for Cultural and Artistic Development in Guayaquil



La Participación Juvenil en Museos para el desarrollo cultural y artístico en Guayaquil

Ana Luisa López Brunett*
Génesis Asunción*

Abstract

The study aims to compare the perspectives of different authors on the participation of young people in Guayaquil in artistic activities and visits to museums. A comprehensive approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods was used, using a representative sample of theses and scientific papers, together with documentary review techniques and data collection sheets. In conclusion, the analysis showed that in order to increase youth participation in Guayaquil's museums and promote their cultural and artistic development, it is crucial to address the challenges identified by several authors through promotion and dissemination strategies, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital world.

Keywords: Artistic, Development, Cultural, Young people, Guayaquil

Msc. Instituto Superior Universitario Espiritu Santo,
Ecuador, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7040-3807>,
alopez@tes.edu.ec

Msc. Instituto Superior Universitario Espiritu Santo, Ecuador,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2448-716X>, gasuncion@tes.edu.ec

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Resumen

El estudio tiene como objetivo comparar las perspectivas de diferentes autores sobre la participación de los jóvenes de Guayaquil en actividades artísticas y visitas a museos. Se utilizó un enfoque integral que combinó métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos, utilizando una muestra representativa de tesis y documentos científicos, junto con técnicas de revisión documental y fichas de recolección de información. En conclusión, el análisis demostró que para incrementar la participación juvenil en los museos de Guayaquil y promover su desarrollo cultural y artístico, es crucial abordar los desafíos identificados por varios autores mediante estrategias de promoción y difusión, aprovechando las oportunidades ofrecidas por el mundo digital.

Palabras clave: Artística, Desarrollo, Cultural, Jóvenes, Guayaquil

Introduction

Before going into the analysis of youth participation in museums for cultural and artistic development in Guayaquil, it is essential to contextualise the cultural panorama of the city. Guayaquil, being one of Ecuador's main urban centres, is home to a rich cultural diversity ranging from its historical heritage to contemporary expressions of art and culture. However, despite this richness, there is a gap in the active participation of youth in the local cultural scene, reflected in the low number of young visitors to museums and cultural events.

In this sense, it is imperative to understand the crucial role that museums play as spaces of encounter, learning and reflection for young people in Guayaquil. These spaces not only preserve and exhibit the city's cultural heritage, but also offer opportunities for artistic exploration, intercultural dialogue and identity building. The active participation of youth in museums not only enriches their own cultural and artistic development, but also contributes to strengthening the social fabric and fostering a more informed citizenry committed to their cultural environment.

The lack of interest of young Guayaquileños in the art and culture of their city poses a significant problem in the cultural context of Guayaquil. This phenomenon manifests itself in a lack of active participation in cultural activities, such as visits to museums, attendance at artistic events or involvement in community cultural projects. This lack of interest can be attributed to a variety of reasons,

including the predominance of a consumerist and superficial entertainment culture, the lack of economic accessibility to cultural events and the absence of a comprehensive arts and humanities education in the educational system.

The formulation of the problem lies in understanding the underlying causes behind the low interest of young Guayaquileños in the arts and culture of their city, as well as identifying the specific difficulties they face in developing a deeper cultural appreciation. These difficulties include the lack of resources and educational programmes that promote knowledge and appreciation of local art and culture, as well as the influence of external factors such as the predominance of globalised popular culture and the lack of cultural role models within the youth community. Understanding these difficulties is crucial to designing effective strategies to foster greater participation and cultural appreciation among young people in Guayaquil.

Conduct a comparative study of various authors who have addressed the degree of involvement of young people in the city of Guayaquil in the artistic sphere and their participation in museum visits. This can reveal nuances and dimensions that might go unnoticed if only one source of information is considered. Furthermore, by contrasting the opinions and findings of different authors, common patterns, discrepancies and areas of convergence can be identified, which enriches the research and provides a more solid basis for formulating conclusions.

The study is justified by the need to understand in depth the cultural dynamics of Guayaquil's youth in relation to the city's art and cultural heritage. This comparative analysis offers a unique opportunity to discern the factors that influence youth participation in artistic and cultural activities, as well as to identify possible barriers that may hinder their involvement in the museum field.

The relevance of this study lies in its potential to inform and guide cultural policies and strategies aimed at fostering the active participation of young people in the artistic and museum sphere in Guayaquil. Ultimately, this study will not only contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field of culture and education, but could also have a significant impact on the cultural and social development of Guayaquil.

The how of this study implies a methodical and rigorous approach, where previous research and studies carried out by different authors will be compiled and analysed from a critical and reflexive

perspective. A process of selection of relevant and representative sources will be carried out, followed by a systematic comparison of each author's findings, methodologies and conclusions. This meticulous approach will ensure the reliability and validity of the results obtained, as well as objectivity in the interpretation of the data collected.

The role of the arts in education arises from the context, highlighting the intention to use arts instruction as a tool to foster understanding, transformation and integration. In this way, the arts assist us in interpreting culture in diverse settings, both verbally and visually (Mariño, M. 2021).

Arts instruction is not only limited to transmitting knowledge about techniques and forms of expression, but also acts as a powerful tool for exploring and understanding the world around us. In this sense, the arts offer us the opportunity to interpret culture in its many facets, whether through visual or verbal language. By integrating the arts into education, a more complete and meaningful learning is promoted, which not only enriches students' educational experience, but also provides them with skills to understand and actively participate in the society in which they live.

As cited by Anchundia, H., & Schoenfeld, A. (2023), with regard to growth in the artistic domain, the process of acquiring knowledge about different forms of artistic expression enhances fundamental cognitive skills, such as conditioned reasoning and the ability to mentally organise creative problem solving in everyday life, generating a long-term impact.

When addressing the field of cultural education, it is commonly argued that in an environment characterised by an overabundance of visual stimuli, it is essential to foster a critical attitude towards images (Fajardo, J., & Chin, L. 2021). By cultivating critical thinking, young people become more aware of the different cultural and social perspectives expressed through art, allowing them to enrich their own sense of identity and understanding of the world around them. Principle of the form

Inquiring about young people's participation in cultural activities and visits to museums, leads us to ask ourselves what we know about the motivations of the new generations for culture, according to Antoine, C., & Carmona, J. (2015), the predominant perception about the relationship between young audiences and museums focuses on the idea of disappointment, where it is believed that young people find it boring to visit these spaces. This view is followed by an ideological

assumption that is presented as an established truth, i.e. the notion that going to the museum will contribute to their education and cultural knowledge. However, these views stand above detailed research that sheds light on young people's precise relationship with cultural objects, practices and institutions, such as books, participation in cultural activities and museums themselves.

For Robles, A. (2017), it is crucial to bring together both museums and the public, particularly children and young people. This partnership has been examined for several decades and, moreover, contributes to an effective management of the museum offer, including its promotion, which will surely increase the number of visitors, especially those interested in the cultural offer provided.

Ochoa, L. (2008), believes that all museums, especially those of an anthropological nature that I have analysed here, are politically charged because they deal with contents and values linked to specific perspectives of society, human evolution and the development of nations or communities. These contents can rarely be separated from ideology and have a significant impact on the formation of imaginaries and subjectivities, be they national, ethnic, gender, class or other.

In order to capture the attention of children and young people, museums are becoming spaces where non-formal cultural and educational work is developed, which is entertaining and dynamic, and which complements or surpasses the teaching given in the classroom. Tovar, C. (2019), mentions that this does not mean that a relationship should not be established between these two educational institutions. In fact, it would be beneficial that before the visit, teachers and museum monitors design educational and recreational projects, which would undoubtedly enrich both parties and, above all, benefit the students.

Proposals such as those of Mendoza, M. (2022), highlight the relevance of technology as a source of advanced innovations, as well as mentioning the availability of digital information as a means of dynamically promoting the development of digital citizenship. This implies involving children and young people actively and collaboratively in the construction of an online society based on ethical principles.

Materials and methods

To investigate this study, a process was designed to integrate both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Babativa, C. 2017). The qualitative research focused on understanding young people's perceptions, experiences and motivations in relation to visiting museums, while the quantitative research provided numerical data on the frequency and type of participation of young people in cultural activities (Bejarano, M. 2016).

The sample used in this study consisted of a wide range of thesis studies and scientific papers related to youth participation in museums and cultural development in Guayaquil. Research that specifically addressed the topic and provided relevant information for the research objectives was carefully selected, and the search not only took data from young people in the city of Guayaquil, but also from other provinces, which serves as a counterpart for the results both in the city and in other regions of the country.

The main technique employed was the documentary review, which involved the exhaustive and systematic collection of information from existing studies, research reports, academic articles and other relevant documents (Blanco, G., & Mesa, B. 2022). This technique allowed us to obtain an overview of previous research on the topic, as well as to identify patterns, trends and gaps in knowledge.

For data collection, data collection sheets were developed that included specific categories related to youth participation in museums, such as frequency of visits, thematic preferences and perceived benefits. These sheets provided an organised structure for recording and analysing the data collected during the desk review, thus facilitating the comparison and synthesis of information obtained from different sources.

Results

The results of this process highlight the need to promote the museum as a tourist attraction of cultural importance. From a professional point of view, it is recommended to promote this place through advertising in digital media and social networks, given that the majority of the population currently uses these platforms. Of the 112 respondents in the study by Acosta, J. (2022), 43.8% indicated that they would occasionally recommend the popular music museum, 39.3% stated that they would do so usually, while 10.7% mentioned

that they would do so almost always. Only 6.2% indicated that they would almost never suggest it.

Factors such as cultural globalisation, migration, marketing and media have a strong influence. The finding of González, Y. (2015), is worrying, as it reveals that a percentage of the population shows no interest in visiting museums and does not know how many there are in the city. With the omnipresence of the internet, there are currently two types of societies: the real society and the virtual society, where reality is increasingly lived virtually, gradually leaving many places empty.

In this study, of the 69 respondents representing 77% of the participants who are in favour of linking museum activities with schools, 54% consider that it would definitely be a direct method of learning. All results related to this question were positive, with an additional 23% expressing that they would find it novel and that it would help them to better remember information taught in class.

Suárez, P. (2020), in his study on the Strengthening and diversification of tourism offerings based on underestimated cultural assets and spaces, the case of the museum and municipal library of Santa Elena canton, findings indicated that the Museum houses a wide range of valuable objects. However, surveys revealed that both tourists and local residents are unaware of the place and do not visit it. Therefore, the importance of preserving the cultural richness of St. Helena is highlighted. According to those interviewed, most tourists choose to visit the province of Santa Elena mainly for its beaches, such as those of Salinas, La Libertad and the Spondylus Route. Among these, Montañita stands out as a favourite destination for foreign tourists, who usually come with family and friends to enjoy the local gastronomy by the sea.

The study conducted by Cisneros, A., et al. (2021) on the Visitor Experience of the Presley Norton Museum in the city of Guayaquil revealed that 53.9% of the 385 young respondents are not familiar with the institution. In addition, 44.1% cited lack of time as a reason for not visiting, highlighting the difficulties of communication between the museum and the public.

According to the findings of the study by Díaz, S. & Fiallos, D. (2022), which focused on young people's digital activity on museums during the COVID-19 confinement, it was observed that the Museo Nacional del Prado experienced a 15% increase in its followers on social networks, with a 37% increase in visits to its website. During the month of April, the online audience increased

by 25% compared to March, surpassing 12 million visitors during the entire confinement period.

Discussion

The analysis of the study conducted by Acosta, J. (2022), reveals that there is significant variability in the respondents' answers regarding the recommendation of the museum of popular music. It is observed that a considerable part of the participants would be willing to recommend the museum at different levels of frequency, from occasionally to almost always. However, a minority is also identified as showing little interest in making recommendations about the museum. This pattern of responses suggests a diversity of attitudes and perceptions among respondents towards the popular music museum, which could be indicative of the need to implement promotion and dissemination strategies to increase its visibility and attractiveness.

The analysis provided by González, Y. (2015), underlines a significant concern regarding the lack of interest of part of the population in visiting museums and their lack of knowledge about the cultural offer of the city. This phenomenon could indicate a growing disconnection between the community and cultural heritage spaces. Furthermore, the reference to the real and virtual society highlights an emerging dynamic in which experience is increasingly shifting to the virtual realm, which could have negative implications for the preservation and appreciation of tangible cultural heritage. The transition to a society where reality is largely experienced through virtual means could contribute to the gradual emptying of physical places of cultural significance, highlighting the importance of addressing these challenges in the current context.

Analysis by Suárez, P. (2020), highlights the disconnection of both tourists and local residents with this important cultural heritage. In addition, it is noted that young people also show a lack of interest in visiting such spaces, which could further contribute to their underestimation and lack of recognition. Despite the wide variety of valuable objects housed in the museum, the lack of awareness and visits highlights the urgency of actions to preserve St. Helena's cultural richness and promote greater awareness and appreciation of its heritage among the population, including youth. Meanwhile, the preference of tourists for local beaches, especially destinations such as Montañita, underlines the need to diversify tourism options and highlight the cultural offer to attract a wider public and promote a more sustainable and enriching tourism.

For Cisneros, A., et al. (2021) the museum faces challenges in disseminating its offer and connecting with this key demographic segment. It also highlights that a considerable proportion of respondents identified lack of time as a barrier to visiting the museum, which points to the need to implement strategies to make visiting the museum more accessible and convenient for the general public. This difficulty in communication between the museum and the public reflects the importance of improving information and promotion channels to encourage greater participation and engagement with the cultural institution.

Authors such as Díaz, S. & Fiallos, D. (2022), examined the digital activity of young people in relation to museums during the COVID-19 confinement, this, highlights the significant impact that the pandemic had on online behaviour. It is remarkable how the Museo Nacional del Prado managed to take advantage of this situation, registering a notable increase in both the number of followers on social networks and visits to its website. This increase in online audiences during the month of April, especially compared to the previous month, demonstrates how the pandemic prompted people to seek out cultural experiences online as a way to compensate for the lack of access to physical spaces during the confinement.

This contrast with other countries highlights the adaptive capacity of some cultural institutions to respond to the challenges left by the pandemic and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the digital environment to reach new audiences and maintain engagement with their audiences, even in times of crisis, creating an opportunity for this to be applied in other types of countries such as Ecuador.

To further explore the issue of youth participation in museums for cultural and artistic development in Guayaquil, new questions arise that could guide future studies. For example, what are the specific barriers faced by young people in Guayaquil to actively participate in cultural and artistic activities in museums? How can museums better adapt to the preferences and interests of Guayaquil's youth to encourage their participation? Furthermore, what is the impact of digital access to museum collections on youth participation and how can it be improved? Another relevant question is how can museums collaborate with educational and community institutions to more effectively engage young people in their programmes and exhibitions? These questions offer a direction for future research and can provide valuable information for designing more effective

strategies to promote greater youth participation in Guayaquil's museums.

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