

## Teenagers and museums. The impossible audience?

*Analysis of the perceptions and opinions of young people and adolescents on museums*

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### Abstract

This research aims to focus on the perceptions and opinions of young people in relation to museums, whether this alleged disinterest is really the result of a totally “hormonal” stage where you have your head in the clouds or if institutions do not know how to adapt to this type of audience, and are not offering the stimuli, language, and answers they seek. What is the middle term we need to understand us? Is it possible to reach a balance between us?

We live in an ever-changing society, which in a very short time has been invaded by a revolution in technology and communication that is advancing faster than we can assume. Reality grows apart from the parameters and patterns achieved so far by creating a much richer and more diverse environment that in many cases is not being reflected in the museological environment. The museum as a container of works and objects, as a temple of knowledge and a mirror of history, is no longer a model suitable for the demands and interests of society (Iniesta, 1994), except for the iconic institutions that will never stop receiving rivers of visitors.<sup>(1)</sup> But then, what about smaller museums focused on local matters? Economic difficulties, the lack of staff and the impossibility of constantly remodeling are obstacles they live with every day. This fact is not related to whether their contents have value or not, or whether its discourses are powerful or not, or its activities enriching and elaborate. However, they do become inevitably less attractive to the public, and especially to a specific type of sector: the teenage audience.

During adolescence, the reaffirmation of identity, a concern to belong and to be accepted by a certain social group, and to be up to date and to leave the established conventional patterns (Funes, 2018) are broadly believed to be the highest aspirations of young people at an age when nothing matters more to them than their own concerns, their friendships, their appearances and their need to be always up to date and constantly reaffirm themselves, looking for their place in the world (Freixa, 2014). It has been assumed they care about nothing else than their own little world, but to what extent is this true? Does the adult vision on this matter stereotype and veto this stage of life? My personal experience around art, culture and museums has surprised me with the recurring resounding assertion that young people and teenagers do not visit museums and have no interest or respect for them at all. But is this really true? And if so, what are we doing so wrong from the institutions not to reach a totally restless, curious and snooping sector of society? For all this, this research aims to focus on the perceptions and opinions of young people in relation to museums, whether this alleged disinterest is really the result of a totally “hormonal” stage where you have your head in the clouds or if institutions do not know how to adapt to this type of audience, and are not offering the stimuli, language, and answers they seek. What is the middle term we need to understand us? Is it possible to reach a balance between us?

# 1. The purpose of this research

The main objective of this study is to define the reality of the perceptions of young people and teenagers in relation to the museological offer in their environment. The approach to this objective allows to break down general objectives that seek to clarify and highlight what kind of information do we have available on this sector of the public, whether there is a specific offer of activities aimed at this profile of visitors and how it influences their environment and social situation in the cultural practice. Now that the bases of this study have been established, specific objectives that are intended to be achieved thanks to the application of a series of research techniques that will make it possible to obtain information on the general state of the issue are to be defined—to know whether there is an interest on teenagers' part for the world of culture, or what are the necessary traits in order to establish and consolidate a bond between both parts.

How many times have you visited a museum and been surprised to see that you were alone in the room? If there were more visitors, how many times were they under 19?

The reality of many museums is that they do not have an influx of visitors according to all the previous work need to set up an exhibition, plan an activity or remodel a space. But if we look closer and wonder how many of these visitors are between the ages of 12 and 19, the answer may be hopeless.<sup>(2)</sup> So, where does the interest of teenagers in museums and culture stand? Is it their last priority? For sure?

This research aims to focus on the vision, perceptions and opinions of teenagers towards museums to answer whether younger audiences are curious and have an interest in this aspect of culture. The will to conduct this research stems from the awareness of the benefits of culture in relation to social and educational aspects, linked to the recurring response experienced by museums that teenagers do not visit or have interest for them (Cacace, Costa & Francischetti, 2017). Therefore, drawing from the very beginning from an inductive reasoning as a result of personal experiences and visions reinforced by specific bibliography, the intention of this research is to verify whether teenagers really have an interest in museums. Existing research on this topic follows the line that many museums are aware of the need to approach this sector of the public (Gonzalo, 2012), and that they try to incorporate dynamics and activities attractive to younger people. However, while this is true, for the most part these are large, powerful museums with many resources that are already consolidated as benchmarks, with more capacity for doing so.<sup>(3)</sup> The main variable on which this research focuses is the interest of teenagers for museums. The intended objective is to make this interest quantifiable by transcribing the answers obtained through various research techniques to get a positive response to the issue—that there is an interest indeed.

This hypothesis is tested by triangulating three research techniques and is reinforced with studies on the same topic and existing data (Pereira, 2011). The main variable, which is one of an intangible nature, is manipulated by translating it into graphs and statistics that allow the results to be quantified. Interaction dynamics that allow direct visualization of opinions and facilitate data collection are also used. The research revolves around a very specific sector of the public—the younger audience. I have included in the sample subjects ranging from the ages of 12 to 19 years, which correspond respectively to the school stages of first year of secondary education and the senior year of high school. Therefore, the intended conclusions show that there is no disinterest, but poor communication between different social groups<sup>(4)</sup> and a lack of resources and incentives by institutions to adapt to the of the younger audience. This research can highlight a number of shortcomings that museums suffer, especially those of a local nature, creating clear references and basic points of improvement focused on the attraction and benefit of the type of public being studied. It also highlights different factors related to museological, communication and management issues that will help to gather more information to promote accessibility to museums (Serracant, 2012), to modernize them and to make them a powerful leisure option.

## 2. Methodology

The main objective of this research is to find out whether younger people have an interest in museums, and whether they have accessible information and a clear idea of what a museum is and how it works. This will lead through the methodology specified in this section to a search for information on whether museums comply current social

requirements and demands, even assessing whether there is a relationship between the interest and cultural participation of the studied group according to their sociocultural and familiar contexts.

It has been considered appropriate for this research to include not only the opinion of young people, but also the vision of professionals and students of the sector towards the participation of this audience in the museological world when recalling their own personal experiences, to analyze in a comparative way whether the observations and opinions on improvement on the museums' part coincide with those of adolescents. To guarantee an optimal performance and obtain the most relevant data, many research techniques have been used, choosing the most suitable for each section and sector of the investigated population, to triangulate the results in the end and allow to create a clear and precise answer to the specific objectives and hypotheses formulated. On the other hand, the general objectives have been achieved through a bibliographical search and an analysis of the data published by the corresponding entities in relation to the topic of this study, creating a valid state of affairs in which to frame this research.

## 2.1. The design of the research

This research has been approached from a non-experimental model(5) using a cross-disciplinary design(6) as the situations and methodologies created to extract data are not of reproducible content(7) and it has not been possible to manipulate their many variables. The approach of this research is mixed(8) as it has combined quantitative and qualitative techniques to analyze the two selected populations in the most appropriate way:

? The first selected segment of population and the most relevant one for this study was the group of younger people and teenagers. It was decided to sort the population according to age, selecting the ages corresponding to the school years of secondary education and high school, from 12 to 19 years. This division is very wide, but it was decided to consider it as valid due to the fact that the activities that museums offer to schools are separated by educational phases, and the stage between the ages of 12 and 19 is seen in this sense as a single block where the same educational resources are used for all courses.(9)

? The second selected segment of population are professionals and students of the fields of education, culture and art.

This research focuses on the search for information about younger people's interest for the world of culture and museums, for which three methodologies have been selected and used. Two qualitative research methodologies—the focus group interview and the participant observation—and a quantitative methodology—the survey. By combining these in a complementary way and triangulating the obtained data this study reached some conclusions as faithful to reality as possible (Vallejo & Finol, 2009), and it achieved both numerical and textual data, due to having used the inductive method to generate theory around the working hypothesis and the subsequent analysis to corroborate or refute it.

## 2.2. The type of sampling

? Simple random sampling has been what has characterized the selection of focus groups.

? A probabilistic sample by conglomerates was used for the participant observation, as all selected groups belong to school groups.

? An intentional non-probabilistic sample has been selected for the survey, as the researcher has selected how to distribute this survey based on the existing characteristics and profiles related to the sample. There has been a desire for a snowball sampling.

## 2.3. The size of the sample

(10)

? It has been deemed valid to carry out at least two focus group type interviews.

? Contrasting results for the participant observation of more than three school groups.

? Survey results are deemed valid if more than 75 responses are obtained.

For the focus group, three interviews were conducted, and in relation to the participant observation, this process was carried out in some of the activities offered by the Catalan Museum of Archaeology in their Girona headquarters to the schools and institutes of Catalonia.

A survey has also been conducted using the Google Drive survey app as a result of the desire to be able to distribute it online, from which 115 responses were obtained.

## 3. The theoretical framework

The aspects that form the theoretical framework of this research want to create a state of affairs that encompasses the characteristics of adolescence, relating them to current sociocultural aspects that directly influence it and that create a concrete perception of art and culture, both by the teenager and the adult, while analyzing what kind of data on this topic is collected and published and to what extent they are valid and complete.

### 3.1. What do we mean by adolescence?



Compulsory Education. Controversia: Éxodo de arrebatos, by Cristina Gimenez

Adolescence is a stage defined in a relatively modern way (Funes, 2018). It has ceased to be understood as a purely biological and transitory process to move on and be detailed in an increasingly complex and sophisticated way (always from an adult perspective) and in relation to the world around us. It should also be added that at this point we try to define adolescence from a Western perspective, as reality does not always allow children(11) to enjoy this period of evolution, self-knowledge and growth to establish the personality and abilities of oneself. It aims to be a transitional stage where the total link between two perspectives must be considered—adolescence as a product of a context and as a product of its adults (Funes, 2005). The result, however, is the conception of this period as a conflictive and rebellious period (Serracant, 2012) difficult to face in the educational and cultural field, two pillars that must be fundamental in this stage of life as the familiar one is. If the context is ever-changing and increasingly

complex, and the adult gaze judges more than it understands, the definition of adolescence is probably neither the most accurate nor the most hopeful, and many institutions may fall into a rejection of this sector of the public.(12) At this point appears the term “adultcentrism”(13) —those interactions between adults and young people where the adult is in a higher position (Unicef, 2013) for the simple fact of being so, although most of the time they are not prepared to guide and accompany teenagers in what they are experiencing (Ulloa, 2002). This imposition blocks the search for autonomy and strengthens the relationship with between the young person and the adult from this perspective of imposed control and authority, producing generational blockages that make it difficult for them to listen to each other and to empathize, and emboldens the cliché that teenagers neither listen nor care about anything. Let's do an exercise—(14) take any word and put the term adolescent as a complement: sexuality, use of social networks, relationships, studies, and so on. Is the result optimistic and reassuring?

The issue of identity and the research for it by adolescents is a topic in adolescent psychology textbooks (Funes, 2018), where it is explained that one of their main concerns is to set this straight. To build one's own identity it is necessary to obtain information, research and resources that favor autonomy, and from museums we can offer experiences that help them and that awake these abilities, connecting theory with emotion (Fernández & Pastor, 2007), creating good dynamics that expand and foster their cultural capital. In this way, cultural institutions are promoted in the daily lives of young people and for the benefit of the development of their identity.

### **3.2. And the data, what does it tell us?**

Periodically, many organizations publish data and statistics on culture and participation. For this research I have made a selection in relation to its fidelity. That is, they are statistics created by consolidated institutions such as the Catalan Government or the Ministry of Culture, and I have focused exclusively on data linking cultural activity at museums and exhibitions with the range of age that occupies this study. These data will provide us with a first analysis of the current situation of young people's participation and interest in this sector of culture and what are the parameters that are taken into account when analyzing them to create an initial state of the issue that is reliable and truthful, always selecting the most recent data. At the same time, this research will also make it possible to detect possible shortcomings in information and statistics.

Analyzing the data from the most reliable public sources that are available to us, we see that interest and attendance by young and adolescent audiences are completely opposite between them. A lack of interest before high attendance highlights the lack of data that clarifies the reason for this fact, which may be due to the fact that visits to museums are made during school hours and are organized by schools. We can extract numerous negative factors from these publications that interfere to create a solid database, such as that age bands(15) do not match each other or that museums are classified differently, either alone or in conjunction with data on exhibitions or art galleries, or even the zoo.

The lack of a joint criteria makes it difficult to analyze cultural practices and museological data. It must be said that the latter are cold, far from social aspects, with a total lack of references.(16) It should be added that there are totally irrelevant points above others that could give a lot of information, always analyzing from the hypothesis and framework of the present research, such as in Annex 1 of the habits survey and cultural practices in Spain, where the level of visits to museums, exhibitions and galleries is studied according to the visitor's state of health. The obvious result is that there are many more visitors in good health than others in acceptable or poor health. Annex 2, on the other hand, provides us with very enriching data, such as the cultural participation of children aged 10-14 linked to family and school participation and interest. I believe that at this point it should be given much more importance, as it would provide us with very useful data for the dissemination of entities in the family or planning activities that try to make cultural activities increasingly popular within family leisure.

### **3.3. The benefits of art and culture**

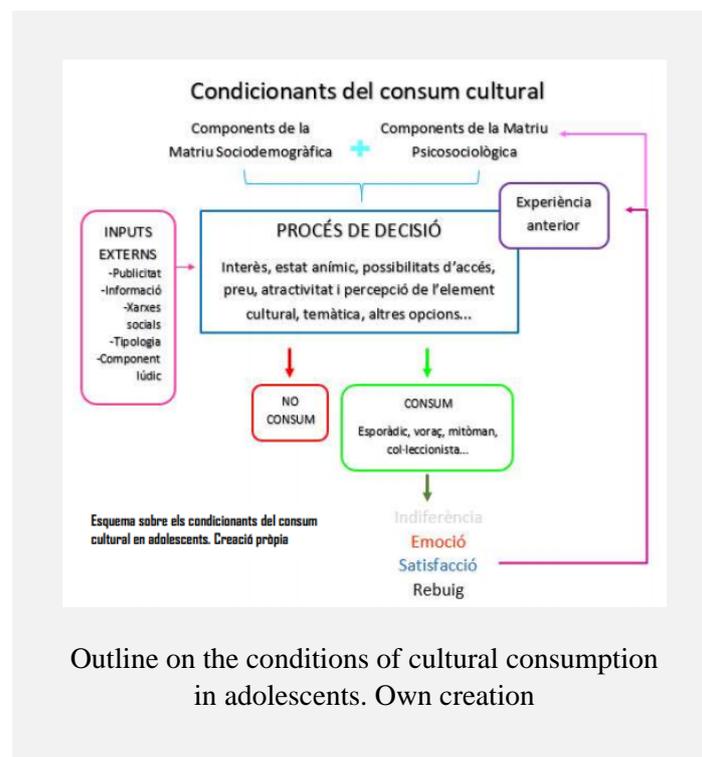
Many studies have highlighted the positive effect of cultural and leisure activities on happiness (Veenhoven, 2018) and people's well-being (Ateca-Amestoy et al., 2016). We also know that the role of the senses and emotions is crucial in self-development, especially in a crucial stage such as adolescence. Therefore, there is nothing better than

museums, art and culture (Santacana & Martínez, 2018) to encourage and accompany these aspects of the adolescent personality, taking advantage of this stage in which young people are just at a key moment to absorb new ideas and values, to experiment and to enjoy. At a personal level, making art and enjoying it provides people with the means to express their thoughts and feelings (López & Martínez, 2006), and as a result of artistic creation and experimentation, knowledge of oneself and others can be increased, reinforcing cognitive skills. The practice of art and its enjoyment contribute to the process of intellectual and emotional balance of people, (17) opening new ways of communicating to express their emotions and actions. Culture plays a key role in building and consolidating the foundations of social cohesion and inclusion, individual and collective well-being and the accumulation of social capital. On an individual scale, cultural participation increases creativity, improves our happiness and health, and fosters our personal growth. (18) Jaume Funes (19) mentions six needs of teenagers:

1. Those related to clarifying themselves as people and positioning themselves in the world.
2. Those related to their status as a subject who learns in the society of communication and lifelong learning.
3. Those related to communicating, expressing and creating.
4. Those related to learning risk management.
5. Those related to the practice of autonomy and responsibility.
6. Those related to learning to live with others.

Therefore, with the benefits provided by art and the tools available to museums, we see that these institutions are fully prepared to cover, or at least try to cover, these adolescent needs, as long as they incorporate museographic elements (Villaseñor, 1993) that bring learning together creatively, driving research and curiosity along with freedom of movement and teamwork.

“For me, the great unresolved matter of our time is rethinking the relationship between culture and education. It cannot be that the management, planning and implementation of the cultural world and the educational system work so separately. It is a serious symptom that leaves the cultural sector in the hands of a circuit of experts who are increasingly elitist and disconnected from society as a whole . . .”. Marina Garcés (philosopher).



If we extrapolate all these concepts to the experiences of teenagers, we see that the accumulated cultural capital they have is vital to form a positive or negative perception of the world of culture, along with their social and family situation linked to their characteristics and their personal interests, in which previous experiences and those linked

to the academic curriculum carry a lot of weight. All these factors will contribute to the decision to consume a cultural product, boost the cultural industries and continue to drive the economic engine linked to this sector, as well as gaining more experience. And in relation to the three previous considerations, we can state that culture brings benefits at an individual level, and that when linked to education it expands the possibilities of communication and learning. All these experiences create and train young people to continue to have the tools that will lead them to consolidate their cultural capital and at the same time to be a cultural consumer, which will have an impact on the increase of museum activity and its possibilities.

### **3.4. Social reality**

In 2021 we live before a reality in crisis where basic needs are not covered and it is easier to have a smartphone in your pocket than to have access to certain educational and cultural spheres.<sup>(20)</sup> To this unequal access we must add a conception that is even more so—we live in multicultural societies that are not yet aware of their wealth and the benefits that this fact brings to them, and we find a reflection of this in museums,<sup>(21)</sup> where in many cases this diversity has no place because it has not been planned and therefore has no representation at all. What interest can the Episcopal Museum of Vic arouse in a group of Muslim teenagers? And the Fogars de la Selva Peasant Museum to a group from a rural institute? Multiculturalism is a challenge within the cultural heritage, in which the narratives of museums and archives tend to be unidirectional and clearly national (Carbó, 2015). For this reason, better cultural and educational policies must be promoted,<sup>(22)</sup> in which all cultural identities are recognized and have a place at their facilities, and the social inclusion of numerous non-museum profiles must be encouraged at the same time. Let us ask ourselves too what kind of audience is most asks the most for cultural activities. Generally, those with a high income and a high level of education. In contrast, the profile of the non-visitor is usually that of low educational level, low income and low resources,<sup>(23)</sup> including here the bulk of the population at risk of social exclusion,<sup>(24)</sup> although there are studies that show that art and culture are a great tool for fostering educational and social inclusion, while at the same time give the opportunity to regenerate community bonds (Vigna, 2008). Many social organizations use art as a tool for the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, and even more, teenagers from marginalized social sectors tend to value spaces that highly promote expressive development, as these are places where they feel identified and recognized, and where their skills can be shown, where they become visible and feel included (Hayman, 1961). These activities between art, culture, and society fit into the model of community museums, a museum model that is still being adapted to Europe and even more so in the Spanish context, which aims to identify three logics of representation of multiculturalism and the phenomenon of immigration—documenting, vindicating, and recognizing (Van Geert, 2016).

## **4. Analysis of results**

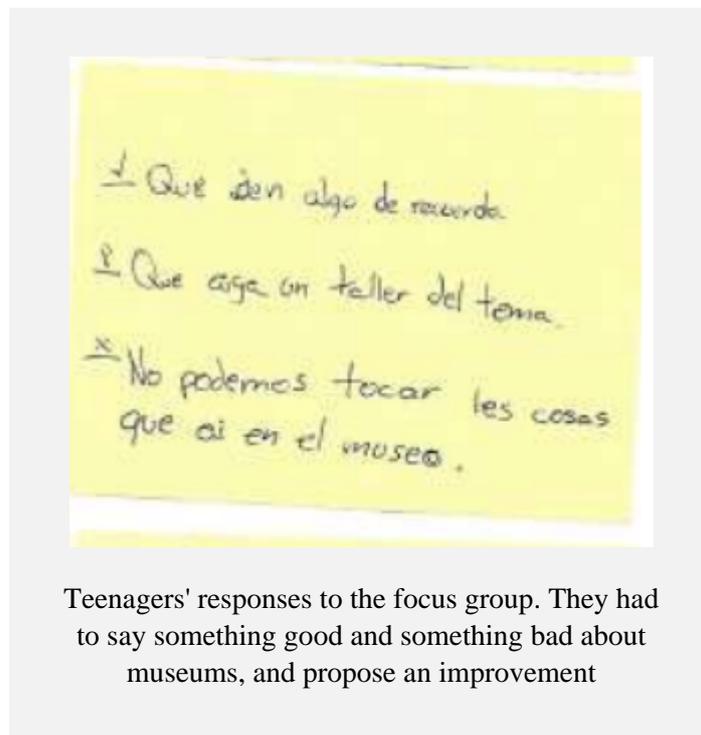
The results obtained with the three research techniques used in the present research will be detailed right below: the group interview, the participant observation, and the survey to contrast them with the hypothesis and corroborate whether they meet the established objectives.

### **4.1. Results of the focus groups**

The initial situation in the three group interviews was that it was difficult for the young participants to get involved, and it took them a few minutes to get started and let go. Consequently, there came a point in the debate where many of them complained that cultural and school institutions do not ask them what they want, what they expect or what they think.<sup>(25)</sup> They believe that their opinion is not taken into account from the sectors that are supposed to support them the most and to encourage their thinking and critical capacity. The general feeling that they have is that they are an audience that is not interested in visiting museums and galleries. They all agree once more that the solution to the lack of attractiveness and low influx of teenagers into museums is to add dynamism. They would like them better if they were more fun, dynamic and visual, right from the start. They ask for quality aesthetic experiences, and there is generally a complaint about the price and difficulty of mobility of museums, followed by an ignorance of those closest to them and the type of content that they exhibit.

The vast majority of teenagers agree that they would visit a museum that exhibited a topic of interest for them, and the ones they listed are linked and typical of the adolescent stage: videogames, sports, adventure, curiosities or everything that is not taught.

When showing them museums or asking them what they would like to find in specific institutions, the vast majority ended up asking for topics and explanations that actually are present in the museums shown to them. For example: they were interested in knowing how glass is made at the glass museum or knowing how cinema was filmed in the past if they visited the museum of cinema. These answers resolve some of the issues raised in the general objectives, which will be discussed in more detail in the conclusions and personal assessments, such as that some existing barriers to young people's access to different museum cultural activities are a lack of general information, a perception of non-representation in institutions and the general feeling that these are not made for them. At the same time, we can also answer the general objective of whether there really is a teenage non-existing public, and we state that it is not so, as all schools make numerous school trips to museums and exhibitions, meaning that it is a collective that does visit museums, although not in their free time but in activities linked to their academic curriculum. It should be noted that the type of teenager that assisted to the second focus group belonged to a higher social and economic position,<sup>(26)</sup> which left significant differences compared to the other two groups, where most participants were teenagers from migrant families, with lower resources and more difficulties in learning, an aspect that opens a new debate on unequal access to culture. With this data in hand, the aim of detecting whether there is a relationship between the interest and cultural participation of the studied group according to their sociocultural and family situation, it is clear that there are significant differences depending on the family situation of each teenager.



Why should we talk quietly in a museum? Why are we told to shut up when we give our opinion and discuss what they are showing us? Teenagers don't like this, but does anyone like to have a guard behind them who constantly makes them shut up for some absurd and outdated reason? I certainly don't.

## 4.2. Results of the participant observation

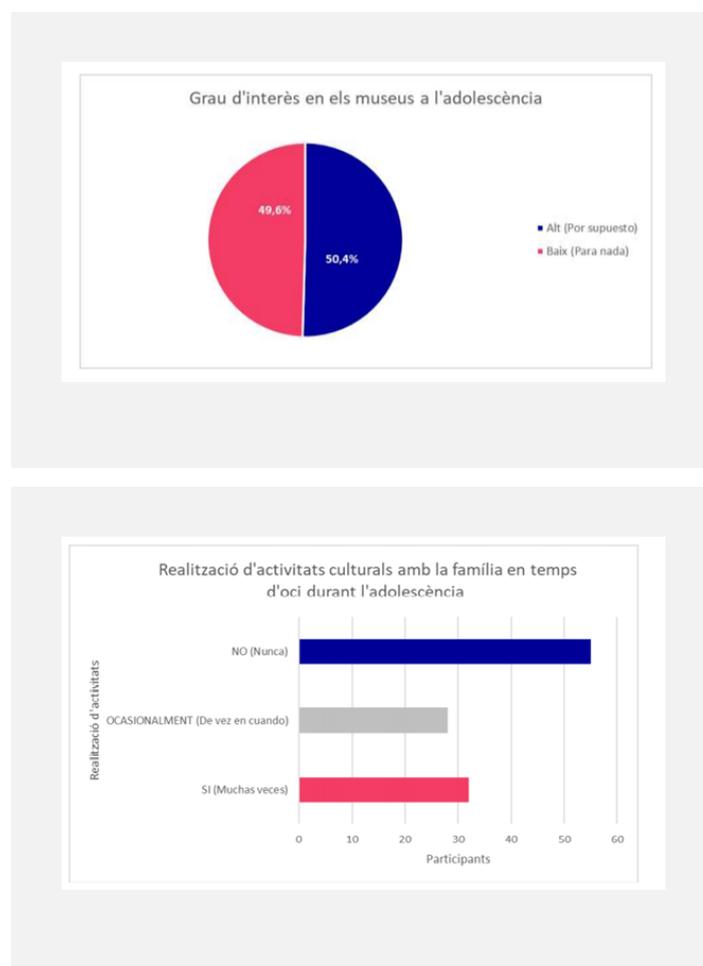
The participant observation<sup>(27)</sup> consisted of participating together with the school groups in activities proposed by the Catalan Museum of Archaeology in Girona. In the four activities in which we participated, the interaction with the teenagers led to the figure of the researcher being seen as another educator, and so it was possible to experience how they formulated questions related to the exhibition, asked for help to carry out the activity and asked questions about the speech given by the guide. It is noted from this observation that: 1) There is a total participation of all the teenagers in the part of the workshop in which they assimilate the concepts explained to them. 2) Students ask and

are interested in the activity, especially at the beginning, but if the explanation is directed towards more technical aspects and only in the form of a speech by the educator, the number of students who “disconnect” increases. 3) The activities in which the explanation is reinforced by didactic material and where the interaction with the students is sought do capture their interest more. With the results of the participant observation and the group interviews, the specific objectives can be analyzed by resolving that an interest from young people does exist, but it is lost in the way the contents are presented, as not all museums meet their expectations and demands.

### 4.3. Survey results

The survey, conducted and distributed online, had a total of 115 participants and its results were analyzed using graphs. (28) We proceed to specify some of the most relevant:

The results do show an interest among respondents in the adolescent stage, both high and low, almost in the same proportion. We can deduce that interest in this sector is increasing as the level of education and specialization in the field of arts, culture and education increases, and so we see an almost equal distribution.



The cultural practices carried out during the adolescence of the respondents highlight that there is a large volume of them who never carried out such activities with their family, while those who did and those who enjoyed them only occasionally are very similar in proportion. Hence, we deduce that family cultural activities in leisure time are not a very popular choice among respondents. With an absolute frequency of 0.47 for teenagers who carried out cultural activities with their families during leisure time, an absolute frequency of 0.75 among those who did it and of 0.99 among those who did not, we obtain relative frequencies of 0.28 among those who did, a 0.24 among those who did not and a 0.47 among those who did it occasionally. We can state that conducting cultural activities with their families was not a priority leisure option for the subjects in this sample. Given these results, we wanted to study the answers of respondents to two variables, so we created a contingency table with the answers to the questions “conducting cultural activities with the family in leisure time during adolescence” and “the degree of interest in museums.”

| Interès actual<br>Visites culturals amb la família | De vez en cuando | Muchas veces | Nunca       | Total        |
|--|------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| ¡Fan total!  | 8.7              | 13.0         | 4.3         | 26.1         |
| Bueno, tanto como fan@atico...                     | 32.2             | 14.8         | 18.3        | 65.2         |
| No no, que pereza                                  | 7.0              | 0.0          | 1.7         | 8.7          |
| <b>Total</b>                                       | <b>47.8</b>      | <b>27.8</b>  | <b>24.3</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Cross-sectional graphic between current interest in museums and carrying out cultural activities with the family during leisure time during adolescence.  
Own creation Data analysis with R Commander

The results in absolute frequencies show that the respondents who carried out cultural activities with their families during leisure time are those who are currently most interested in museums, with a result in absolute frequency of 13.0. Those who feel indifference towards museums used to visit and carry out family cultural activities on an occasional basis, and their absolute frequency is reflected in 32.2 of the results. As for the respondents who have no interest in museums, 0.0 of absolute results answered that they carried out cultural activities with their families, compared to 7.0 who did so occasionally and 1.7 who never did. Pearson's Phi correlation coefficient is applied in the analysis, with a result of 0.34, therefore with a correlation of  $0 < 1$ , with a positive direct linear relationship between these two variables.

Finally, the survey provided an option for them to propose improvements to make museums more attractive to themselves. The answers, in order of relevance, are:

- Creating content that is closer, current and of their interest.
- Offering interactive and dynamic content.
- Incorporating new technologies.
- Improving information.
- Offering better prices and offers.
- Not changing a thing.
- Don't know

In relation to the opinion of professionals in the field of education, art and culture and the specific objectives set, we can say that most respondents believe that cultural institutions are not adapted to young people and should be made more attractive for them, more related to their own interests, in order to attract them and make them participant in cultural activity. We also see that the options for improving institutions coincide with the interests of young people in relation to the content, dynamism and implementation of interactive and manageable material. Therefore, we can say that the methodologies and changes that museum institutions must make to be more attractive to young audiences are known and studied.

## 5. Conclusions

As Daniel Sánchez Caballero says,<sup>(29)</sup> “a good teacher must be someone who is able to generate educational

experiences and not exclusively transmit content.” The same goes for museums and teenagers. They are not an impossible audience. They are actually a necessary audience, so much as creators as consumers of content, for them to know history so that they can preserve it and make it develop. This research shows that this group complains about the lack of dynamism and motivation offered by museological institutions. Teenagers do not feel identified with museums and believe that it is difficult for them to find elements that catch their attention. They lack a lot of information about what types of museums exist and what they have to offer, while there is widespread ignorance about the museums in their own city. It’s amazing to see how they demand things that do exist but are not promoted. They complain that they are not asked for their opinion, that they are stigmatized and excluded. Other negative aspects of museums that most teenagers expose are those that could quickly be improved and adapted to them with ease, such as the information provided to them, prices, or the dissemination of their activities and dynamics. On the other hand, the aspects that teenagers assess positively are definitely beneficial for their growth and personal evolution at this stage, those that make them think, that stimulate the imagination, that inspire them and invite reflection. They know that cultural institutions are beneficial, but they see them far from their reach. This research highlights the need to redesign museums by making them more interactive with the public due to the current social and technological situation, to adapt them to today’s society, which needs constant stimuli, while the discourses must be rethought by making them more inclusive, following the steps of a multicultural society. We are living in the year 2021, we are overcoming a pandemic, we are showing reality and social change through museums. We can do this. It is necessary to adapt our themes to the perspectives of teenagers. All museums and exhibitions are adaptable to themes, through similes and interests of young people. Museums of a local nature may not have as many resources to adapt their discourses to new technologies or to create striking remodels to capture the public, but they can link their thematic blogs to the present and use textual, manipulative and didactic resources. Museums must be rethought, adapting all typologies to current interests, explaining and giving importance to history, the function of the object in the past and its simile in the present. This study therefore provides scientific knowledge about a specific type of audience—adolescents. For this public, the offers of museum activities are not a priority in the field of leisure, but they are taken into account in academic and curricular activities. The activities that museums offer the most are family activities and those aimed at children, and then at an adult audience. Advances in the understanding of heritage management highlight its shortcomings in analyzing offers aimed at this type of public. It also highlights the need for new museographies and museological narratives, for modifying the concept of what a museum is, for moving it completely away from the museum-temple-elite binomial, and for opening it completely to society so that people can enjoy it and nurture from all its benefits. It is also necessary to provide innovative scientific knowledge with the statement that teenagers do not have a disinterest in the cultural world—what they have is a total misinformation of what it can bring to them, what they will find and how they can access it. Heritage management is aware that it needs to be renewed and adapted to new times, but it is difficult to find out how, and results are slow and quite exclusive. By analyzing data provided by institutions on the role of museums in relation to teenagers, we see that surveys and public statistics are not completely reliable, as they usually do not directly assess the attendance or the interest in museums themselves, since these are often combined with other exhibitions, libraries, archives or monuments. It is difficult to find data in relation solely to museums. The main variable on which this research focuses is the interest of teenagers for museums. The intended objective is to make this interest quantifiable by transcribing the answers obtained through various research techniques to get a positive response to the issue—that there is an interest indeed. What new areas of research emerge as a result of this research? It is confirmed that the dynamism and interaction between content and works are indispensable requirements to make museums more attractive to teenagers, and it is necessary to study how to implement this—more manipulable material, more participation, less stigmatization of young visitors, and more references to the present and to their interests. The greatest finding in relation to the temporary social situation that this research presents is the assertion that most museums are not prepared to welcome and reach a multicultural public, a real social multiculturalism that is excluded from many cultural institutions, whether it is for their interests, the type of content they expose, or their resources and motivations. This fact is related to the other social link presented by this research—the direct relationship between the family context and the cultural experience of teenagers. In relation to the specific objectives, it should be noted again that an interest exists, but there is a lack of information accessible to teenagers, or a clear idea of all the possibilities that museums have to offer for them. They largely agree on a perception of museums as elitist centers. They do not feel identified with them. They believe that the content of museums does not represent them, but when it is explained to them and when they discover what museums have and what possibilities they offer to them, their interest is very present. Therefore, based on their opinions, we deduce that museums do not meet the requirements that young people expect of them. They demand more dynamism, more participation and less

control, and more content related to their interests. Having interviewed groups of teenagers from different social backgrounds has also highlighted that those who belonged to a family sector where members had higher education visited museums more often and were more open to cultural experiences than those who came from families with fewer resources and lower curricular preparation. It should be added here that the contingency table created as a result of the survey results showed the direct relationship between the teenagers' interest in museums and cultural capital accumulated through cultural experiences with their families. The survey also obtained results from the opinions of professionals and scholars of the field of culture, arts and education, although this data is not completely reliable, as 34% of the respondents did not come from this field. However, most participants agree that the way to make museums more inclusive for the younger generations is by creating content that is closer, current and of their interest, always very dynamic and interactive, with new technologies being paramount. This data absolutely agrees with the opinion of young people. Hence, now that we know what is missing and what needs to be changed in museums, we need to get into it. Young people want museums to be fun, interactive and full of curiosities, dynamism and activities. These are ingredients that are already studied and known by museology to attract all kinds of audiences. We already have the theory—we lack the practice.

## Notes

1. With which they can't always cope. See the article “Los vigilantes del Louvre están agotados,” by Peio H. Riaño, published in the digital version of the newspaper *El País*, on May 27, 2019.
2. See the study *Desaprenent. Una mirada feminista a l'etapa de secundària*. Barcelona City Council-Eixample District, March 2019.
3. “Activities for young people are offered in big and renowned museums, but what about the ones that operate on a local scale? That, in this environment, a teenage usually has fewer tools to deal with it, and often becomes a passive consumer who swallows inputs without selecting or thinking.” Del Río, N. *Los jóvenes y el museo: experiencias en, desde y para el MNCARS en relación con la cultura visual*. Queen Sofía National Museum, 2012, p. 132.
4. “If professionals do not love the user, and vice versa, the collaboration between them doesn't have much hope to succeed, as museums end up being a cultural cliché for the chosen audience. The ineptitude of institutions to be part of the creative forces of living culture is a sign that they are obsolete and that society itself is decaying . . .” Sola, T., *La teoria general del patrimoni*, p. 28.
5. The researcher never manipulates the variables, but merely observes them. Tres, S.E.S.I.O.N. (2013). *Metodología de la Investigación*.
6. Cross-disciplinary design is believed to be most appropriate for assessing teenagers' interest for museums without interfering with their views and applying observation, participating as a technique, always at a specific time.
7. Carefully explained methodologies are reproducible, but not the content of this study.
8. The use of mixed methodology design is currently an excellent alternative for research in the field of education (Pereira, 2011).
9. As an example, we can cite one of the activities that were attended to as a participating observer, “Innovations in Prehistory”, by the Catalan Museum of Archaeology in Girona, which offers in its curriculum file this activity for both primary education and secondary and high school.  
<http://www.macgirona.cat/ca/Apren/Activitats-didactiques/Tallers-didactics/Les-innovacions-a-la-prehistoria>

10. These sampling dimensions are considered valid in relation to the possibility of being able to be contrasted with each other and to the possibility of the researcher to carry out the techniques selected for the research.
11. International Labour Organization ([www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)) estimates that worldwide 218 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 are employed in the economic production. Among them, 152 million are victims of child labor and almost half of them, 73 million, are in a situation of dangerous child labor.
12. “Els importa un rave,” an article by Daniel Ocaña published in [diarieducacio.cat](http://diarieducacio.cat) on November 1, 2018, about the lack of interest in the educational improvements of high institutions.
13. Pages 18-19, Unicef (2006): *Adolescencia y participación. Palabras y juegos*.
14. Proposed in the publication *Desaprenent*. See the bibliography.
15. It is common for each audience study, survey, or analysis of the cultural sector to select its own study parameters, and for this reason it is difficult to compare bands. In this case, we are interested in the age factor, and in many cases this is not even an analyzed indicator, as is the case of the Cultural Map of Girona and its analysis of the cultural offer.
16. Especially on the website of the Ministry of Culture, it is not specified where the data is drawn from, and the only thing they provide is a percentage.
17. “Ha llegado el día. El arte es terapéutico y para muestra un botón de Canadá, donde los médicos lo ponen muy fácil al paciente: para curarse, ha de ir al museo”. Article by Dolors Massot published on November 21, 2018, at [es.aleteia.org](http://es.aleteia.org)
18. *Observatori Social La Caixa, Dossier 04, gener 2018*. “Participació Cultural i Benestar. Què ens diuen les dades?”, p. 28.
19. Funes, J. (2018). *Estima'm quan menys m'ho mereixi perquè és quan més ho necessito. Una guia per a pares i mestres d'adolescents*. Columna, Barcelona, pag. 93-95.
20. See the article by Àgata Fàbregas published on May 15, 2019, at [www.ccma.cat](http://www.ccma.cat) “Només 1 de cada 5 fills de famílies amb poc nivell formatiu arriba a la universitat,” and the article by Víctor Saura published on the same date at [diarieducacio.cat](http://diarieducacio.cat), “La universitat constata que també segrega per classe social i gènere.”
21. We know the theory, but the reality is different. Museums profess that they are for everyone and that they promote accessibility at all levels, but the exhibitions continue to have an approach far removed from this accessibility, closer to elitism than to inclusion (Castro, Gómez & Asensio, 2016), and targeting a particular type of audience.
22. The cultural and educational policies promoted in Catalonia between 1980 and 2010 have been analyzed (Carbó, 2015), and the results have shown a need to reconsider the models given to respond to the new paradigm of diversity.
23. *Observatori Social La Caixa, Dossier 04, gener 2018*. «Participació Cultural i Benestar. Què ens diuen les dades?»
24. The awareness of people in a situation of social exclusion increasingly highlights the need to combat this situation: <https://www.idescat.cat/pub/?id=intpobr&lang=es>, data from Idescat in relationship with social exclusion only available since 2012.
25. Domènech, Mar. “Els adolescents també volen ser escoltats.” Article published in the newspaper [ara.cat](http://ara.cat), in its section [criatures.ara.cat](http://criatures.ara.cat), on November 17, 2018, in which the author talks about the centers for families and adolescents “Aquí t'escoltem” (Here we listen to you) to promote empowerment and self-esteem among young people and their families, and I personally think it's a resource and a typology that would fit very well into a

museum.

26. They have been the only group that remembered and mentioned exhibitions and museums, especially if they had been related to their personal interests—the mentioned ones were exhibitions on surfing, the Machines of the Isle of Nantes, the Big Fun Museum (<https://bigfunmuseum.com>) in Barcelona, and the Museum of Santillana de Mar. This group had the largest number of participants who had visited museums or carried out cultural activities with their family.
27. The researcher prepared tables with indicators of interest, disinterest or intervention, and by dividing the activity according to the stops made by the educator, it was possible to visually analyze the participation and the decrease in the general interest of the teenagers depending on the point where the activity was at a given time.
28. Graphics of own creation analyzed with R-Commander, EACSPIR package.
29. Daniel Sánchez Caballero in *El Diari de l'Educació*. Article published on December 10, 2018.

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