



ON THE TRAIL OF NOSTALGIA: A STUDY OF THE EMOTIONS EVOKED BY THE ISTANBUL TOY MUSEUM IN VISITORS

NOSTALJİNİN İZİNDE: İSTANBUL OYUNCAK MÜZESİ'NİN ZİYARETÇİLERDE UYANDIRDIĞI DUYGULAR ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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Abstract

This study investigates the emotional experiences of museum visitors, with a specific focus on the Istanbul Toy Museum in Turkey, widely recognized as one of Europe's most distinguished institutions of its kind. The research is significant as it highlights the role of emotional engagement in cultural spaces, underscores the importance of communication in shaping a city brand grounded in historical heritage, and positions Istanbul as the "toy capital." Methodologically, in-depth interviews were conducted with the museum's founder, Sunay Akın, and 10 visitors to explore their emotional experiences. Participants' emotional states before and after their visit, as well as their evaluations of the museum's communication practices, were analysed through content analysis techniques. The findings reveal that the museum is not merely perceived as a venue for displaying toys but as a living cultural space where communication is fostered and meanings are actively constructed. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that the museum environment significantly influences visitors' emotional states, both prior to and following their visit.

Keywords: Communication Psychology, Istanbul Toy Museum, Communication, Museum Culture, Emotions.

Öz

Bu çalışma, Avrupa'nın en iyi oyuncak müzeleri arasındaki kurumlarından biri olarak tanınan Türkiye'deki İstanbul Oyuncak Müzesi'ne odaklanarak müze ziyaretçilerinin duygusal deneyimlerini araştırmaktadır. Araştırma, kültürel mekanlarda duygusal bağlılığın rolünü vurgulaması, tarihi mirasa dayalı bir şehir markasının şekillenmesinde iletişimin önemini altını çizmesi ve İstanbul'u "oyuncak başkenti" olarak konumlandırması açısından önemlidir. Metodolojik olarak, müzenin kurucusu Sunay Akın ve 10 ziyaretçiyle derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılarak duygusal deneyimleri araştırılmıştır. Katılımcıların ziyaret öncesi ve sonrası duygusal durumları ile müzenin iletişim uygulamalarına ilişkin değerlendirmeleri, içerik analizi teknikleri kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Bulgular, müzenin sadece oyuncakların sergilendiği bir mekan olarak değil, iletişimin teşvik edildiği ve anlamların aktif olarak inşa edildiği canlı bir kültürel alan olarak algılandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, sonuçlar müze ortamının ziyaretçilerin ziyaret öncesi ve sonrası duygusal durumlarını önemli ölçüde etkilediğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İletişim Psikolojisi, İstanbul Oyuncak Müzesi, İletişim, Müze Kültürü, Duygular.

INTRODUCTION

Museums have historically positioned themselves as conduits for understanding the cultural and political structures of ancient societies, as well as exhibition spaces for the evolution of civilization by elucidating the unfolding of humanity's events. In this capacity, museums function as historians, offering visitors a curated experience that enables them to comprehend "what life was like" in these bygone eras. Through these experiences, visitors are introduced to the identity of the period's people, the practices of interpersonal communication, the methods of cultural reception, and the connections with nature and the city (Boddice, 2023, p. 21). The provision of information about history and culture to visitors fosters social consciousness and historical awareness, thereby contributing to the creation of a shared social identity and a sense of historical belonging.

Museums facilitate communication and the establishment of new connections between visitors, their cultural heritage, and the world they inhabit. These institutions offer a unique opportunity for individuals to share a space temporarily and forge connections that transcend their previous experiences. These enigmatic spaces, which offer a rich field of experience in which real life is temporarily suspended, provide visitors with the opportunity to observe, interpret, and communicate with the museum building and the objects within it through the lens of their prior experiences (Karaosmanoğlu & Kara Bilgin, 2024, p. 239). The moment visitors first step into the museum, the museum metamorphoses into a different space. This space, which is distinct from the everyday world, is meticulously designed to encourage visitors to be receptive to moments of wonder at any juncture. While museums are institutions of learning that reflect the memories of societies, civilizations, and diverse cultures, they are not traditionally designed to elicit visitors' emotions (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999; LaVoie, 2003). It is noteworthy that only a limited number of museum visitors have the capacity to transform their museum experience into a creative, exciting, and effective one (Chertoff et al., 2010, p. 105). However, recent years have seen an emergence of an awareness that emotions play a pivotal role in the context of museum visits.

The prevailing consensus in the field posits that emotions and cognition are intricately intertwined, with both being necessary for meaning making (Hubard, 2015). This awareness involves a synthesis of emotions and reflection, which optimizes the museum visit through the combination of different skills and ways of acquiring knowledge. Museums provide rich stimuli for visitors, stimulating imagination and creativity (Gartenhaus, 2000). Visitors need to identify, think about, and interpret works of art in museums. The existence of museums dedicated to collecting, preserving, exhibiting, researching, and interpreting artworks invites museum visitors to reflect on the artistic, historical, social, and aesthetic purposes and feelings of an object and to make connections with other objects and periods.

Furthermore, museums contribute to the development of aesthetic tastes by introducing visitors to various art movements, techniques, and artistic works. For the museum experience to be effective, it must be both permanent and learning-oriented, and visitors must be able to create interpretive experiences through artifacts. In order to achieve this, museums are expected to establish a connection with their visitors (McRainey, 2013). Museums offer visitors the opportunity to examine and research different aspects, experiences, and cultures of people, societies, or various civilizations with the rich stimuli they provide (Jones & Jackson, 2014). One of the concepts that best expresses the concepts of museum, artifacts, learning, interaction, and visitors is "connection" (Smith et al., 2017). This connection can be made in a variety of ways, including through the narratives of artifacts or the architectural features of the museum building itself, during the observation of artifacts, or through discussions about the placement and organization of collections within the museum. As Mercin and Diksoy (2023) have noted, museums have undergone significant changes in terms of function, content, and type from the past to the present. However, today, they adopt an approach that prioritizes the individual and society as the central focus. In this regard, museums can be regarded as acting for the benefit of society without anticipating any form of compensation, thereby maintaining this continuity throughout all periods (Chang, 2006).

It is evident that contemporary society requires communication, interaction, and group work grounded in experiences in museums to ensure a satisfactory museum visit. Contemporary museum visits have shifted from an object-oriented approach to a participatory and experience-oriented paradigm, as evidenced by the works of van de Laar (2013), Mercin & Diksoy (2023), and McRainey (2013). This paradigm shift places the museum visitor and their characteristics at the forefront of the museum experience, thereby enhancing the quality of the visit. Hubbard (2015) asserts that facilitating communication among visitors is one of the most effective methods to achieve this objective. In contrast to conventional museum visits, particularly those incorporating communication-based activities, these structures enable visitors to observe artworks in close proximity, exchange their sentiments, reflections, and impressions with others, and connect their museum experiences with their prior knowledge and experiences. These performance and communication-based activities, which are employed for diverse purposes and in varied forms (Wang, 2014), provide effective methods and strategies to mobilize visitors' emotions and enhance their learning experiences (Hughes et al., 2007).

The objects, events, and narratives exhibited in museums facilitate an emotional connection with the past for visitors (Walsh-Piper, 1994). For example, a war museum can help visitors experience the devastating effects of war and develop empathy. All of the artifacts or certain objects in museums can cause visitors to recall their own life experiences and create an emotional connection with their personal memories. In addition to the objects that demonstrate the life experience, museums also offer an aesthetic experience through artworks, architectural designs, and sound arrangements. These elements can influence visitors' emotional states both during and after their visit. For instance, an impressive painting in an art gallery can evoke emotions such as admiration or melancholy. Therefore, objects can be considered triggers of emotions, given that an object does not have the same emotional impact on everyone. The emotional response to an object may vary depending on the circumstances of the encounter, including the individual's age, prior experiences, and the context of the moment (Üzümçü Polat & Şahin, 2017, p. 52). To illustrate, the same object, such as an old toy car, might elicit different emotional reactions in a 40-year-old and a 20-year-old. Similarly, a doll might evoke a range of emotions, including fear, grief, longing, or regret, depending on the context and circumstances. The fundamental material of emotions is interaction.

Interaction serves as the intangible and invaluable mortar that sustains the architectural stance of museums, nourished by the power of human communication (Sartre, 2002, pp. 11–12). Emotions, which are at the basis of interaction, can be examined in the form of interpretation, that is, the understanding and evaluation of an expression. To understand the impact of museum visitors' experiences on their emotional states, it is crucial to examine their pre-visit emotional states and the reflection of their emotional states after the visit. The emotional content of artifacts during a museum visit can reinforce the guiding function of museums. In this regard, the present study, which involves emotion and communication, body and mind, and all these elements, aims to develop a proposal that can be integrated into the whole in the specific case of Istanbul Toy Museum. Museums hold the power of space design, and designs carry a certain power and impact. Museums are just buildings before they gain a soul depending on their meaning. These buildings are built on certain scenarios and the spirit they want to keep alive. In Sunay Akın's design for the Toy Museum, the message he intends to convey to visitors, the emotion he aims to evoke, and the spirit he seeks to embody are meticulously crafted in relation to the spatial environment and the artifacts on display. Implicit assumptions, often referred to as the prescription of emotions, transcend the thematic distinctions of the exhibited artifacts in the design of the visitor areas. It is imperative for museums, visitors, and founders to critically evaluate these implicit assumptions within the framework of communication.

The museum was selected as the research area, and an effort was made to examine how the meanings attributed by the museum's founder to the museum and its toys, the stories he created, and the general atmosphere of the museum resonated with the emotional states of visitors. The absence of analogous studies signifies the study's unique contribution to the existing literature, with its findings expected to enhance the existing body of knowledge. The study's significance lies in its ability to draw attention to the pre-visit emotional states of the target audience, their emotional experiences after the visit, the importance of communication, and the function of the toy museum in the social dimension and raising

awareness. This study aims to examine the emotional states of museum visitors before and after their visit, describe their emotional experiences during the visit, and identify their suggestions and expectations regarding the museum's communication activities. There is a lack of literature that comprehensively addresses toy museums, their visitors, emotions and communication. The limited number of studies in this field necessitates further research. Secondly, studies examining toy museums, emotions and communication have shown that research focusing on visitor experiences and emotions is insufficient. Thirdly, the effects of globalisation on changes in museology have not yet been comprehensively examined. The accelerating process of globalisation and the evolving conceptualisation of museology make it imperative to evaluate the emotional and communicative importance of museums. For these reasons, this study aims to address the existing knowledge gaps on this subject and understand current museological dynamics. For instance, Tangkuptanon and Sawmong (2020) examined the Special Toy Museum of Thailand's use of interactive applications as a digital marketing tool. Jagodzińska (2022) examined the roles and responsibilities of museums, focusing on the Poland-Krakow Toy Museum. Sadooghi et al. (2024) examined the development of sustainable tourism in the case of the Iran-Kashan Puppet & Toy Museum.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Museums, Communication and Emotions

The term "museum" derives from the Ancient Greek word "mouseion," signifying "temple of sciences" and dedicated to "muses" (Sop et al., 2020, p.3891). In recent years, museums have undergone significant developments, resulting in a restructuring of their functions. This evolution has led to museums transcending their traditional role as mere repositories of artifacts and collections, becoming entities that utilize and develop information systems in domains such as documentation, education, research, collection management, design, conservation, maintenance, and repair (Uralman, 2006, p. 252). Museums develop educational content and communication activities for different age groups based on their collections (Norman, 1993). Museums play an instructive role in building children's inner worlds with the toys they contain (Artar et al., 2004; Onur, 2010; Karadeniz & Artar, 2017).

Evaluating museums solely in terms of their geographical location and the artifacts they contain is insufficient. Museums serve as structural elements that facilitate connections between the past and the present, functioning as effective memory tools that enable individuals to comprehend the past through the lens of the present (Soydaş & Üstünbaş, 2020, p. 378). Networks and interactions occur within lived spaces and places, with emotional dynamics being embedded within the physical architecture of the environment. The historical context of spaces, buildings, and objects is instrumental in understanding the characteristics of emotional style, as well as the relationship between space and communication (Bondi et al., 2005; Bruno, 2007; Jones & Jackson, 2014; Reckwitz, 2012). Emotional expression is contingent upon an individual's subjective experience within a given space (Boddice, 2023, p. 218).

Toys have been identified as significant instruments in the developmental process of bodily position and established relationships during childhood. Toys are considered as indicators of their respective eras and reflect the economic, social, and cultural characteristics of both folk art and industrial products (Huizinga, 2006, p. 16; Onur, 2002, p. 14). Toys underscore the pivotal function of communication and the significance of emotions in conveying individuals' ideas, sentiments, reflections, and aspirations through shared languages (Brady, 2022, p. 11). Individuals frequently seek to share the emotions they encounter in their daily lives with others or with someone with whom they share a close bond (Güneysu & Tekmen, 2009; Hariman & Lucaites, 2001). Emotions play a pivotal role in motivation, particularly in enhancing human existence (Goleman, 1996; Seçer, 2005; Steigenberger, 2015; Avcı, 2023).

This study is based on the above-mentioned assumptions and explores how sharing emotional experiences in museums can strengthen communication. Visitors bring their own emotions with them when they come to the museum, and these emotions interact with the exhibited works, themes, designs and atmosphere during their visit. Emotions reveal and present certain values. Understanding values requires emotions, which are vital for maintaining and strengthening interpersonal communication in terms of understanding and interpreting values (Deonna & Teroni, 2012; Johnston, 2001). Emotions are powerful feelings that influence how events are experienced and how information is interpreted. They

profoundly affect decision-making, information processing, risk perception, action-taking and communication processes (Goodwin et al., 2004; Steigenberger, 2015).

Toy Museums

Contemporary museums are undergoing a period of transformation, with an increasing diversity of museum types. While the assertion has been made that all conceivable subjects are represented in museums, those that offer visitors profound knowledge and insight on a particular topic are classified as "special-interest museums." Within this framework, toy museums are regarded as a subset of special-interest museums (Onur, 2014, pp.16-18). These museums act as a conduit between the past and the present, serving as living museums that perpetuate the legacy of both eras (Erbay, 2017, p. 435). Marcus et al. (2012, pp. 7-8) further emphasize that toy museums can cater to children's aesthetic preferences and emotional needs, offering rare learning experiences that can enhance historical knowledge and develop understanding skills. These museums serve as reliable sources of information. Toy museums facilitate interaction with tangible objects, thereby serving as conduits of information that are influenced by and shape societal discourse through reciprocal communication (McLean, 2007, p. 246; Fladmark, 2014, p. 13).

The act of learning in a museum setting can be conceptualized as a process of "learning from objects." According to Hooper-Greenhill (1999), objects function as documents, possessing the capacity to retain and document information. They undergo changes in response to new insights gained through learning, thereby serving as a reminder of previously acquired knowledge. A significant aspect of learning in a museum environment pertains to the dynamics of thinking skills and emotions. Toy museums also function to elicit questions from their audiences, evoke emotions, and encourage further research (Claverie, 2017, pp. 28–29). Toy museums also contribute to the image of a city (Speshilova, 2023). Madran (2014) identifies the preservation of childhood happiness and innocence as one of the primary motivations for collecting toys. Madran elucidates that the impetus for collecting toys stems from a sense of deprivation, stemming from the absence of childhood and the opportunity for imaginative play. The genesis of toy museums can be traced to Europe, with prominent exemplars including the Pollock Toy Museum and the Nuremberg Toy Museum, which are regarded as the world's leading and most significant institutions in this domain. These museums have the capacity to appeal to individuals of all ages, effectively facilitating intergenerational communication and fostering the development of a museum culture among diverse interest groups (Karadeniz & Artar, 2017, pp. 479–481). The design of toy museums is unique, offering visitors a distinctive experience that fosters the development of children's ability to express themselves. In these museums, children communicate with their age group in an unhindered and non-transferable manner, facilitating an environment conducive to open dialogue and interaction. The visitor profile of these museums is not limited to children; it also includes adults who engage in activities with their children, thereby creating opportunities for shared experiences among family members. Adults, too, find value in these museums, as they facilitate introspection and the realization of long-held desires, including nostalgia for the past and childhood, the rekindling of childhood dreams, and the desire to engage in play (Erbay, 2017, pp. 443-444).

The Istanbul Toy Museum (ITM), which constitutes the sample area of the study, was founded on April 23, 2005 by poet and writer Sunay Akin. The museum, which is currently under the supervision of the Istanbul Directorate of Archaeological Museums (Istanbul Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2024), is noteworthy as the third toy museum in Turkey and the first toy museum in Istanbul (Istanbul Toy Museum, 2024). The museum's decor was designed by theatre designer Aydan Doğan. ITM is the world's first museum to be founded by a poet and built by a theatre designer (istanbuloyuncakmuzesi.com).

The museum's classifications, as delineated by Demiral Gökalp (2015, p. 74), encompass the categories of art museum, based on its collection, and independent/private museum, contingent upon its administrative affiliation. It is classified as a museum-house according to the place of exhibition, a public museum according to the service area, and a toy museum according to the theme. The museum, which exhibits toy examples from the 1700s to the present day, is located in the Göztepe/Erenköy neighborhood of Kadıköy. It is housed in a 5-story wooden historical mansion. The genesis of the museum can be traced back to Akin's visit to the Nuremberg Toy Museum in the early 1990s.

Akın's research focused on the history of toys, which he explored over the course of five years. Following his initial visit to the museum, he traveled to all the toy museums in Europe (S. Akin, personal interview, May 2024). During his exploration, he collected toys that tell the history of toys, and the museum's decor was specially designed to create "spaces for children to play" in their own imaginations. The museum consists of nine rooms, each with a different concept. ITM's affiliation with ICOM dates back to 2009, and the museum's involvement in the activities of the European Museum Forum (EMF) commenced in 2011. In 2012, ITM was honored with the prestigious European Museum Academy (EMA) and Hands On! International (2012), and the Children's Museum Award from the European Museum Academy (EMA) and Hands On! ITM also organized the inaugural meeting of the European Toy and Children's Museum Association (TOYCO) in 2012. Following the conclusion of this meeting, Istanbul was formally designated as the Toy Museum Capital (TOYCO, 2012). ITM has adopted the mission of ensuring that children do not forget the power of play and imagination.

The museum provides information about the history of the game, as well as an educational component focused on the concept of conservation. Akın asserts that the notion of preservation initially disseminated throughout the country from their museum (S. Akin, personal interview, May 2024). ITM aspires to congregate three generations—grandmothers, grandfathers, parents, and children—who also constitute the target demographic of the museum. The museum's objective is to provide appropriate information and toys that appeal to all three generations, fostering a sense of shared history and the future. Since 2018, the museum has continuously exhibited more than 4,000 toys, with the content of the collection being continually refreshed by Akın, the founder and curator of the museum. The addition of new toys to the exhibition is not subject to a predetermined schedule. The collection is predominantly comprised of acquisitions from foreign antique shops and auctions, featuring a wide array of items. These include models of kitchen utensils, dollhouses, space and robot toys, plush toys, airplanes, automobiles, wheeled toys, trains, dolls, teddy bears, toy soldiers, and workers. In addition to these, the museum displays a selection of other toys that are regarded as being of exceptional significance on a global scale. Examples include Monalisa's doll and Charlie Chaplin's personal belongings. In addition to these, the museum exhibits toys that reflect a specific period or event, defined as narrative toys.

The museum's design is conceptually divided into distinct sections, each with its own unique theme. For instance, the space toys are exhibited in a section dedicated to the exploration of space, where visitors can learn about the historical efforts to reach the Moon. Similarly, the train toys section utilizes a didactic approach, retelling the history of the Industrial Revolution through the medium of toys. The room dedicated to war toys, characterized by their damaged appearance, was designed with the objective of promoting critical thinking and emotional intelligence (S. Akin, personal interview, May 2024). The collection is distributed across three floors. The first floor features Turkish-made toys, an Indian room, and a fire and rescue room. The second floor features a circus room, a map room, a hospital-police room, and a train room. The third floor comprises a soldier room, a space room, and a knight room. Akın elucidates the collection's significance in the context of toy and game culture/heritage as follows (S. Akin, personal interview, May 2024): In ITM, the play and toy history is expressed in the most accurate examples. The toy to be exhibited in a toy museum must be in the right position in terms of toy history. The emotion it creates identifies with history, or history merges with that emotion.



Figure 1. Istanbul Toy Museum Images

TOYCO was formally established under the auspices of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism at the Caddebostan Cultural Center (CKM) of the Kadıköy Municipality in Istanbul on November 19-20, 2012. The event saw the participation of numerous countries, including Spain, Poland, Sweden, France, Slovenia, Italy, the Philippines, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Estonia, Greece, and the Netherlands (TOYCO, 2012). The event was meticulously organized with the active involvement of representatives from a diverse array of toy and children's museums, numbering 14 countries. Following the conclusion of this meeting, Istanbul was formally designated as the Toy Museum Capital.

In this study, the title of the ITM and its contribution to the image of the country were given priority due to its emotional and communicative significance. The selection of this museum, a pioneering institution in Turkey as the first "private" toy museum, was predicated on several factors. Primarily, it boasts an extensive collection, both in terms of the sheer number and the diversity of artifacts, surpassing other toy museums in Turkey. Additionally, it chronicles the history of toys through captivating and emotionally evocative themes. The museum's innovative approach to presentation, eschewing classical exhibition methods in favor of a more decor-oriented style, further sets it apart. Moreover, it attracts a remarkably broad audience, evidenced by its high annual visitor count that exceeds that of other toy museums. Additionally, the museum's representation of Turkey on the European continent and its substantial inter-national recognition are of significant importance. As museums increasingly prioritize visitor experiences, the manner in which they communicate with their visitors and the qualities they possess has become a focal point of examination. The question, therefore, arises: who are the visitors of a museum? The examination of visitor demographics, including the age and educational levels of the most prevalent visitors, as well as their cultural practices, has yielded significant insights into their needs and expectations (Falk & Dierking, 2018).

The analysis of museum research provides significant data regarding the transformation of exhibitions and practices according to visitor needs. A study conducted by Reiss and Tunnificle (2011) on natural history museums analyzed visitor conversations to determine the meaning of displays to the audience and the information sources relied on by visitors (Louw & Forlizzi, 2004). A substantial body of research has emerged on the evaluation of visitor pro-files, expectations, experiences, and motivations (Sezgin et al., 2011; Sheng & Chen, 2012; Gürel, 2013; Harman & Akgündüz, 2014; Kırçova & Erdoğan 2017; Tezgel & Akova, 2017; Harada et al., 2018; Korkmaz et al., 2019; Sop et al., 2020; Akoglan Kozak, M. & Günçan, 2021; Hernández & Toney, 2021; Giammanco et al., 2022). However, the number of studies on the emotions of museum visitors is limited. The present study aims to address this gap by analyzing the emotional experiences of visitors to the Istanbul Toy Museum.

The foregrounding of emotions in the Istanbul Toy Museum is an important factor that increases the impact of museums on visitors. In addition, this approach contributes to the pro-motion of the city, the cultural image of the country, the creation of collective consciousness, and its transmission to new generations. Emotional experiences in museums enable visitors to connect with the past and develop an emotional attachment to cultural heritage, becoming an effective tool to strengthen the communication of museums. This transformation of museums into dynamic spaces for emotional engagement transcends their traditional role as mere exhibition spaces, profoundly impacting visitors. The Toy Museum, with its unique characteristics, serves as a suitable subject for this study.

Classification of Emotions

In the field of emotion research, scholars have proposed various classifications of emotions. Some authors have emphasised reactions and behaviours, while others have sought to explain emotions through biological and social processes (Ashkanasy et al., 2000). A seminal contribution to this field was made by Robert Plutchik in 1980. He examined the emotions that guide various adaptive behaviours in humans and animals, categorising them into eight fundamental groups: These fundamental emotions are fear, astonishment, sadness, disgust, anger, hope, joy and acceptance. Each emotion functions in a distinct manner in order to adapt to environmental expectations. For example, fear prompts animals to flee in order to protect themselves from threats, whereas anger incites them to attack (Martin, 2021).

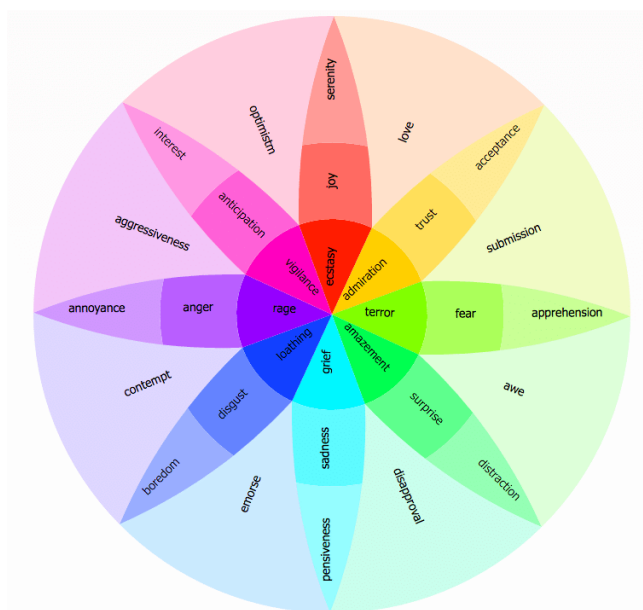


Figure 2. The Wheel of Emotion (Plutchik, 1991)

As shown in Figure 2, the emotions of varying intensity within the emotion wheel are categorised as primary, secondary or tertiary according to how frequently they are felt. According to the Plutchik model, combining different emotions can create a broader and richer range of experiences. For example, anticipation combined with joy can lead to optimism, while joy combined with trust can lead to love. Conversely, surprise combined with sadness can lead to disappointment (Plutchik, 1991, p. 118; Martin, 2021, p. 509). Plutchik's (1980) seminal 'Emotion Wheel' model posits that there are eight fundamental emotions underpinning adaptive behavior within society. These emotions, as delineated by Plutchik, are joy/joy, trust, fear, surprise/amazement, sadness/sadness, disgust/disgust, anger/anger and expectation. This study selected Plutchik's model based on its ability to define a given emotion through the integration of emotions experienced at varying degrees of intensity.

The amalgamation of emotions with other emotions, alongside the accurate interpretation of an individual's internal state and their responses to external stimuli, constitutes the essence of emotional intelligence (Smith, 2020, p. 36; Soydaş, 2024, p. 12). Emotions are the catalyst for behavioral, emotional, experiential and communicative responses, facilitating interaction with others, maintaining equilibrium and providing a lens through which to interpret others and events (Feldman, 2012, p. 329; Lerner et al., 2015, p. 801). The interplay of emotions within the emotional wheel has been identified as a key factor in triggering behavioral, emotional, experiential and communicative responses (Soydaş, 2024, p. 12).

The study of universal emotions has been extensively explored across a variety of disciplines. However, there is a lack of research addressing the emotional effects of museum visits on visitors. The communication-centered examination of the emotions museums evoke in visitors was determined to be the fundamental basis of the research, and it was decided to proceed within this framework. In this context, the statements frequently expressed by visitors in the questionnaire directed at museum visitors were considered and evaluated as emotions on the emotion wheel.

METHODOLOGY

Toy museums not only shed light on the history of toys. They represent the strong communication links that societies and cultures have established with the past. Toys are more than just play materials for children; they are important objects that present the economic, social, political and cultural reflections of the period in which they were made. Each toy, as a prototype of the life practices of the period, can evoke deep emotional reactions in people. The research questions to determine what these emotions are, and their communicative activities are as follows:

- What is the pre-visit emotional state of museum visitors?
- What is the emotional state of museum visitors after their visit?
- What are museum visitors' evaluations of the museum's communicative activities?

The integration of toy museums' collections with the exhibition spaces has the potential to enhance the impact of these institutions. The impressions created by artifacts, the design of the space, scripted narratives, decorations, and layout play a significant role in the communication process. The objectives of the proposed research are as follows:

- To examine the pre-visit emotional states of museum visitors: To ascertain the emotional states of visitors prior to their museum visit.
- To ascertain their emotional states after the visit: To evaluate the post-visit moods of visitors according to the overall design of the museum.
- Defining mood effects: To identify mood changes before and after the museum visit.
- Providing suggestions for communication activities: To identify visitors' suggestions and expectations for communication activities in line with the museum's communication goals.

The importance of this research is underscored by its contribution to the field in three primary contexts: Firstly, there is a paucity of literature addressing the issues of toy museums, museum visitors, emotions, and communication in an integrated manner. The limited number of studies in this area necessitates further research in these areas. Secondly, studies examining toy museums, emotions, and communication have demonstrated a dearth of research focusing on visitor experiences and emotions. Thirdly, the effects of globalization on changes in museology have yet to be thoroughly examined. The accelerating process of globalization, coupled with the evolution in the conceptualization of museology, has rendered an evaluation of the emotional and communicative significance of museums an imperative.

For these reasons, the objective of this study is twofold: first, to address the existing lacunae in the extant knowledge on the subject, and second, to understand the current dynamics of museology. It is also imperative for museum founders, directors, and curators to provide valuable clues about the emotional impact of exhibited artifacts on visitors and communication strategies, and to contribute to museum development with new arrangements and themes.

The present study employed a basic qualitative research design. Qualitative research is a process aimed at revealing events in their natural settings in a realistic and holistic way. It includes qualitative data collection techniques such as observation and interview (Yıldırım & Simsek, 2008). Qualitative research offers an in-depth understanding by examining individuals' ways of evaluating events, their forms of expression, and their perception of the world. Rather than relying on broad generalizations, this approach enables a meticulous examination of the participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences concerning particular facts, events, or individuals. To ensure the collection of rich and detailed data, the researchers opted for the interview method, a technique that facilitates close observation of the participants' perspectives and in-depth understanding of their experiences (Creswell, 2017).

The Toy Museum in Istanbul was selected as the research site; however, the findings of this study were obtained from a single museum, thereby limiting the generalizability of the results to the broader context of Turkey. The museum is mostly visited by school groups during the week, and by families and individuals at weekends. Visitors are equally divided between children and adults of all ages. The museum's average annual visitor count is 150,000. Over the past two years, the proportion of visitors who are foreign tourists has increased. It was previously 6–7%, but is now 20% (personal communication, May 2024; Our Story, n.d.). Two interview forms were prepared for the study: one for the museum's founder and writer/poet, Sunay Akin, and the other for visitors to the museum. Due to the impossibility of reaching the entire population, as well as cost and time constraints, it was decided that a sample would be taken that could represent the population. The 'convenience sampling' method, a non-random sampling technique, was used in the research. As part of the study's methodology, interviews were conducted as a qualitative research method to better analyse the subject of interest. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. A total of 11 people were interviewed for this study, including six female

and four male museum visitors, as well as the museum's founder, Sunay Akin. The participants' consent was obtained and demographic information forms were collected.

Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013, pp. 142–143) have stated that, when selecting a sample, the focus of the research, the amount of data and theoretical sampling are more important than the number of participants. They also note that, depending on these factors and the subject of the research, qualitative research can be conducted with as few as one person. They also note that the data from a study with one participant can sometimes be much more valuable than data collected from 20 individuals in another study. Bülbül et al. (2008, p. 20) emphasise that, in qualitative research, it is more important to consider who is interviewed, based on the content and expectations of the research, and whether the desired results are achieved through the relevant interviews or observations, than to consider the number of people interviewed. For these reasons, the focus of the research was evaluated as the point at which answers repeated each other and a sufficient sample size was reached. A total of 11 individuals were included in the sample. The study was conducted in the cafeteria of the approved ITM building between 09:00 and 19:00 on 24 May 2024, with each interview lasting approximately 20 minutes. The interview questions were developed by the researchers after reviewing studies on this subject (Mura & Kho-Lattimore, 2012; Filep & Deery, 2010; Yirik & Seyitoğlu, 2015). Additionally, the findings section presents examples of responses provided by some participants. After the questions had been finalised, they were pre-tested on five individuals who had visited the ITM. The final version of the interview questions was determined based on the feedback received from these visitors. When analysing the responses, codes were first created and categorised in relation to the answers, and then presented in a language understandable to the reader. During the analysis process, every word that the participants said in relation to each question was evaluated. For instance, a visitor may have multiple reasons for visiting the museum. Therefore, the total number of responses to some questions exceeded the number of participants, which was 11. Validity and reliability are the most important indicators of the credibility or quality of research results (Yıldırım, 2010, p. 81). Validity and reliability are more easily achieved in quantitative research than in qualitative research. While challenging, achieving these two elements in qualitative research is not impossible. Validity is divided into internal and external validity. Yıldırım & Şimşek (2013, pp. 292–293) state that internal validity depends on researchers being consistent in their data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes, and on their ability to explain how they achieved this consistency. External validity, which is related to generalisability, depends on researchers providing readers with detailed information about all stages of the research. Regarding reliability, detailed and clear reporting of the steps followed indicates that the results are based on the collected data and that researcher biases did not affect the results (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, p. 296). Validity depends on the researcher providing the reader with detailed information about all stages of the research. On the other hand, reliability is said to be related to the researcher clearly and precisely documenting the stages followed, collecting and analysing data without introducing their own biases and assumptions, and relating it to other data (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, pp. 293–296). These analyses increase the validity and reliability of the research by ensuring internal and external validity, which is achieved by verifying that the findings are consistent with each other and compatible with the previously established conceptual framework.

FINDINGS

This study focuses on the Istanbul Toy Museum, which functions as a conduit of nostalgia between the past and the present, with a particular emphasis on emotions and communication. Following the acquisition of approval from the Istanbul University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (decision dated May 18, 2023- E-35980450-663.05-1922992), the museum's administration was contacted. Initially, a face-to-face interview was conducted with the museum's founder and writer-poet, Sunay Akin, to obtain information regarding the museum's establishment, its mission, communication and management policies, its expectations for visitors, and Sunay Akin's definition of emotion. Ten individuals over the age of 18 were selected at random from among those who visited the museum on May 24, 2024. Initially, these individuals were interviewed individually at the museum entrance, and their emotional states prior to the visit were inquired about. The attempt was made to ascertain which emotional states would influence their decision to visit the museum. The feedback obtained during the interviews was documented.. The visitors were coded as K1, K2,..., K10, and the

transcripts were analyzed by content analysis. The demographic information of the participants in the study group is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants in the Study Group

Demographic Data		Count
Gender	Female	6
	Male	4
Age	18-30	1
	31-40	3
	41-50	5
	51 and over	1
Educational Level	Primary School	2
	High School	1
	Undergraduate	4
	Master's Degree	1
	PhD	2
Marital Status	Married	5
	Single	5
Childbearing Status	Yes	9
	No	1
Age Range of Children (People with children)	0-3 years	1
	6-11 years	5
	11-15 years	3
	16-18 years	2
The Following Accompanies The Museum Visit	Family (Child, Partner)	7
	Friend	1
	Other (Lonely)	2
Information Channel for the Museum	Social Media Account (X, Facebook, Instagram)	2
	Website	3
	Announcements and Public Notices	2
	The environment encompasses one's spouse, friends, and relatives	4
	Other	1
Purpose of Visiting the Museum	Obtaining Information	2
	Curiosity	10
	Learning	2
	Passing the Time	3
	Having Fun	5
	Meeting Sunay Akın	6
	Other	-
Toy History Information	Yes	3
	No	7
Toy Museum History	Yes	4
	No	6
Prior Toy Museum Visit Experience	Yes	5
	No	5
The Target Audience for the Museum is as Follows	For Children	4
	For Adults	3
	For All Age Groups	2
	Not Suitable for Children	1
	Not Suitable for Adults	-
	For Toy Collectors	-
Total		10

An examination of the demographic information of the interviewees included in the re-search reveals that the majority of visitors are middle-aged and above, possess a bachelor's degree, are married, and have children. It was observed that these individuals visited the museum with their families. A sense of curiosity drove their visit to the toy museum, and they had obtained various information about the museum from social media. Nearly half of them had previous experience visiting museums and toy museums.

The findings obtained from the interviews with the visitors and the founder of the museum are presented to examine the participants' opinions regarding their feelings about the museum they visited. The findings are interpreted by making direct quotations from the themes, sub-themes, and sections that make up the sub-themes.

The evaluation of the themes, codes, and visitor opinions concerning the Toy Museum's visit and communication activities reveals four predominant themes: expressions of appreciation, expressions towards the museum, general opinions about the museum, and evaluations of the museum's communication activities. The evaluation of these themes was conducted within each theme.

Theme 1: Visitors' expressions of appreciation

According to the data presented in the table, the most prevalent main theme within the coding is "expressions of appreciation." This theme is further subdivided into two sub-themes: "positive expressions" and "negative expressions." The positive expressions include terms such as "magnificent," "very beautiful," "very impressive," "extraordinary," "interesting," "fascinating," and "inspiring," as articulated by six participants. Conversely, negative expressions, such as "the space is narrow, small, and not disabled-friendly," underscore challenges experienced by some visitors. The analysis reveals that positive expressions constitute the predominant category within the thematic framework of expressions of appreciation, indicating that visitors to the Istanbul Toy Museum hold this institution in high regard.

Theme 2: Statements on satisfaction

The theme of "expressions of satisfaction" is comprised of two sub-themes: "positive expressions (7)" and "negative expressions (3)." The majority of the satisfaction theme is positive, as evidenced by the following codes: "you should definitely come," "I am glad I came," "it attracts people especially," "the pressure of being an adult is lifted from you when you enter," and "you become a child." Conversely, the negative statements, such as "I would not come again," "I got my longing," and "I may think again when I miss my childhood," conveyed a less favorable sentiment. These negative statements, which included the inability to acquire toys for one's children, were less frequently expressed. This suggests that the majority of visitors expressed satisfaction with their experience at the Istanbul Toy Museum.

Theme 3: Opinions about the museum

The third theme, entitled "opinions about the museum," is further subdivided into two sub-themes: "positive opinions" and "negative opinions." The positive opinions are characterized by expressions such as "it is magnificent, like a fairy tale land, a magical ship that makes you travel through history, a place to come as a family." Conversely, negative opinions, such as "If it were more activity-oriented, it would meet my expectations," represent a minor proportion of the overall sentiment. Among the sub-themes that comprise this theme, positive opinions were expressed with greater intensity, while negative opinions were expressed to a lesser extent. This indicates that "visitors to the Istanbul Toy Museum hold a predominantly positive opinion about the museum."

Theme 4: Evaluations of the museum's communication activities

The fourth theme, "Evaluations of the Museum's Communication Activities," is further subdivided into two sub-themes: "Positive Evaluations" and "Negative Evaluations." Positive evaluations include the following: "The space is fascinating, and the communication of the space combines with the smell of cookies coming from the bottom floor. They use communication well in every sense by listening to the story and history of the toys with Sunay Akin's voice." The sub-theme of negative evaluations identifies room for enhancement in the museum's promotional materials, suggesting that visual elements, when

strategically positioned, can enhance the impact of communication. The application of a virtual museum visitation experience through the use of a mobile device is proposed as a means to enhance the museum's communication. In this sub-theme, negative evaluations were more intense, while positive evaluations were less prevalent. It is thus understood that visitors to the Istanbul Toy Museum have negative evaluations about the museum's communication activities.

Table 2. Themes, Codes and Visitor Emotions Regarding the Emotions Created by the Toy Museum

Theme	Participant Statements	Codes	Age
Adults' Emotions Before the Visit	<i>"I came with joy and happiness."</i>	1. Female	31
	<i>"We came with excitement and joy."</i>	3. Female	34
	<i>"We came with great enthusiasm"</i>	4. Male	35
	<i>"I came with happiness and joy."</i>	8. Male	45
	<i>"It has an inspiring aspect. Most importantly, you are witnessing that inspiration."</i>	8. Male	45
	<i>"We came with excitement and joy."</i>	10. Female	44
Adults' Emotions After the Visit	<i>"I leave with great happiness and longing for the past."</i>	1. Female	31
	<i>"I would say bewilderment, mostly nostalgic excitement."</i>	2. Female	40
	<i>"Sadness. I looked at my own childhood and felt sorry for today's children. I realized that our children cannot experience childhood."</i>	5. Male	69
	<i>"I left happy, not in a euphoric way, but in a peace of seeing things that take me back to my childhood."</i>	7. Male	50
	<i>"Nostalgic. Longing, but it's not age-related. It comes from the museum itself: the toys on display, the decor and the smell of the mansion"</i>	9. Female	18
Emotion Description of the Museum	<i>"Absolutely longing."</i>	1. Female	31
	<i>"I would say joy. It fills you with hope."</i>	3. Female	34
	<i>"Happiness. This is the place you see in storybooks, the lines you read are toys."</i>	4. Male	35
	<i>"Sadness. Once there were toys here for us to be ourselves, now it's like watching."</i>	8. Male	45
	<i>"Hope."</i>	8. Male	45
	<i>"Happiness is a longing for childhood"</i>	10. Female	44

Upon evaluation of Table 2, which encompasses the themes, codes, and opinions concerning the emotions evoked by the visit to the Istanbul Toy Museum, it is evident that the visitor opinions are categorized into three predominant themes: (1) the emotions experienced by adults prior to the visit, (2) the emotions experienced by adults following the visit, and (3) the expressions pertaining to the emotional interpretation of the museum. Each of these themes was subjected to independent evaluation.

Theme 1: Adults' emotions before the visit

The initial theme elucidating the emotional experiences of visitors to the Istanbul Toy Museum is entitled "Adults' Emotions Before Visiting the Museum." This theme is further subdivided into two sub-themes: "Positive Emotions" and "Negative Emotions." The positive emotions sub-theme includes statements such as "joy and happiness" and "we are here with great excitement. witnessing an inspiring place." It is noteworthy that no visitor expressed negative emotions. The pre-visit emotions of adults before visiting the Istanbul Toy Museum were exclusively positive. This finding aligns with the prevalent sentiment among adults, as evidenced by their own statements, which include, "I am eager to enter the museum with great anticipation, anticipating an inspiring journey through history," and "I feel as though my childhood is awaiting me within." These statements suggest that adults who visit the Istanbul Toy Museum experience a state of heightened emotional anticipation and encounter profound emotions during their visit.



Theme 2: Adults' feelings after the visit

The second theme, "adults' emotions after the museum visit," is comprised of two sub-themes: "positive emotions" and "negative emotions." The positive emotions experienced by visitors include sentiments such as "I traveled to my childhood, I was happy, I looked at my childhood through a window, and I felt sorry for today's children." It is noteworthy that none of the visitors expressed negative sentiments following their visit. The predominant sentiment expressed by visitors upon their departure from the Istanbul Toy Museum is one of positivity, as evidenced by the following statements: "It is as if you travel back in time and come across your own history in the history of toys." "It is the only place where the past does not pass by." These statements suggest that the museum evokes nostalgia in adult visitors, as the toys on display serve as a catalyst for memories and a nostalgic longing for childhood.

"Observing the exhibition of toys from my youth provoked a nostalgic recollection of that period." "My visit was not to the exhibition of toys, but rather to the history of my own childhood, which is preserved in the toys that remain on the shelves of my youth." It is evident that adults who encountered the toys they played with during their childhood in the museum experienced a sense of contentment as a result of their visit.

The adults who visited the Istanbul Toy Museum may have come for the children, but their experience seemed to be more self-directed, as indicated by statements such as, "It was more like a journey for us than for them." This suggests that the adults' motivations for visiting the museum may have been more personal than for the benefit of their children. Furthermore, it was noted that many of the toys exhibited in the museum were from the adults' own childhoods, emphasizing a sense of personal connection and nostalgia. This observation suggests that the toys hold more significance for adults than for children, implying that they resonate more deeply with adults than with children.

The following statements, among others, offer insight into the impact of the Istanbul Toy Museum on adults: "It's a magical world; I didn't want to leave," and "It is like a secret realm to escape from the real world, to return to my childhood. I wanted to go back to my childhood, take refuge, and be a child." These statements suggest that adults who visit the museum experience a longing to reconnect with their childhood and perceive the museum as a journey back in time. This phenomenon underscores the persistent desire among adults to engage in play with toys, driven by emotions reminiscent of their childhood, irrespective of their current age. The museum's impact suggests that toys can leave profound and enduring im-prints on individuals' lives. This observation aligns with Sunay Akin's (2024) assertion that visitors often depart the museum with their children in one hand and their childhood in the other, signifying a deep connection with their past.

Theme 3: Emotion description of the museum

The final theme, entitled "emotion description of the museum," sought to articulate the emotional response to the museum as a living entity. Visitors employed a range of expressions, including "longing, joy, hope, and sadness," to describe their experience at the museum. They articulated sentiments of hope and contentment upon visiting. Concurrently, the sentiment of "happiness" was frequently articulated, given the museum's embodiment of the scenes from storybooks and the lines from the toys' packaging. A visitor's statement, expressing a sense of nostalgia for a bygone era when toys served as a means of self-expression, resonated with the notion of a longing for the past. This sentiment, coupled with the realization that individuals cannot revert to their childhood selves through toys and the museum, evokes a profound sense of sadness.

The visitors' emotional responses to the Istanbul Toy Museum, as defined by the museum's emotional definition and codes, were predominantly positive. However, when asked to describe their emotions, visitors frequently cited sadness and a sense of nostalgia for the past. The museum is regarded by visitors as a living emotional space that preserves their childhood and innocence, evoking a longing for the past and a desire to reminisce.

Table 3. Reference Distribution of Combined Emotions in Visitors

Visitor Codes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
United Emotions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Optimism (Joy+Expectation)	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Regret (Sadness + Disgust)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disappointment (Surprise+Sadness)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Terror (Fear + Surprise)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Love (Joy+Trust)	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Excitement (Carelessness + Anxiety + Fear) (Enthusiasm + Surprise + Joy)	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Not Feeling Free (Anxiety+ Distress+ Insecurity)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Loneliness (Sadness + Expectation + Longing + Insecurity + Shame)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Longing (Love + Wanting + Loneliness + Sadness)	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1

As illustrated in Table 3, visitors exhibited a pronounced focus on emotions such as excitement, longing, and optimism within the museum setting. According to James and Lang (Yaşarsoy, 2006), excitement is defined as an emotional response that manifests in the body in response to external stimuli. In the context of emotion types, excitement is anxiety based on the feeling of fear, distraction, or excitement that occurs when enthusiasm, surprise, and happiness are felt (Goleman, 2009). The aforementioned emotion can be felt through two opposite emotions, such as fear and happiness. It was determined that the excitement felt by visitors at the Istanbul Toy Museum was enthusiasm, amazement, and happiness. There were no expressions of excitement caused by fear in the statements of the visitors. The sentiment of enthusiasm and happiness served to reinforce the visitors' sense of amazement, evoking a sense of rejuvenation reminiscent of their childhood.

Another emotion experienced intensely at the Toy Museum is longing, defined as "the desire to reach someone or something" (TLA, 2024). According to Plutchik's emotion wheel (Plutchik, 2001), it is a composite emotion formed by the combination of feelings of love, desire, sadness, and loneliness. Museum visitors occasionally reported feelings of longing for toys, and at times, for a specific period of time or the past. A predominant factor influencing these intense feelings of longing was the nostalgic sentiment evoked by the toys' association with one's own childhood.

The other intense emotion experienced at the Toy Museum is optimism, which is fundamentally constituted by the emotions of joy and expectation (Plutchik, 2001) and is defined as "an attitude or personality trait that generally interprets every thought and work well" (TLA, 2024). According to Plutchik's emotion wheel, optimism is a composite emotion comprising joy, expectation, and desire. Optimism, as defined by Plutchik, can be directed towards an idea, an object, or an event. Museum visitors have reported that observing toys that evoke memories of their childhood and visiting the museum itself have a restorative effect on their optimism.

The expression of composite emotions has been found to exceed that of basic emotions. The most prominent basic emotions are curiosity, surprise, joy, and sadness. The utilization of diverse techniques and styles, the arrangement of toys according to themes and narratives, the design of the rooms, and the physical and communicative characteristics of the space have been effective in expressing these emotions. Fear, anger, and disgust were not mentioned at all. Among the combined emotions, excitement was the most intensely felt emotion. The feelings of curiosity, enthusiasm, and surprise towards the toys were effective in evoking this emotion. Museum visitors expressed feelings of amazement and excitement while visiting the toys, and their longing to visit the toys and travel to the past is reinforced by a concomitant longing and sadness, stemming from the awareness that their expectations cannot be met. They attempt to overcome this with a sense of optimism. The notion of composite emotions can be

interpreted as a multifaceted process, extending beyond a mere feeling towards an emotion, object, event, or person.

Within the scope of this study, it can be said that museum visitors have emotional experiences in different emotional transmissions and ways, considering the toys, the design of the space, the physical and communicative possibilities of the space. Excitement, longing and optimism are the prominent combined emotional states. At the same time, it is understood that Sunay Akin, the founder of the museum, also expressed the unified emotion regarding the emotional state towards the museum. "...The museum is like the sun. You will get the light from there. You will go to it. Actually, I built the alphabet of toys, the alphabet is letters. The letter is so important in communication that it creates memory. Museums do that. I founded the museum with this feeling. I want those who have never seen a museum in their lives, who have never been to a movie theater to see the Toy Museum. Because the light is given to the one who stands in the darkest place. Children do not need us. We need children's dreams. Play and toys are a great treasure, they are what builds civilization and children do that. Childhood is not a lived period that ends, childhood is a sense of wonder..."

CONCLUSION

Museums are institutions that facilitate a two-way communication process with their visitors (Schubert, 2004). As posited by Gaskins (2017) and Lundgaard and Jensen (2014), museums must understand their visitors in order to fulfill their social functions. Museums should be equipped to meet the needs of visitors (Golding & Modest, 2013). The advent of interactive presentations and applications in recent years has introduced a communicative dimension to the museum environment, exerting a significant influence on visitor preferences, duration of visits, the propensity to recommend the museum, and the intention to return. Furthermore, the Museum plays the role of a bridge between generations, creating a strong connection between childhood and adulthood, appealing to both adults and children. The conclusion that the museum appeals not only to children but also to a wide audience is similar to the Medan Toy Museum study conducted by Veronika et al. (2021).

In contemporary museums, visitors encounter a diverse array of activities, including culinary experiences, visual stimulation, and social interaction. These institutions provide not only tangible artifacts but also the emotional responses that are often associated with them. However, research on the emotional experiences of visitors in museums remains limited (Davis, 2011). The present study was conceived with the objective of examining the emotional experiences of Sunay Akin, the founder of the Istanbul Toy Museum, and the individuals who visit the museum. The investigation was conducted from a communication-centered perspective, and it was qualitatively designed. In-depth interviews were conducted with both the founder and the visitors of the museum. The emotional experiences of the visitors were analyzed by asking questions focused on their emotional states before and after the visit. The data were then subjected to content analysis, and main themes were formed in three different groups. The themes related to museum visit and communication activities in the first group consist of four main themes: "museum visitors' expressions of appreciation," "expressions about museum visit satisfaction," "opinions about the museum," and "opinions about the communication activities of the museum."

The second group's themes related to the emotions created by the museum visit are categorized into three main themes: "adult emotions before the visit," "adult emotions after the visit," and "the museum's definition of emotion." In the last group, combined emotions were evaluated based on the fact that visitors expressed more than one emotional state. The predominance of positive sentiments among the majority of visitors to the Istanbul Toy Museum was evident, as evidenced by their expressions of excitement, happiness, and overall satisfaction during their visits. The visitors' positive emotions at the time of their departure from the museum suggested a strong intention to visit again and to recommend it to others. Furthermore, the data suggest that visitors experienced a sense of nostalgia, evoking sentiments associated with the past and their own childhood.

The notion of revisiting the past underscores the pivotal role that toys play in the development of an individual's emotional landscape, serving as a conduit to the future and leaving enduring imprints on their lives. The toys showcased in the museum, the thematic designs of the rooms where the toys are exhibited, the methods of presentation, and the emotions evoked by the environment were evaluated as indicators of the interaction, presentation skills, and de-sign capabilities of museums. These evaluations were conducted not only as exhibition spaces but also as places where meanings are constructed. This finding aligns with the conclusions of Chaiyotha (2015) in Krirk Yoonpun's study on the Million Toy Museum, which asserts that museums function not only as exhibition spaces but also as sites for the construction of meaning.

The emotional states of visitors before and after their museum visit indicate that the environment exerts a significant influence on them. The spirit of the environment is shaped by communication, and the museum concept, where the power of emotion is presented through interaction and experience, shapes the emotional states of visitors. In alignment with these observations, visitors to the Toy Museum have characterized it as a living "emotional space," one that evokes a nostalgic longing for the past and serves as a sanctuary preserving the memories of childhood and innocence. The data reveal that visitors experience a combination of emotions, which supersede basic emotions.

The predominant basic emotions experienced by the subjects were curiosity, surprise, joy, and sadness. The utilization of diverse techniques and styles, the arrangement of the toys according to themes and narratives, the design of the rooms, and the physical and communicative characteristics of the space were found to be effective in eliciting these emotions. Furthermore, their sentiments of encountering the toys and reliving the past were reinforced by a sense of longing, while their melancholic feelings stemmed from the inability to fulfill their expectations. These emotions are not merely straightforward sentiments but rather intricate phenomena involving a multifaceted interplay of factors, including the utilization of diverse techniques, styles, and thematic arrangements. The design of the environment, encompassing the arrangement of toys according to themes and narratives, the physical characteristics of the space, and its communicative features, collectively contributed to the effectiveness of these emotions. Furthermore, the experience of encountering the toys and reliving the past evoked a sense of longing, while the manifestation of sadness was attributed to the inability to meet visitors' expectations. In the context of these emotions, optimism emerged as a pivotal factor in their management. This observation underscores the complexity of the emotional process, highlighting the interconnected nature of emotions, objects, events, and individuals.

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The Istanbul Toy Museum exemplifies contemporary approaches to emotions and communication, characterized by its integration of two-way communication through workshops and activities. However, in the future, modern and technological toys can also be exhibited by increasing more interaction-based applications in order to be interesting for all target audiences. In addition, although this study is limited to the Istanbul Toy Museum, it is recommended to be expanded with other museum examples and various visitor groups and to be addressed in future studies with issues such as intention to visit again, sustainable destination tourism and its impact on cultural communication.

The fact that the research was conducted with visitors to the Istanbul Toy Museum is a limitation of the study. The most significant constraint is that the data obtained from the interviews has not been subjected to quantitative analysis in another study.

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