



Evaluation of Carasso Science Park Activity during the Run-in Period

Executive Summary

November 2013

Program Description

The Carasso Science Park in Be'er Sheva was founded to promote science and technology education in southern Israel. The park is a hands-on, challenging educational center that serves as a gateway to the world of science, introducing visitors to various science fields through interactive displays. The park initiates science-oriented activities, conferences and competitions and operates programs to improve achievements in science studies. The park is designed to spark interest, encourage the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies in science and technology in people of all ages.

The Research Goal

To provide formative information about the way in which the services offered by the park are used and experienced, as well as an initial review of the degree to which short-term goals are achieved.

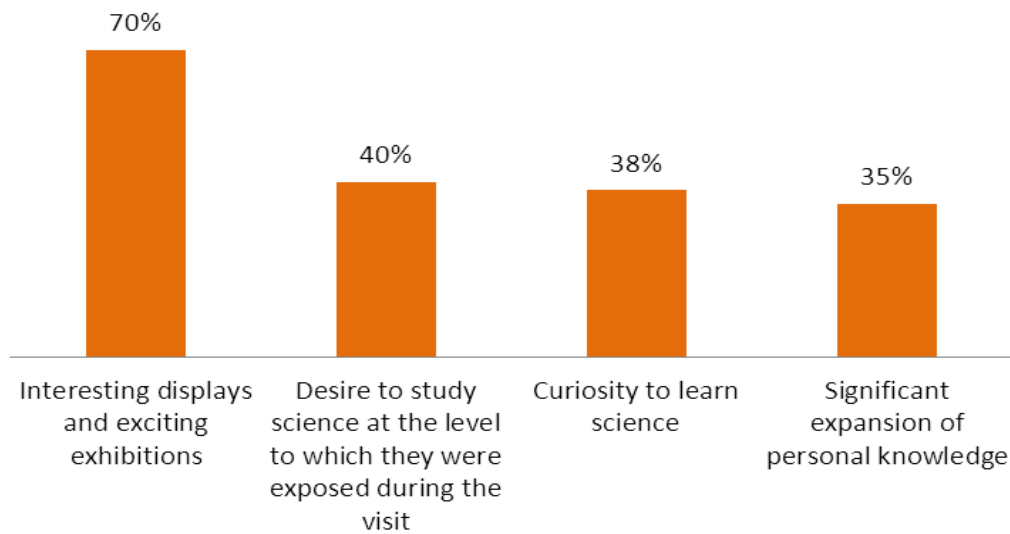
Methodology

Following their visit to the Science Park, 92 visitors of various ages completed a questionnaire about their experience during the visit, their satisfaction with the park and its contribution to them. In addition, 21 guides were asked to complete an online questionnaire about their attitude and feelings regarding their work at the park and the training processes. In-depth interviews were conducted with the park operators and with a group of visitors.

Main Findings

- The analysis revealed that visitors were satisfied with the visit and found the majority of the displays and exhibitions interesting and even fascinating. Over 70% of the visitors reported satisfaction with the displays and with the guides.
- Reports from visitors revealed that the visit contributed to encouraging curiosity about science topics and broadened their knowledge. For example, 40% of visitors strongly agreed that the visit motivated them to learn more about the subjects to which they were exposed.

Contribution of the park as perceived by visitors (N=92)



* The percentage of visitors who agreed with the statements

- The research reveals that instruction in the park is a crucial factor for maximizing the experience and visitor's gain. 63% of visitors believed that guide presence should be increased in exhibitions while only 39% said that they could understand and operate displays without the guide's assistance.
- Most guides believed that visitors successfully operate the displays as intended (understand, read instructions, know how to operate). However, it seems that interaction with the displays is occasionally 'free style' and based on trial and error.
- Most of the difficulties raised by guides and visitors (32%) are related to technical and logistical aspects (e.g. displays that do not work; shortage of seating and shade). Some complained of a shortage of displays suitable for young children.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The visitors' reports indicate that they perceived the visit in the park as an enjoyable experience. In addition, a visit to the park appears to contribute to acquisition of knowledge, change in attitude and increased curiosity about science, thereby accomplishing the short-term goals. The technical and logistical issues that negatively affect the experience should be improved.