

The Influence of Animal Visibility on Visitor Experience: with special reference of Dehiwala Zoological Garden, Sri Lanka

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The zoological gardens founded from the 19th century onwards, claimed not only to educate and entertain their audiences, but also to serve science by providing exotic animals. Zoos nowadays have always generated a mixed feelings when it comes to education and equity among all creatures. While the zoo industry is starting to blossom, some may argue that the idea of keeping animal in the cage may have been divorced from our thoughts in the first place which is to educate and protect. As more natural environments are affected by development, zoos represent one type of urban open space that is increasingly recognized as a place for visitors to reconnect with nature. Millions of people visit zoos on an annual basis but we know very little about zoo visitor satisfaction with animal visibility; a lack of animal visibility may negatively impact a zoo visit. The primary purpose of this study was to examine the effect of animal visibility on visitor experience. Specific objective of this study was understand the relationship between visitor experience and exhibit design. The researcher carried out an extensive literature review to provide conceptual background of the study and formulated a conceptual model. Simple random sampling method was used and selected 100 visitors for the sample of this study and data were collected through questionnaire. Associating SPSS 22.0 software and based on univariate analysis and bivariate techniques the data were analyzed. The results of this study suggest that there is a significant relationship between animal visibility and visitor experience. Based on that results indicate exhibit design significantly influence for visibility and visitor experience.

Key words: Visitor Experience, Animal Visibility, Exhibit Design, Zoo

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