Rethinking Visitors Studies for the United Arab Emirates: Sharjah Museums as Case Study

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Mona Rashid Saeed Ali Bin Hussain Al Ali

School of Museum Studies

University of Leicester

March 2015

Acknowledgment

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to understand the reasons why some people visit museums and why others do not in the Emirate of Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates. There are no pieces of visitor or audience research in the United Arab Emirates, therefore this research will examine Western theories on visitor studies and whether they can be applied in Sharjah or not. This study explores the psychological and external factors that influence a person's decision whether or not to visit a museum.

The methodology which was used to collect data was qualitative and the researcher used case studies and semi-structured interviews. In total, 55 interviews were conducted with UAE nationals and residents in three museums and three different coffee shops around Sharjah. These interviews investigated how people determine their leisure activities and whether museums are an option for that activity. The research focused on museum visitors and their motivations to visit a museum. Moreover, it identified the barriers to visiting a museum.

The main outcomes of this study suggest that there are internal factors that influence a person's decision to visit a museum, and these include learning, socializing and identity related reasons. There are also external factors, which are outside forces that lead people to visit a museum, such as a university assignment, weather, the location of the museum and its architecture. Moreover, barriers were identified for people who do not visit museums, which are personal, cultural, institutional, environmental and structural. These outcomes and barriers arose from the analysis of the interviews and finding general common themes which emerged throughout them.

Understanding the factors that attract visitors to come to museums, and the barriers that hinder their visits, helps museologists and museum makers to understand their perception of Sharjah Museums. This will encourage the Museums to enhance their services and what they provide to the public. Moreover, it will encourage repeat visitations and create new audiences.

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Introduction

There is a common question that been raised since museums first opened in the United Arab Emirates 45 years ago. It is about people, and why some of them choose to visit museums and others do not. Western researchers have tried to answer this question regarding Western museums, using variables such as psychological (personal) or socio-cultural factors that influence visitors and non-visitors, and by examining variables such as cultural capital, social class, level of education, personal motivations, expectations, lifestyles, prior knowledge, interests and attitudes (Davies, 1994, Merriman, 1991, Bourdieu, 1984, Falk and Dierking, 1992, Kotler et al., 2008, Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). Moreover, there are external factors, institutional, environmental and structural, that influence visitors and non-visitors (Goulding, 2000, Stylianou-Lambert, 2007, Ambrose and Paine, 2012). These variables will be discussed in detail in chapter 4 Literature Review. However, as there are no existing museum visitor studies in Sharjah or the United Arab Emirates, this research will be the foundation for such studies, and will shed light on the reasons, factors and barriers for visitors and non-visitors in the Emirates of Sharjah.

This chapter will discuss the thesis argument, research purpose and questions. It will include information about Sharjah, why the researcher has chosen to conduct the study at three of the Emirate's museums and summarise the findings. Then it will highlight the significance of this piece of research, and it will conclude by giving an overview of the thesis chapters.

The main research objectives are to understand and explore the motivations of those who currently attend the Sharjah museums, whilst investigating why other members of the community are unwilling to make visits. In this way, the researcher anticipates to better understand strategies that might tempt people to visit museums, and how museums can

facilitate this by being more relevant to these communities. As Black (2005: 7) suggested, in order to develop and retain new audiences, understanding the nature, motivation, expectations and needs of the existing visitors, and building enduring relationships with them, is needed. The number of United Arab Emirates nationals and residents who visit museums is minimal. To understand the reasons behind this, several variables have to be examined, such as education, motivation, attitudes, interest, lifestyle and previous knowledge, drawing on research undertaken by Western theorists and attempting to apply this to the particular circumstances of the Emirate of Sharjah.

When museums were being established in the West, they were less motivated to involve the public, as collectors collected for themselves (Hein, 2000). They only opened their doors to other collectors from the same community group. In the nineteenth century, philanthropists did aspire to broaden their audience, as they wanted people from diverse backgrounds to come together (Hein, 2000). Moreover, museums pioneers saw museums as formal educational places which are similar to schools and public should be educated in the museum venue (Kratz and Merritt, 2011: 12).

The museum in general has many different definitions and purposes. Museums in the modern sense of public institutions were developed in Europe in the seventeenth century (Ambrose and Paine, 2012 : 8). Museum functions have changed through history, from the collecting, researching, storing and conservation of objects, to interpreting them and serving the public. In the nineteenth century, museums had a marked emphasis on objects and specimens, and sometimes they seemed to be a forbidden place for the general public (Alexander and Alexander, 2008 : 9). This has changed in the twentieth century, and museums have started to give visitors more attention; some museums have become community cultural centres. As Black (2005: 1) argued, in recent years there has been increasing pressure from above (governing and funding bodies), from below (audiences), and from the profession itself, to change the way material is presented to the public.

It can be observed that the nature and purpose of the museum has been defined very differently according to the historical or contemporary society and culture that created it. As Al Nayadi says:

Today's museums are no longer simply places for preserving works of art which it is feared will be lost, but are a standard for measuring the progress and development of nations. In fact, they have become scientific institutions where all members of society can learn and be educated. Nowadays the museum is considered as a manifestation of civilization, representing an institute of learning, a centre of culture and a school of art. It is a space for contributing in large measure to the visitor's knowledge of the heritage of our civilization and cultural property. It seeks to spread cultural awareness and to develop an aesthetic awareness and sense among all sections of society. (Al Nayadi, 2011: 27).

The definition given by International Council of Museums (ICOM) is that a museum is a

Non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment (ICOM, 2010)

The above contemporary definitions are important for this research and they show the necessity in understanding museum visitors as they are the main focus to museums in the last few years.

Museums have to understand the social, psychological and economic contexts which form people's interests and concerns, likes and dislikes, needs and wants (Ambrose and Paine, 2012 : 40). In 1984, the American Association of Museums published illustrations on the new thinking of museums for a new century (Lord, 2007: 109). The main message highlighted was "the importance of pluralism in American society and the responsibility of museums to recognise and help translate their meaning to the visitors" (Lord, 2007 : 109). The idea of pluralism is

To bring more people of different races, genders, ethnic origins classes, generations, physical competence and cultural and sexual lifestyle into museums as visitors and workers. So museums need to be physically and psychologically accessible to more people. This is why museums need to make deep changes in their content and messages (Hein, 2000 : 44).

For the purposes of this research the researcher conducted interviews with people in the Emirates of Sharjah in three different museums - Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, Sharjah Art Museum and Sharjah Archaeology Museum - and in public areas such as coffee shops and shopping malls around the Sharjah Emirates. More about the research case studies and locations will be discussed in Chapter 5 Methodology. The researcher did not look at the type of museums as a main reason as to why people were visiting museums as she wanted to examine how motivations and psychological factors influence museum visitation in general rather than the type of museum. The data collected from these interviews was analysed from both settings, in a way which investigated what motivates people to visit museums and what the barriers are that might discourage them from visiting. The analysis of this research did not only focus on a museological perspective, but also looked at the issues from the perspectives of sociology, psychology, education, consumer behaviour, leisure studies and communication. The process of looking at the data from all these perspectives gave a deep understanding of the characteristics of people who do and do not visit museums, what attracts them, and what the barriers are.

At the beginning the researcher wanted to examine how people choose their leisure time. From the interviews conducted, it was noted that the people of Sharjah based their leisure time on socializing, entertainment, weather, change of routine, convenience and services. More is explained in Chapter 6 Findings and Discussion: Free and Leisure time Choices. Then factors and barriers that influence museum visiting were investigated.

After conducting the interviews with the visitors, the researcher found out there are different types of factors that can explain why people chose to visit a museum. There are internal and external factors that encourage people to visit a museum. Internal factors relate to psychology, which includes motivation and the behavioural characteristics of individuals (Davies, 1994: 69). Moreover, learning, socializing and identity were identified as the three main motivators that encourage people to visit Sharjah Museums. Learning means either parents coming to a museum with their children, or students coming to complete an assignment or an individual coming to explore the museum to gain more knowledge. Furthermore, socializing and being part of a group was a strong factor and people enjoyed going to museums with family or friends. Most visitors referred to national

4

identity, and knowing more about the country they belong to or are a part of was a key factor.

The external (structural) factors explored were the location of the museum, the architecture of the building and transportation options. The museum location was one of the factors that people referred to as key in helping them decide whether this was a place they would visit, in particular if the museum is a place which is easily found and has enough parking spaces. Also, visitors' cited the architecture of the building and the importance of having a well-designed museum. That would include museum interiors and non-gallery spaces such as a coffee shop, shop, restaurant and restrooms. Signature museum buildings allow visitors to experience the unique identity of the institution (Sweet, 2007: 266).

This research also investigated the barriers that obstruct Sharjah's people from coming to museums. These can be summarised by three main barriers which are: personal, cultural and institutional. Personal barriers come from within the person themselves, which include the image of the museum, lack of awareness of the existence of the museum or what the museum offers, and general attitudes toward the museum. Cultural barriers come from the culture a person lives in, and institutional barriers come from the museum itself, and include the location of the museum, its opening hours, accessibility, services and staff attitude.

1.2 Thesis Argument

This research argues that for Emirati society and Sharjah in particular, as part of the Middle East and Arabian area, psychological and external factors are the main reasons that influence museum visiting habits, and not social class and cultural capital as most Western museum visitor studies suggest.

Arab society is structured into social classes, and individuals inherit the social class of their family (Nydell, 2012 : 44). In most Arab countries there are three social classes, which are: (1) the upper social class, which includes royalty, influential families and wealthy people; (2) the middle class, which includes professionals, government employees and military officers; and finally (3) the lower class, made up of labour employees (Nydell, 2012: 44).

However, the UAE does not fit ordinary norms, be they the ones of political and social structure or of economic assets (Heard-Bey, 2005: 360). The UAE's social classes changed dramatically after the discovery of oil in the region. When the land was still known as the Trucial States the society was homogenous, because the economic conditions provided little room for any section of the population to live very much better than anyone else. In the UAE, tribal and ethnic class was more significant than socio-economic class. The society saw the recent development of urban living and modern education, lifestyle, healthcare, communication, mobility, infrastructure and culture, which started after the formation of the country as it is today. Therefore, cultural capital theory is not relevant to the UAE context, as its contemporary society still very new and changes rapidly. Today the totality of the UAE population represents one of the most racially, ethnically, regionally and socially mixed to be found anywhere (Heard-Bey, 2005: 360). Citizens of the UAE are those who hold UAE nationality and passports, and they consider themselves as an undisputed class. Heard-Bey (2005: 360), argues that almost the entire local population who hold UAE passports are considered to be middle class and above, if we consider traditional social ranking measurements.

In the United Arab Emirates there is no clear division about social class, either from the government or from sociologists. The society has shifted, and is still shifting dramatically, because of the economic prosperity in the country. Moreover, the government want people to feel equal as citizens of the UAE regardless of their race, nationality, religious belief or social status, and that is why there is no official social class. Therefore, the researcher decided not to use it as a factor in this research.

1.3 Research Questions

There are two main research questions. Based on these questions, the researcher chose the methodology, process of data collection and the analysis procedure. The two main research questions are:

- What motivates the public of the UAE to visit Sharjah's museums?
- Why is overall participation in museum visiting so low in Sharjah?

6

As was mentioned previously, the researcher will discuss and analyze the main Western theories related to visitor studies and their motivations. Moreover, the researcher will examine same theories in Sharjah based on the interviews conducted with visitors inside the museum and outside the museum.

1.4   Significance of the Research

Although there are 19 different museums in Sharjah, no visitor-related research has been conducted to date. Not only is this the case in the United Arab Emirates, but also in the Arab Gulf countries, and in the Middle East. This study, therefore, serves as a milestone for further research and establishes a valuable source of data for museum professionals in Sharjah who are involved in audience and visitation services. Moreover, this research can help researchers dealing with similar situations with museum visitors and museum professionals, either in Sharjah or overseas, and transform the thinking of museum management to a more visitor focused one.

The museum scene in the UAE is increasing, and huge projects have been built - the $27 billion development project for Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi, which will consist of Louvre Abu Dhabi, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, The Sheike Zayed National Museum, the Maritime Museum and the Performing Art Centre (Doherty, 2012), being only one such example. Not far from Abu Dhabi, Qatar has already built a range of cultural institutions, such as Doha Museum of Islamic Art, and in progress is the new National Museum of Qatar.

As the Sharjah Museum Department has a well-established museums and cultural policy it was chosen as a case study to reflect on the extent to which research on museum visitors and their motivations in the UAE is sorely needed.

1.5   Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2 will investigate Emirati culture and society. It will give an introduction to its culture and emphasise education, geography, cultural engagement and values, as well as social structures and relationships. All this information will give a background about UAE

society in general and Sharjah specifically, and will help the reader to understand its people, perspectives, history and context.

Chapter 3 will give in-depth information about Sharjah Museums and their historical background, and discuss recent studies published about them.

Chapter 4 is a literature review chapter, and will examine theories on visitor studies in Western literature. Then it will examine how these theories can be applied or examined in Sharjah. This chapter will include theories on leisure time choice and the main factors people put into consideration while choosing where they want to spend their leisure time, and if a museum is a place they would consider. Moreover, it will contain the socio-cultural, psychological and other external factors that influence people's decisions.

Chapter 5 will describe the methodology employed in this thesis and the research process in terms of sampling, data collection methods and ethical issues which arose during the investigation.

Chapter 6 will discuss the free and leisure time choices, and will use findings from the interviews to discuss where people in Sharjah prefer to spend their leisure time. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of knowing more about how individuals and families spend their leisure time. This will help to understand how people choose their leisure time and if museum visiting is an option.

Chapter 7 will include the findings and discussion, where the researcher will analyse the interviews conducted and will emphasise the important factors that influence people in Sharjah to choose a museum as a place to spend their leisure or free time. These factors will be summarised as internal factors - learning, socialising and identity - and external factors - architecture of the building, weather and location.

Chapter 8 will also include the findings and discussion, but focussing on the barriers to Sharjah residents who do not visit museums. It will highlight the main factors behind this, based upon the interviews which were conducted by the researcher. The three main themes

which emerged were personal barriers, cultural barriers and institutional, environmental and structural barriers.

Chapter 9 will provide a conclusion for the study and answers the research questions. It will present the main findings of the research and connect them to previous literature. Moreover, it will explain the limitations of the study and will provide a set of recommendations to give directions for further investigations and research in the same field.

1.6   Conclusion

This chapter introduced the main argument of the research and why this area of research needs to be examined. The research questions were presented and the importance of this research was explained. The research findings were highlighted briefly, but will be explained in detail in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Before moving into the results and data obtained by the researcher in this study, the researcher will discuss, analyse and highlight the previous studies and literature in the related area of the research. This literature will be explained and explored in detail in Chapter 4 while Chapters 2 and 3 provide the first steps in identifying Emirati culture and Sharjah museums respectively.

Chapter 2   Emirati Culture and Society

History is a continuous chain of events. The present is only an extension of the past. He who does not know his past cannot make the best of his present and future, for it is from our past that we learn. Shaikh Zaid Bin Sultan Al Nhayan (gulfnews, 2005)

2.1   Introduction

This study is based in the United Arab Emirates, therefore this chapter will give an overview of the United Arab Emirates as a country and an understanding of UAE culture and society. This will help us to understand the museum visiting habits and attitudes that individuals in the UAE have. Although the United Arab Emirates (UAE) united as a country only in 1971, the people living on the land have a longer history. The UAE has, since its inception, been on a major growth path in all aspects of life. Its economic and urban development and growth has been evident for all to see. What is not widely known is that cultural aspects and the education sector have also been given a boost by the government and have been given equal importance (Ataya and Deemas, 2011: 59). In his address to UNESCO, Abdullah Alneaimi (2011: 8), who is the country's Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to the agency, informed it of the uniqueness of the museums in the UAE. The wealth of the museums in the UAE, he stated, is not limited to conserving the history of the region, the transformations that have come about over the years, or its concrete or ephemeral treasures. This has resulted in all cities in the Emirates boasting museums on various subjects, be they astronomy, anthropology, ocean sciences or natural sciences. Collaborative ventures are being set up with national and international museums all across the world. Comparing the new museums to an open book comprising sciences, history and arts, Alneaimi (2011: 8) stated that the museum landscape in his country can be thought of as an expanse studded with gems from the past, or even a mirror that is reflecting the travel of the region through space and time, facing adversities on the way but eventually reaching stability and prosperity.

This chapter will give an overview of the country in general and Sharjah in particular. It will outline the geographical context of the UAE, and how this affects the community.

Moreover, it investigates Emirati culture and society and its development. It will introduce the nature of culture and the emphasis on education, cultural engagement and the values in Emirati society, as well as economic change which was the main force for change in the UAE in the twentieth century. All this information will give a deep understanding of the attitudes, values and priorities of the people who live there. This will lead to an understanding of the attitude towards museums and if museums are valued as places to visit.

2.2   Country Overview

To understand the context of United Arab Emirates society, an overview of the county is needed. In 1971, the UAE first emerged as the nation we know today. The seven emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Umm Al Quwain and Ras Al Khaimah were united to establish the foundation. As Al Abed and Peter (2001: 121) state, the

> United Arab Emirates achieved formal independence as a federal state on 2 December 1971, as a result of two distinct, but related, events. One was the signature by the government of the United Kingdom (UK) and the rulers of the seven emirates (formerly known as the Trucial States or Trucial Oman) of separate instruments bringing to an end the treaty relationship that had existed between them since the early nineteenth century. The other was the agreement between rulers of six of the emirates, the previous July, to establish a federation to be known as the United Arab Emirates simultaneously with the ending of the treaty relationship with Britain. The seventh emirate, Ra's al-Khaimah, formally acceded to the new federation on 10 February 1972.

But the UAE did not arise only on the date of its announcement in 1971; its history has longer roots dating back to earlier centuries and events that were experienced by the people and the Arabian Gulf before the arrival of Islam to their land (As'eed and Shorab, 2011: 51).

The land of the UAE has a very ancient history, dating back to the first human settlements which appeared in the late Stone Age. A settlement found in the UAE is dated back six

thousand years before Christ to the era of Delma and Marawah, and is known as the civilization of the "slave" Valley Rivers (Al Aboudi, 2009b: 121). Moreover, there is evidence of earlier settlements in the region during the emergence of the civilisations of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt. In the Bronze Age (3200-1300 BC), the Gulf Arab Emirates had a role in trading copper and pearls to the empire of Mesopotamia, and imported ivory, pottery and other goods from Afghanistan, Iran and the Landis Valley. Maliha archaeological site in Sharjah showed evidence of trade links with Greece in the third century before Christ (Daniel et al., 2003). Furthermore, the excavations around the UAE uncovered very rich Neolithic finds. Moreover, trading posts existed by 4, 000 BC on the Emirati coast, as it was trading maritime products with Mesopotamia (Boumansour, 2011: 11). The Portuguese occupation of the coast of Oman - what become the Emirates later - found that the dhows of the empire of Ormus sailed as far as India, China and Tanzania (Boumansour, 2011: 12).

Most pre-Islamic findings from Sharjah are exhibited and stored at Sharjah Archaeology Museum. Visitors can see artefacts, coins, jewellery, pottery and ancient weapons from the Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age and pre-Islamic centuries in the United Arab Emirates in general, and the Emirate of Sharjah in particular. Another important era in United Arab Emirates history is the entry of Islam to the Arabian Gulf region, as it was a turning point for Arab tribes and people. Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, sent messengers bringing message of Islam to heads of the Arab Tribes ,and they responded without any hesitation (As'eed and Shorab, 2011: 52). Thus, Arabian Gulf countries entered a new era, and lots of beliefs and perspectives changed because of religion. Islam as an ideology fought against what was known of religion of "ignorance" - what Arabs used to follow before the rise of Islam - as a concept and practice. Islam was a social, cultural, intellectual, political, military and economic revolution. However, it built upon previous prophets and religions, practices and ideas, and took them as its foundation. This has a very direct connection to the identity of the people and their knowledge of who their ancestors were. Most Muslim people do not have any direct connection to the civilizations before Islam, and they connect themselves to the Islamic era. Therefore, people may feel more connected to Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization (SMIC), which includes all the artefacts and objects related to Islamic art and explains what Islam is, as they are Muslim. Whereas,

some people wouldn't feel linked to the objects at the archaeology museum as they do not see the people who made them as their ancestors, even if they shared the same land. More description and details about SMIC and the archaeology museum are mentioned in Chapter 5 Methodology.

Most Emiratis describe themselves as Muslims, Arabs and Emirati. They also see themselves as sons or daughters of the Emirates. They have a very strong sense of pride regarding their culture, tradition, leaders and religion. The UAE is part of the Arabic and Islamic nation; Anderson (2006) describes a nation as a socially constructed community imagined by people who perceive themselves as a part of a group. They might never meet each other but they might have similar interest and beliefs – this is the case in the UAE. The government spreads its national ideology through mass media, the education system, administration regulation, cultural institutions such as museums, and so forth. In 2005, the government of Dubai established the Watani Al Emarat organization to reinforce national identity and to highlight the inherent values of UAE society. In 2008 the UAE government announced that the year would be "identity year", where they would emphasise a strong sense of Islam as a religion, Arabic as a language, common heritage, food, clothes, crafts, sports and tradition (Mohammed, 2006). Ghobash (2012: 102) said that UAE identity is not just a set of values related to aspects of development such as social welfare and economic prosperity. It has a rooted love of Islam as religion, the UAE as a country and being proud of and responsible for the country's safety and well-being. Moreover, Dr. Ameenah Al Dahri, Associate Professor of mass media at UAE University, defined national identity as culture, tradition, heritage, and loyalty to the UAE (Mohammed, 2006).

Bristol-Rhys (2009: 107) suggests that many young Emiratis do not connect to anything prior to the discovery of oil and the establishment of the UAE, as they believe it has no relationship to their life today. New generations do not look upon the people of the pre-Islamic era as their ancestors, as they do not share language, religion, beliefs or culture. In Sharjah, Malaiha is one of the most important archaeological sites, dating back to between the third century BC and the second and third centuries AD. Excavation showed that three ancient languages were used, like the Al Hamirya language used in writing on potteries, the Al Aramya language used on different materials and Greek - the writing of this language

appearing on handles that come from Greece (Al Aboudi, 2009b: 124). Moreover, the ancient civilizations which lived on the land were not Arabs, which most Emirati consider themselves to be (Al Aboudi, 2009b: 124). Arabs first moved to the land with the arrival of the Al Azd tribe, the first tribe who printed Arabism onto the Oman region. Oman was ruled by the Arab of Yemen before the arrival of the Al Azd tribe. Al Azd migrated from Yemen after the collapse of the Marib Dam (Bin Sarrai, 2005: 72). The migration started in the ninth century BC and lasted for ten centuries. People have discovered inscriptions and Al Misned letters in the peninsula, in Oman, and at the Maliha site, which were Al Azd effects on the region. They were using Al Misned writing or the ancient Arabic language. In the period from the third century BC to the seventh century and beyond, until the advent of Islam, religions were divided into three sections; Paganism, Judaism and Christianity. Paganism includes idols, fire and tree worship (Bin Sarrai, 2005: 87). The only common thing that they shared with each other and with contemporary Emiratis is the land they lived on. People often do not connect with the area prior to the establishment of the UAE, as it has transformed completely from what it used to be.

The rapid change and development in the UAE has affected every aspect of Emirati culture and society, creating, as Khalaf (2002: 18) describes, "a rupture in the local life pattern and their historical memory of their social self". The UAE witnessed social development and economic growth that affected the lifestyle of Emiratis. Older Emiratis reflect on the olden days and know how much change the UAE has been through. There is an important role for families and school education in building the connection between the younger generation and history. Parents and grandparents are important sources of information as they lived the past and can tell the story they lived. Moreover, schools and cultural institutions such as museums are important agencies to teach the students about the history of the land and not only the country. Therefore, if young Emiratis do not have the importance of history reinforced by their families or schools they will not build an interest in it. As Lubar (2007: 365), stated, "personal stories because family legend, a way of connecting to parents and grandparents". He also discussed the World War II *Sharing Memory* exhibition at the Smithsonian. In this exhibition they wanted to display stories and present history beyond a historian's perspective. The curator wanted to display the value of

14

memory and history. Memory and history allow us to comprehend the past, with visitors able to share their stories. Lubar (2007: 403), added

> Family stories were humble heroism stories. You can imagine the stories being told over and over passed down from father to son or daughter. Sometimes expanding and sometimes contracting. The big picture might be forgotten but the details never are.

This has equal importance for the new generation and the old generation. For the new generation it strengthens their culture and enhances their identity, and it creates a dialogue between them and older generations. Museums remind the old generations of the past and show how much change the UAE has been through. As Bristol-Rhys (2009: 1) suggests

> for many younger Emiratis, the past, anything pre-dating the discovery of oil and the establishment of the UAE, has no resonance with and no meaning for the lives they live today. For them, the past represents a kind of poverty that is hard now to even imagine. Older Emiratis, those in their fifties, sixties and beyond, narrate vivid anecdotes of the hard lives they led in earlier days and how much life has changed since then.

This section has reviewed the two key historical events that changed the UAE into the country we see today. Firstly, the entry of Islam as a religion, and, secondly, the establishment of the UAE as a country. As discussed earlier most people do not feel connected to anything before Islam. Moreover, most new generations do not feel connected to anything before the establishment of the UAE. Therefore, there is a responsibility upon families, schools and cultural institutions such as museums to build this connection. Stories can be told and objects can be shown to strengthen this relation.

2.3   Geography and Location

The UAE's area is 82,880 square kilometres, bordered to the north by the Arabian Gulf, to the East by the Gulf of Oman, to the south by the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and to the west by Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). This research is conducted in the Emirate of Sharjah which is one of the seven emirates (the

others are Abu Dubai, Ajman, Umm Al Qywayn, Ras Al Khaymah and Fujairah). Sharjah is 2590 square kilometres in area, and is considered the third largest emirate in terms of location, size and population, as the population reached 80,000 in 2010. Both the geography and history behind Sharjah's location are of importance. Sharjah has a coastline of more than 16 kilometres along the Arabian Gulf which boasts sandy beaches and urban areas. The city centre is characterised by the green lushness of its oases, and the redness of its sand dunes and gravelly plains. The eastern side of Sharjah stretches to the coast of the Gulf of Oman until it reaches the rocky coastline ringed by high mountains. From a historical perspective, the archaeological sites in the east increase Sharjah's significance. Some of the sites date back to the 2nd millennium BC and the region also features Portuguese forts from the sixteenth century, built to control spice trading routes (Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority, 2015)

Figure 1 United Arab Emirates Map
Photo credit: © Ministry of Social Affairs Stories from the United Arab Emirates publication

Rugh (2007: 3) stated "the people of this small geographical area shared a common culture and until recently, a similar livelihood, giving them a relatively similar way of perceiving and approaching the world". However, there are a few factors that influenced individual people's lifestyles and thoughts. In the context of the UAE, location is one of the most

important factors, as people who live close to the sea are more exposed to different cultures compared to the people who live in the desert or the mountains, which are insular. People who are living in cities located near the sea work with different nationalities by trade. Another factor is origins, as people from different origins have different ways of behaving (more will be discussed about this below on page 22). Nevertheless, the UAE community is an Arab and Muslim one, which is the most important factor that shapes the community's beliefs and behaviour. According to the country's constitution, Islam is the official religion of the UAE (Al Abed and Peter, 2001: 15). Nonetheless, the country's laws encourage the toleration of all religions. Because of the presence of guest workers, most residents of the country are, in fact, citizens of other countries; consequently, a variety of other religions are represented in the country as well. Arabic is the official language, but in the UAE it contains many terms from foreign languages, such as English, Hindi, Persian, African and others, as a result of contacts with other countries by trade or marriage. In the 1970s many local men in the northern emirates, mainly Ras al Khaimah and Ajman, married women from India, thus making the new generation half-Indian. Moreover, according to Murr, in the 1980s thousands of men entered into matrimonial alliances with women from different nations, such as Egypt or Morocco (Krause, 2008 : 28).

2.4   Economic Prosperity and its Effect on Society

To understand people's attitudes towards museums it is important to understand their economic and social backgrounds. The primary reason for social change in the UAE was the discovery of oil. In a very short period of time, it transformed the society from one of economic poverty into a country enjoying economic wealth (Forte et al., 2006). This has resulted in, amongst other things, an increase in the number of highly educated people due to educational opportunities which have been put in place by the government, and a very high per capita income for citizens (Ghobash, 2012: 32). This has reinforced the need for cultural institutions like theatres, libraries and museums. As Khalaf (2002: 14) suggests "with the speed of such oil propelled, globally driven cultural change, the leaders are becoming increasingly concerned with preservation of their threatened national culture".

Even in the sphere of work, demographics are changing. Traditionally, the locals earned a living by farming, pearl-diving and fishing, or they were from nomadic tribes raising goats, sheep and camel. But the discovery of oil in the region has given rise to a plethora of new jobs, encouraging them to seek newer avenues and foregoing their traditional jobs. A new class have emerged and this class is very wealthy, comprising owners of buildings, large businesses, and citizens who have control over economic, cultural and social institutions. Another by-product of the new development in society is an employee class or middle class, comprising the literate and skilled section of Emiratis. This class of people is a mix of the old and the new, since they retain their traditional ways while adopting new ones, thus helping the country progress further. Another class of people is the set of unskilled workers in the fishing, herding and diving industries, for instance. They may also belong to the segment engaged in manual labour or serving as messengers or guards. This segment is on the lower rungs of the social scale in the UAE; however, they do manage to acquire some economic comfort, especially when compared to their earlier status (Ghobash, 1992: 125). The education level of workers is basic literacy or they might even be illiterate, not able to read or write. This can be a very important barrier to visiting museums, as they will not be able to read the labels or even understand how to relate to the objects displayed. Museums in Sharjah do welcome all type of visitors, and guides will offer guided tours for visitors who cannot read or write. However, people might not visit in the first place, as they may think they won't understand the content of the museum.

Even though the economy has shown tremendous growth, this has led to the creation of a consumerist society that is boosting materialism at the cost of the cultural and social aspects of society. The result is that there remains a segment of the population, primarily those in unskilled work, which is unable to gain the material advancement that might allow the smooth accommodation of traditional life into the culture of modern civilization. For those in the upper economic group, contradictions may arise from the impact of economic change on the family that does not coincide with psychological, educational and cultural change. This discrepancy may lead to problems in using this newly acquired economic potential. When people get confused about values and goals, the more traditional and less educated strata may become uncomfortable about handling the consequences of modern development (Ghobash, 1992: 133).

The UAE state has put great effort into building up its legitimacy. As legitimacy and identities are fragile, a considerable effort has been, and is still being, made for the development and formation of the historical legitimacy of the UAE, and part of developing this legitimacy is building museums. In the late nineteenth century in Europe, and England in particular, institutions of high culture were assigned, in a distinctively modern way, by the government, to civilize the population as a whole. Institutions of high culture were asked to help form and shape the moral, mental and behavioural characteristics of the population (Bennett, 1995: 21). Museums were undoubtedly closely bound up with the formation and solidification of the nation state (Macdonald, 2012: 273), as museums can help in lifting peoples' popular taste and design, and might help to prevent riot and sedition (Bennett, 1995: 21). Collections which were private were made public, and people who been previously denied to access such treasures now had access to them. This spread the idea of democracy and that people have equal rights. Museums are appropriate agencies for culturing members of the public and making them feel part of a nation. They can make people feel that they are like a large team, family, community, which is made of thousands or millions of people, most of whom never meet in their life (Macdonald, 2012: 274).

The idea of having culture has become crucial to nationalist and politicized ethnic discourse (Handler, 1988: 142). Museums already established as sites for the bringing together of significant cultural objects were readily appropriated as national expressions of identity or the links of history. However, Macdonald (2012: 29) argued that the identities of the past are becoming increasingly irrelevant and new identities are being created. In the UAE, the political project has two unrelated objectives. One of these objectives, according to Davidson (2007: 44), is to strengthen and justify the status of the ruler as the head of the patriarchal and hereditary society in a modern context. The second goal is to conserve the local identity of the region by not only restoring but also enhancing the past so as to connect the coming generations to their heritage (Krause, 2008: 38). For this, the government of the UAE has collated together resources from various sources: cultural, religious, personal or patrimonial. Numerous forts and towers from ancient times are being restored in the country for the purpose mentioned above. Many roundabouts in cities in the UAE have sculptures that are associated with their past heritage, such as falcons bringing to mind the ancient art of falconry or oysters with pearls recalling pearl diving. The latter is

also commemorated by installing restored ships or sculptures of boats along harbours in the coastal areas (Krause, 2008 : 8). Along the waterfronts one will also find cafés shaped as traditional buildings, serving Emirati food and refreshments, and providing shisha (pipe-smoking), even though it is not a local tradition.

The population of the UAE was not large before the discovery of oil. But during the early 1960s, and after the production and exportation of oil, waves of immigrants started enter the country (Bin Alwan, 2011: 76). The emergence of oil was the main incentive for the economic, political and social development in the UAE (Al Habsi, 2011: 9). A significant number of immigrants from neighbouring countries arrived in the Emirates in search of jobs in the new booming sector. The tribes' people from the deserts also migrated to the oil-rich regions. The establishment of the federation, along with increasing job opportunities, attracted expatriate jobseekers to flock to the region. This impacted upon the size of the population tremendously. In 2010, the National Bureau of Statistics estimated that there were 947,997 nationals living in the UAE compared to 7,316,073 non-nationals (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). One of the ways that societies influence each other economically and culturally is through international labour migrants (Walmsley, 2011 : 19).

The huge transformation and wave of immigrants led to a belief in the need to preserve the history, heritage and culture of the UAE through museums. As Khalaf (2002: 19) suggests "the nationals have become a minority in their own homeland, constituting less than 20% of the total population. They are overwhelmed by huge immigrant workforce".

In this section, it has been explained that the discovery of oil increased job opportunities, and that many immigrants seeking work came to the UAE. They brought their own beliefs, religions, languages, foods and other things and started to integrate into UAE society and affect it. The government and UAE families were aware of this, and they were worried about the UAE's national identity: hence why many institutions and campaigns were established to preserve national identity. Therefore, museums are considered to be places that preserve national identity against the influence of globalization and immigrants. The section that follows moves on to consider the social change which occurred due to economic prosperity.

2.5   Social Change

Due to the economic development mentioned above, social development and change took place in the UAE. The current social changes of our modern society represent a huge and speedy transition from the rigid traditional image, which lasted for centuries, to a modern sophisticated one. As was mentioned earlier, one of the radical stages that UAE society saw was the introduction of Islam and the Islamic faith in the seventh century AD This was one of the most important stages that UAE society witnessed, because it affected behavioural patterns, beliefs and values as well as traditions and customs (Al Sayyar, 1990: 12).

The speed of change in the Gulf States (Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE, Oman and Saudi Arabia) permeates all aspects and components of society. The massive economic growth, and global economic engagement which has been actively sought out, have been accompanied by on-going changes in both population size and composition, the expansion of higher education and cultural revivalism and investment, the creation of ultra-modern cities, extensive sovereign wealth funds and holdings, universal healthcare (or plans to widen citizen healthcare to whole population), and international companies, luxury airlines, investment firms, and much more - all within a generation (As'eed and Shorab, 2011: 136).

In 1962, social changes started to shift dramatically in the Arabian Gulf region in general, and the UAE in particular. For example, family structure changed; several generations used to live under one roof as extended family, and now it is a closer family unit, where parents and their children live together and grandparents live in a different house. Moreover, the pattern of marriage has changed from arranged marriage, where the mother recommends a girl to her son, to the son choosing his own wife. Arranged marriage was the common way of marriage in the UAE; however, in the last 50 years the pattern has changed and mostly men have started to marry foreigners. Therefore, children from these marriages are influenced by both cultures of the father and mother, and most of them end up talking in two languages and living with two different cultures and traditions. Also, women have access to education and are able to work, which makes them more economically independent. Social changes happened due to internal and external factors, mainly economic and educational. These factors included road construction, the building of

hospitals, schools, houses and mosques, the establishment of cultural, social and sports clubs, the construction of ports and airports, the launch of TVs and TV programmes, the issuing of daily newspapers and weekly magazines, the creation of multiple economic activities and new jobs, the facilitation of innovative areas of work for a large number of Emiratis, providing different kinds of commodities in the markets, the recruitment of large numbers of employees and workers from outside the country, the introduction of performers, concerts, and religious, social, and national ceremonies, the building of hotels and movie theatres (Al Sayyar, 1990: 62). This development brought foreigners to work in the oil industry to provide services in all sectors. As a result, some new behaviour started to appear in Emirati families, as a result of their direct interaction with new cultures from immigrants, expats that moved to the Emirates and gave an opportunity for the social change we are witnessing today to appear. For example, there are problems with servants, nannies and demographic imbalance, as today the UAE population is around 4.2 million, and foreign residents compromise at least 3.3 million (Bristol-Rhys, 2009: 108).

Statistics conducted by 999 Magazine show that an average local family in the Emirates has two servants who have migrated from other countries in their quest to earn a better living (999 Magazine, 2014). Concerns have often been voiced about the influence of foreign help on the local nationals, mainly in relation to children. Children are accompanied by nannies most of the time. Nannies are mostly responsible for the child's food, clothing and daily routine. Most of these children spend their free time with the nannies. Parents usually take the children to the playground or a shopping mall, and leave the child with the babysitter while they go shopping. Children are affected by the babysitters, either by language, beliefs or values (Dhal, 2011). As children are very attached to their nannies they do not want to go out with their parents without them. Moreover, some children are not introduced to the history, heritage and the culture of the country in earlier ages, and this will not make them value the past.

The community before the discovery of oil was influenced greatly by the environment, which influenced and shaped people's identity, and social and cultural character. The Emirates was originally constituted of tribes living in the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula. Gradually, due to changing circumstances, like looking for water and grass for herding

animals, these tribes moved to other mountainous, coastal and agricultural regions. Rugh (2007: 1) states that "tribal society evolved into forms ranging from monarchies to republics". They did not possess a formal structure and they were, rather, a loosely organised system of segments, with their configuration based on ecology or other such factors. Given the geographic nature of the Emirates, the population can be divided into six groups. The Nomads (Bedouin) lived in the desert, and relied on grazing and travelling from one place to another. The Urban (Hadar) lived in the coastal cities and made their living by working in the sea as fishermen or sea divers (Al Abed and Peter, 2001: 89). The groups who engaged with farming formed the agricultural community of the UAE. The Mountain people were the Arab tribes, including Al Shohooh, Al Hoboos and Al Dhohoryeen, who lived in Ras Al Khaymah and Ras Musandam. The Arab Islanders made their living by working in the sea and agriculture, owing to there being around 200 islands in the UAE. The last group was the Arab community who navigated between the Iranian and the Arabian coasts of the Gulf. They were Arabs who left the Emirates for a while to live on the Persian coasts, but they moved back to settle in their homeland again (Bin Alwan, 2011: 102). These categories are still apparent, but less obvious, as a result of modernization.

People's origins in the United Arab Emirates affected the way they thought, believed and what they valued. For example, Bedouin who lived in the desert valued their heritage, which is linked to the place they used to live. Falconry, camel racing and hunting are some of the traditions that they still practice as a hobby. Another example is that of the Hader (people who used to live close to the sea), who valued activities related to the sea such as fishing, pearl diving and sealing: most of them still practice these traditions. The industrial environment affected people, as they looked at agriculture and farming as their tradition. Sharjah Heritage Museum reflects on the three main environments of the region, the desert, sea and mountains. Visitors who come to the museum from these three environments will feel linked to the museum; however, visitors from different environments will feel disconnected.

Keeping up with the social changes led to the emergence of three intellectual tendencies: the first one is the traditional conservative tendency; the second one is a comparatively

liberal tendency; and the last one is supportive towards change in all its manifestations (Al Sayyar, 1990: 45). An Emirati sociologist, Dr. Moza Ghobash (2012), has stated that due to the rapid social change, a cultural division has occurred in the UAE, creating differing values in the community, as a result of which Emirati society has been divided into three main groups. The first one is a traditional group constituted by people who wish to maintain tradition and do not want change. The second one is a flexible group, including people who like cultural change to some extent and wish to retain traditional aspects in family values, food and dressing codes. And the third group includes people who fully support change and are ready to embrace it in every aspect of their lives (Ghobash, 2012 : 193). These three cultural divisions may explain attitudes toward museums or the type of museum individuals would prefer to visit. More will be discussed in Chapter 6, 7 and 8 Finding and Discussion.

2.6   Family in the UAE

As can be deduced from the facts stated earlier, UAE society is an amalgam of different elements and is not homogenous. But deference to old known families and the structure of tribal families still continues among the Emiratis, regardless of the new dramatic economic turnarounds and changes to their traditional lifestyles. Many families still continue their old ways of living, despite having access to contemporary and modern housing, healthcare and education. Local traditions, such as greeting each other with a nose kiss, are still followed. The clothes worn by most of the locals are still the traditional robes, even though some may make them with newer fabrics. The men meet each other in the traditional Majlis[1] where visitors are welcomed; however, women rarely join these meetings, especially if there are foreign male visitors joining. Women are also not expected to share the customary routine of their menfolk and lead a parallel life to theirs in segregation. This shows that if people think of visiting museums it needs to be in one family unit or in groups of women or men,

---

[1] Al Majlis are places where friends, neighbours and families gather during a certain time, mostly afternoon till evening. It is a place for social gatherings where the head of the family hosts male guests, and they chat about the daily issues of life, religious topics and reminisce about the past over Arabic tea and coffee.

and they mostly do it separately and rarely together. More will be described in Chapter 8: Findings and Discussion: Reasons why People Choose Not to Visit Museums

However, the changes in the country have impacted the social situation in small ways. For instance, an Emirati family was generally a unit of many generations living together. But, over the years, single units of parents and children have opted to live separately, along with paid help to do the household chores. Nevertheless, even though they may be staying separately, they generally stay close to the abodes of their older parents and relatives, in an area that is apt for their social and economic standing. They also prefer not to live in an area where immigrants live (Al Sayyar, 1990: 80).

An average Emirati family has between six to eight children, as the government encourages them to have large families. However, over the years, families have been opting for fewer children (Al Sayyar, 1990: 82). Parents want better education and health care for their children, and that's why they sometimes decide to have three to four children instead of eight or ten. Having many children is very costly and requires a lot of effort from the parents; it gives the children only basic needs and limits their ability to accesses different places, as they will be limited in mobility.

Rugh (2007: 13) recounts an instance of the changes brought about by the discovery of oil and the associated economic and social revolution. A well-known family of Al Ain had three generations living together under the same roof. The societal changes brought about over the years can be exemplified by the women of this family. The oldest woman in the family was the lean and sinewy grandmother, who continued her traditional life of raising goats in the family compound. The family was treated to fresh butter that the old lady made by swinging her goatskin 'churn' on an everyday basis. The exercise made her strong enough to boast about her firm and muscular abdomen. She reminisced about their annual trips undertaken on camels, lasting for days before they reached the coast. The same trip now took the family just over an hour in the new automobiles that they owned. The old lady's daughter had access to plenty of servants and lived in large mansions with all her needs taken care of. As a result, she suffered from obesity and various medical problems, such as diabetes and cardiac issues, while still only in her forties. Her daughters, in their

teens and twenties, were fluent in many foreign languages thanks to the access they had to education. Their interests, like those of many others of their generation worldwide, included diets and fashion styles. It is interesting to note the various generations in the same family typifying the changes in the country; the grandmother was totally uneducated, the mother could just about read religious texts, and the daughters were imbibing an education at the university. This is a very common to see in UAE houses, and it shows the huge gap between generations and how families have changed dramatically.

2.7   Cultural development

The cultural transformation in the UAE has an earlier history and is not entirely dependent on the wealth of oil. The economic development of the Arabian Gulf coast in the early twentieth century helped in the UAE's cultural development, and as well as this, the connections between the Arab Gulf countries and cultural movements in Egypt and the Levant coast also had a significant influence on the transformation process. Moreover, road construction in the desert between Bagdad and Damascus in 1924 made cultural periodicals and books easier to transfer between Egypt, Damascus, and Iraq, and then on to the Arab Gulf countries. The establishment of this route between Damascus and Baghdad, at a distance of some 550 miles (885km) across large, desolate parts of the Syrian Desert, allowed to the transportation and exchange of cultural ideas, as well as movement of people and goods, which was previously made by camel.

Coastal cities in the United Arab Emirates helped their inhabitants diversify into trading, because their cities were located on the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, halfway between Europe and the Middle East. This made the process of trading easy between them and the Westerners. Their boats were very active in the Indian Ocean, particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when they were trading with the East African coast, India and the western coast of the Indian subcontinent. The most important imported goods were from Basra, Bahrain, Iran, Yemen, Mumbai and Zanzibar. However, the UAE was supplying pearls, dates and dried fish. This commercial activity between the UAE and different countries contributes to the openness of Emirati individuals to different cultures, and makes them an open society regarding different cultures while maintaining their own traditions

and customs. Also, the UAE was the main centre for books imported from India when there were almost no printing presses in the Arab world in the thirties and forties, and from the UAE they were exported to other countries in the region.

The UAE developed culturally during this period as, for the first time, many artists, poets and educated people started to publish books and articles in various fields. There are factors that affected cultural development in the UAE, which are religion, education, leadership, parental influence, media and art (As'eed and Shorab, 2011: 67). Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization was established to explain what Islam is and display some of the Muslim contributions to science, mathematics, technology and art. Furthermore, education is an important factor in fostering individuals to seek knowledge. Leadership has utmost importance in providing a role model to be followed and, in the case of the UAE government, having the insight to agree on the establishment of cultural institutions and getting people to be involved the country's development and improvement.

Illiteracy in the Emirates before the establishment of the federation was 90% for males and 99% for females, meaning that the majority of society was unable to participate effectively in development (Al Sayegh, 2006: 38). However, this changed after the foundation of the federation, as the literacy rate increased remarkably, to 90% for both females and males (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013). Modern education started in Sharjah in 1953. Al Qassimiah School was the first systematic school that applied the modern education system. The school teachers came from Egypt, Iraq and Palestine. Before these teachers, there were only the *Motawehs* who taught students how to read the Quran and Hadeeth, and how to do simple mathematical calculations. Some semi-formal schools were established before the foundation, and some of these included Al Tamimyya al Mahmoudya, which was founded in 1907, The Wahwabyya in 1911, Al Naboudyya in 1921, Al Taymyyah in Al Heera in 1927 and Al Islah School in 1930 (Bin Alwan, 2011: 148).

So, the cultural movement started in the early twentieth century, but on a very small scale. Cultural development and education levels increased dramatically after the establishment of the country. This lead to changes in people's perspectives and values, especially in regard to education and culture. Moreover, it made most of them value museums as places

of learning and preserving history and national identity. However, there is still a lack of visits to museums in the UAE, and this is what is going to be explored more in this research.

2.8   Conclusion

Society in the UAE has transformed from one of poverty to wealth, and this has brought with it rapid economic development which has led to social change, particularly in the fields of education and culture. This type of rapid change has led to a desire to capture and preserve history, culture and tradition. This desire was initiated by the government, and has resulted in the establishment of museums in the UAE over the last forty years (Ghobash, 2012: 60).

While a multi-cultural city in terms of its ethnoscape, Sharjah is far from multi-cultural, insofar as Emirati, Muslim and Arab cultures and heritage are privileged in many aspects of life, including in museums (Picton, 2010: 83). When museums were first built in the UAE, they started as historical and archaeological collections. They aimed to preserve archaeological finds from the region and conserve history, heritage and people's identity. Museums are places where two different concepts of identity exist. The first one is national identity, which is reinforced by historical circumstances, and the second is community identity, meaning people feeling as a part of a group with a sense of themselves (Watson, 2007: 268). However, over the last twenty years, new museums have been built with a wide variety of collection types, from contemporary art, and science, to natural history and live collections (including an aquarium). The aim of this chapter was to provide an overview of the UAE by introducing the social structures, cultural developments and changes of Emirati society, in order to demonstrate the place and importance of museums within that society. The review provided in this chapter indicates that, despite the ancient roots of the society, preserving and displaying historical materials has only recently gained importance within the country.

Chapter 3   Background to Sharjah Museums

3.1   Introduction

Museums in the Arabian Gulf were built upon the creation of nation states in the region. Erskine-Loftus (2011: 19), stated that "many museums in the Gulf today opened in the 1970s and 1980s. It cannot escape attention that these museums coincide with the creation of the nation state of some gulf countries". Erskine-Loftus (2011: 19) added that many historic houses, dhows, forts, schools and airports were transformed into museums and opened to the public.

Museums in the United Arab Emirates are funded by local government, and half of them display heritage/history collections that are intended to preserve the cultural identity of the region. The main mission of Sharjah Museums is preserving heritage and national identity. Local museum professionals have a knowledge base which is Western, and which needs to be developed in order for the approach to be related to UAE culture and to work in the UAE context.

The Emirate of Sharjah is a pioneer in the creation of museum infrastructure in the Gulf States (Bouchenaki, 2011 : 69), on the initiative of His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah and Member of the Supreme Council. Since 1998, 19 museums have opened their doors. These museums have enviable collections, on a wide range of topics, such as Islamic and Oriental art, traditional art, popular art, maritime heritage, natural sciences, botany, science, and technology (Bouchenaki, 2011 : 97). All these museums were opened following the vision of the Ruler of Sharjah, and his interest in promoting understanding, appreciation and respect for Sharjah's identity and for the value of its cultural and natural heritage for residents and visitors (SharjahMuseums.ae, 2014). The UAE government strongly supports the foundation of museums and has opened them for the public. Only a few years ago, private museums were established in the UAE. These are also for the public; for example, The Salsali Private Museum and Women's

Private Museum in Dubai. In Sharjah, museums were built, as Manal Ataya, Director General of Sharjah Museums Department, said:

> Under the enlightened guidance of its esteemed leadership, Sharjah has long been recognized for spearheading the development of museums in the region, and given its forthcoming designation as 2014 Capital of Islamic Culture, we look forward to consolidating and expanding on what has already been achieved for the benefit of ourselves and our visitors (Schwarzer et al., 2012 : 204).

However, it should be noted that museums themselves are part of a Western philosophical tradition, not a concept native to UAE nationals (Picton, 2010: 70). The Western concept of museums has extended around the world, and in the early 1970s it began to emerge in Arab Gulf countries (Erskine-Loftus, 2012: 2). However, this concept was not that of the traditional object focused museums, but visitor oriented spaces based on the concept of the new museology (Vergo, 1989). In the Arabian Gulf, museums were established as cultural sites, as Erskine-Loftus (2012: 2) said, "to create nationhood internally, consolidating and creating history and background to the country and its rulers via which citizens might feel connected to a new nation state"

3.2   Historical Overview of Sharjah Museums

When museums were first built over forty years ago in the UAE they started out with historical and archaeological collections. They aimed to preserve archaeological finds from the region and conserve history, heritage and people's identity. However, over the last twenty years new museums have been built with a wide variety of collection types, from contemporary art and science, to natural history and live collections (including an aquarium). All such museums are premised on a Western model, and focus on collections, displays and visual intellectual appreciation of material culture arranged in a specific manner to demonstrate how a certain kind of knowledge can be imparted to the visitor. As such they have taken little account of Emirati society and its preferred methods of knowledge acquisition, which tend to focus very much on family and social activities.

Al Aboudi (2009a: 131), suggests that museums in the United Arab Emirates have different reasons as to why they were built, depending on the museum and the city it is in. Museums here can be a place to protect folklore, heritage and tradition against globalization, and that includes heritage and history museums. Some were built as cultural institutions to benefit the community, such as art museums. Other museums were built to display historical documents for tourists and the community to tell the history of the country. In Sharjah, the aim of the establishment of museums was for them to become part of the area's cultural institutions, for example, libraries, and theatres.

In 1990, his Highness Sheikh Sultan decided to restore the walled historic centre of Sharjah City, and organized the Directorate of Heritage to manage this. A series of restorations to heritage buildings and traditional houses followed in the Sharjah heritage area. In 1995 Sharjah's Directorate of Heritage announced officially that the oldest part of town was becoming a heritage area (Rab, 2011: 41). The heritage area consists of many historic houses which have been transformed into museums or offices. It includes Sharjah Heritage Museum, Bait Al Nabooda, The Majilis of Ibrahim Al Midfaa, Bait Al Gharbi, Sheikh Sultan Bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Al Eslah School Museum and Calligraphy Museums (Boumansour, 2011 : 21). Very close to the heritage area, the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization was reopened in 2008, and it includes a large collection of manuscripts and Islamic art. Another museum is Sharjah Fort museum, which dates back to 1820 (Sharjah Museums Department, 2011c), and has been closed for restoration and redesign work since 2010.

In Sharjah, there are 19 museums in total. 16 are managed by the Sharjah Museums Department (SMD), which was established as a local government institution in 2006. The other three museums (the Natural History and Botanical Museums and the Wildlife Centre) are managed by the Department of Environment and Preservation. The SMD is the umbrella organisation that coordinates the work of 16 museums located in the Emirate of Sharjah, and it is responsible for strategic development of future museum projects. Sharjah Museums cover the arts, Islamic culture and history, the heritage and the history of Sharjah and the region, archaeology, science, children's learning and natural history. The first model of museums across the Emirates came from the Emirate of Sharjah, which developed

the required infrastructure. In an attempt to popularise museums among the Emiratis, the Department plans to organise exhibitions and provide facilities to encourage research, education and community outreach programmes in the country (Ataya and Deemas, 2011 : 60).

Most of Sharjah Museums' collections are based on the city of Sharjah, its history and heritage. There are also visiting exhibitions from different countries that expose visitors to different cultures and ideas. However, there are always limitations to what is presented in the museums. For example, nudity and politics, although acceptable in religions other than Islam, are topics which cannot be discussed in these museum settings. The Emirate of Sharjah follows Islamic law and norms, and takes its decency laws very seriously, as people need to wear modest clothes, and both men and women are required to cover their bodies from shoulders to knees. Also, public displays of affection and homosexuality are not permitted. Therefore, museums are well aware that they need to display objects and art pieces which are within these restrictions.

Sharjah Museums Department (SMD) established the Department of Interpretation and Education in 2007 (Burhaima, 2011: 36). It was the first department of Interpretation and Education in the Arabian Gulf region, and before it began curators and guides used to be responsible for developing, organizing and delivering programmes to visitors for the 16 museums of Sharjah. The role of museums in Sharjah has developed significantly since the first museum was opened. In recent years museums have started to focus more on the needs of their visitors. Generally this focus has been based on notions of education and learning prevalent in the West, and has tended to attempt to attract audiences through programmes of activities and events very similar to those hosted by Western museums, whether by organizing programmes for the pubic or interactive displays and audio tours.

Moreover, museums were intended to serve UAE nationals to teach them about their heritage and culture. A key consideration here is who is making decisions about what is local culture and heritage? While there is Emirati involvement, a large number of decision-makers and staff are non-Emiratis – mostly from other Arab countries and also Western expatriates (Picton, 2010: 76).

Sharjah Archaeology Museum was the first museum to be opened in Sharjah in 1993. It then moved to its current location in 1997 to serve as a permanent archive for all archaeological findings recovered in the Emirate of Sharjah since the beginning of archaeological excavations in 1972 (Simonet and Vincent, 2013 : 5).

The Natural History Museum was opened in 1995, and is located 25 km outside the city on the road to Dhaid. Sharjah Art Museum is the largest art museum in the Gulf region, and was set up in 1997. The permanent collection there is the enviable Orientalist collection (Boumansour, 2011 : 22). The Sharjah Discovery Centre is an interactive museum for children, and likewise the Sharjah Science Museum. Al Mahatah Museum is an aviation museum which is hosted in the old Sharjah airport, built by the British (Sharjah Museums Department, 2011a).

Both Sharjah Aquarium and Sharjah Classic Car Museum were opened in 2008 (Sharjah Museums Department, 2011b). The newest museum to be re-opened in Sharjah was Sharjah Maritime Museum in 2009, which captures sea life in the emirate of Sharjah. It was located in Sharjah Heritage Area earlier in 2003, but it was relocated as it required a bigger space for its collection. Different museums have different purposes according to the collection they hold, but all have the same mission of preserving culture, and educating Sharjah residents and visitors about Sharjah City.

In 2011 it was estimated that more than half a million people visited the museums in Sharjah. The attempts of the Emirate of Sharjah to popularise museums in the country was appreciated and recognised by the ITB Berlin Travel and Trade Show, where it was awarded a prize (Bouchenaki, 2011 : 97).

Figure 2 Map of Sharjah Museums around Sharjah City.
Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department booklet.

The map above was copied from the Sharjah Museums Department guide that is distributed to museum visitors to show where each museum is located. As it shows, there are eight museums which are located in the Heart of Old Sharjah (Sharjah Heritage Area). Some of these museums have free parking spaces - for example Sharjah Islamic Museum - and others have limited parking spaces - for example, Sharjah Calligraphy Museum, Art Museum, Heritage Museum, Al Eslah School Museum, Majlis Al Midfa and Bait Al Naboodah. Al Mahata Museum is located close to the Heart of Sharjah. It is located between residential buildings and is very close to the Ministry of Immigration, in what is considered to be a very crowded area. Sharjah Archaeology Museum and Science Museum are located very close to each other, near to the cultural square and Sharjah Library. Two other museums that are close to each other are Sharjah Aquarium and the Maritime Museum. Both of them are located in the Al Khan area, and are very close to the Dubai border. Sharjah Classic Cars Museum and Discovery Centre are located on the outskirts of Sharjah and have very good parking spaces. Bait Sheik Saeed Bin Hamad Al Qasimi is

located in Khalba, which is a city located on the coast of Oman, and is considered to be a small city under the government of Sharjah.

Figure 3 The front entrance of Sharjah Heritage Museum.
Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Website

Figure 4 Lifestyle gallery at Sharjah Heritage Museum.
Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Website

Figure 5 Sharjah Maritime Museum building.
© Sharjah Museum Department Website

Figure 6 The main gallery at Sharjah Maritime Museum
Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Website

In 1998, Sharjah was named the 'Cultural Capital of the Arab World' by UNESCO, due to the large number of museums and other cultural institutions there, as well as the care that is given by Sharjah's government to the cultural movement. Since the 90s Sharjah has organized many cultural events, and these include: Sharjah International Book Fair which has been held since 1982, Sharjah Biennial which started in 1993, Sharjah Calligraphy Biennial, and Sharjah International Biennial for Children's Arts, Sharjah Theatre Days, the Islamic Art Festival and Sharjah Heritage Days (Sharjah Islamic Cultural Capital, 2014b). Moreover, it got the name of "Capital of Islamic Culture for 2014" at the organisation of Islamic Countries Conference that occurred in the Azeri capital of Baku (Sharjah Islamic Cultural Capital, 2014a). The Emirate of Sharjah is characterised by diversity, and offers a wide range of tourist activities including lagoon promenades, nature holidays in the sunshine, desert, mountains or seas, cultural activities such as visiting museums, traditional markets (souks), heritage sites and mosques, alongside modernised urban shopping centres.

As was mentioned earlier, the cultural drive happened under the guidance of the ruler of Sharjah, as he has wanted Sharjah to position itself as the federation's cultural centre since

the early 1980s. He works closely with any cultural institution and projects in Sharjah, and gives his insight on them. Kino (2015) said that :

> His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi is known for his artistic sensibility. The sheikh steered his emirate toward culture, which he deemed "essential to the spirit." A playwright and author with two Ph.D.s, he formed theater companies, founded the U.A.E.'s first coed university and, in 1982, launched an international book fair that still creates traffic jams. In a 1979 speech, he told an audience that it was "time to stop the 'concrete revolution' of civil construction in the country and replace it with a 'cultural revolution'.

3.3 Sharjah Museums and Their Visitors

Many of the historic houses, dhows, forts, schools and airports were transformed into museums and opened to the public. Museums in the United Arab Emirates are funded by local government, and half of them display heritage/history collections that are intended to preserve the cultural identity of the region (Erskine-Loftus, 2012). The main mission of Sharjah Museums is preserving heritage and national identity. Local museum professionals have a knowledge base which is Western, and which needs to be developed to in order for the approach to be related to UAE culture and to work in the UAE context.

Museums in Sharjah opened to serve residents and visitors of the Emirate of Sharjah. As Manal Ataya, the director general of Sharjah Museum Department said:

> It's not always about museums and collections but about how museums can actually be this living organism that lives in your community that actually does listen to what the community needs and can be that space you can explore and be, basically, informal (Zacharias, 2014).

As mentioned in the introduction, Sharjah Museums were always intended to serve the public. As Burhaima (2013: 535) stated, "it is now the role of the museum educators to build bridges between museums and communities to communicate the importance of

learning about the country's rich history and heritage, understanding it, and passing it on to future generations".

It does not escape notice that museums practices in Sharjah Museums are affected by Western ones, as was argued by Schwarzer et al. (2012: 211)

> The first local museum professionals in the region (Sharjah) did not have a museum background and little, if any, relevant education has been available regionally until recently. Thus, we have benefitted from working with foreign consultants and we have learned a lot from cross-cultural dialogues and collaborations.

For example, Sue Underwood worked as Strategic Museums Advisor in Sharjah, and was the person responsible for the creation, implementation and integration of 16 independent museums into a single organisation (SMD), operating at international standards and incorporating international partnerships. Pamela Erskine-Loftus established the Education and Interpretation Department, and was its Head from 2007 till 2009, training over 15 educational specialists to work in the 16 museums. Therefore, we notice that most of the museum's practices and knowledge are based on non-Emirati specialists and professionals. However, not all practices from the West are applicable, as Sharjah has a very different and unique culture and tradition, and the people of Sharjah are of course different. To understand local visitors will, therefore, help museum workers to know more about their needs and what would attract them to come to the museums.

As Erskine-Loftus (2012) suggests, museums in the Gulf were only built during the 1990s, and there is limited published literature or research on them. The lack of research about museums in the United Arab Emirates or Arabian Gulf in general has been a major influence to conduct this research. In the last few years there have been a few publications, as the museum scene in the UAE is growing. The first study was done as a doctoral thesis by Pamela Erskine-Loftus in 2010 at Newcastle University. Her research title was, "What is the relationship between Western musological practice and philosophy and display in the Sharjah Art Museum, United Arab Emirates?" Erskine-Loftus's research was the first academic analysis of museum display in the United Arab Emirates. Her research examined Sharjah Art Museum's displays to uncover how Western museology influences art

museums outside of the West. Her research gave valuable information about the history of museums in the Arabian Gulf and United Arab Emirates. Moreover, she stressed the need to conduct contextualised research that accommodates the nature of the society in which it is done, not only adapting and importing Western practices in the museums. This is what this research is doing in finding out what motivates UAE nationals and residents to come to museums, and it will help in identifying their needs for museum professionals to be aware of in designing programmes, events and displays.

In 2011, UNESCO published its last issue of MUSEUM International, and dedicated it to museums in the United Arab Emirates as a new international museum hub. Most of the articles were written by museum professionals in the United Arab Emirates and all of them were useful as they gave information about the museum scene in the UAE.

In 2012, Pamela Erskine-Loftus edited a book entitled *Reimagining Museums: Practice in the Arabian Peninsula*. This book is a collection of 18 different papers related to museums in Arabian Gulf, and six of them relate to United Arab Emirates museums. Several of these chapters were written by Sharjah Museum Department employees; for example, the chapter "Social Change and the Rules of the Game: A Conversation about Museum Values in the United Arab Emirates", was co-written by Aisha Deemas, Curator at Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, who is currently working as deputy manager for Sharjah Museum Department. She discusses, with other two Western museum professionals (Marjorie Schwarzer and Leigh Markopoulous), the role of museums in the Arabian Gulf as places for social change. Deemas suggests that museums in Sharjah specifically are platforms for discussion and new ideas, and people can engage more to learn about their own culture. She also added that it is very important to make museums part of people's lives as they grow, and that is what is happening in Sharjah (Schwarzer et al., 2012 : 231). This raises the question of whether museums are actually part of people's lives in Sharjah, and this is part of what this research will investigate.

Moreover, a chapter on the adaptation of Western museum education practices was written by Alya Burhaima, as she is the Interpretation and Education Manager at SMD. In her chapter she talks about how many Western practices have been used and adopted in the

Education and Interpretation Department in Sharjah, and how the department adapted many ideas to work for them in building bridges with the audience (Burhaima, 2013: 533). Moreover, she wanted to present the department's experiences as a model to other museums in the region. Burhaima (2013: 533) argues that some educational practices and activities used in museums in Western societies are not always suitable to the local Emirati community, for historical, cultural, social and traditional reasons. However, there was no clear method proposed by the writer on how an Emirati alternative can be developed: this research is going to show how it can be done. Finally, a chapter was written by the researcher of this thesis, entitled "Impacts of Social Change on Museums Development in United Arab Emirates." This chapter discuss the rapid social change in UAE society after the discovery of oil, and the need to build museums to capture history and preserve the people's and country's identities (Al Ali, 2013). Moreover, many people find it difficult to fully understand the role and importance of preserving and protecting the past and future cultural and historical heritage of the country. Lack of awareness of the importance of museums is reflected in a lack of interest among people in visiting them. However, this should not be viewed as a lack of interest in traditions, heritage and culture by Emiratis, but rather that those museums are not currently the site of choice for this engagement (Al Ali, 2013: 142).

In 2014, a companion volume to *Reimagining Museums* entitled *Museums and the Material World: Collecting the Arabian Peninsula* was published, with 14 chapters about the social, cultural, economic and political contexts that influence how material culture is valued and collected in the Arabian Peninsula: two of these chapters were about the United Arab Emirates in particular (Erskine-Loftus, 2014).

Proceedings were published in conjunction with a seminar organized by the Al Khaleej Study Centre in 2006, where eight speakers who held a high position in their organization or museums were invited to discuss the current situation in respect of museums in the United Arab Emirates (Al Khaleej Study Centre, 2006)[2]. But a lot of things have changed

---

[2] This seminar was organized by Al Khaeej Study Centre in the Emirate of Sharjah. The seminar was in Arabic and the publication was in Arabic too. The researcher has translated key points of the seminar.

between the years 2006 and 2014. One of them is the establishment of SMD and its Education and Interpretation Department, and the Al Sadiyat Island museums projects. However, this seminar is still a valuable source, as it invited top professionals in the museums field in the UAE to actually discuss the reasons why people do not visit museums, and it is the only such seminar which is published as a book. Speakers unanimously agreed that there is a shortage in museum visiting by nationals of the UAE. The first speaker, Abduallah Al Mutari, who is the curator of Shaik Saeed Al Maktoom Museum, Dubai, suggested that most Emirati nationals are not interested in visiting museums due to many reasons, such as:

1. Families do not take or encourage their children to visit museums.
2. Emirati families are not aware of the importance of museums.
3. School curriculums do not include museums and an appreciation of heritage in their books.
4. Cultural managers are not paying attention to the importance of museums.
5. There is a lack of awareness of the educational role of museums.
6. People working in museums limit the role of the museum to that of displaying artefacts, rather than using them as an educational tool.
7. Lack of marketing.
8. Museums are not interested in promoting museums for local people.
9. Lack of experts working in museums.
10. Objects are not interesting for visitors.
11. There is no connection between museums around the United Arab Emirates.
12. There are no academic museums.
13. There are no research study sections or departments in museums in the UAE.

Most of what Mr. Abduallah referred to was based on his personal experience and interaction with the visitors. He did not give any statistics on visitors who visit Shaik Saeed Al Maktoom Museum.

Museums have a strong link with schools and universities, and lots of teachers and academics take their students to museums. This might be a reason why people do not come

42

to museums, as they link them to school and they would prefer to do something fun rather than going to learn. As Burhaima (2011: 38) said,

> the Education team started looking at the curriculum objectives of the various subjects taught in schools. The main purpose behind all this work was to welcome students and to encourage their teachers to enhance their lessons by using museum objects, along with in-gallery activities followed by a fun workshop and things for students to take home to remind them of their visit.

This shows the effort that SMD and its Education team are putting in to welcome students and teachers to museums. However, it also important for families to take their children to museums; school visits are not enough. If a child has had a good experience in a museum he will always remember the visit and come back as an adult or maybe bring his own family. This has been called a "life cycle" by Falk et al. (1998: 108) "where museum-going is seen as a repeated activity that takes place in certain phases in one's life, related to childhood".

Other reasons mentioned above were explored while analysing the interview responses and these will be discussed further in the finding and discussion Chapter 8: Reasons Why People Choose not to Visit Sharjah Museums.

The second speaker was Aisha Abdullah, who is the curator of Dubai Heritage Museum. She said that there are almost fifty four thousand visitors to the museums per month and 30% of them are local people (Al Khaleej Study Centre, 2006: 78). On the other hand, she believes that museums can be boring and dull for some visitors; hence the reason they showcase movies and temporary exhibitions within the collection. Similarly, Abdulaziz Al Musalem, Sharjah Heritage Director, added that the typical monotonous method of displaying objects and artefacts deters visitors from visiting museums. Moreover, he believes that "the absence of a pleasure, thrill and entertainment in the museum can be one reason for people not visiting museums" (Al Khaleej Study Centre, 2006: 79). Finally, Al Musalem adds that "incompetent museum staff and their lack of knowledge can be one reason for the shortage of local national museum visitors" (Al Khaleej Study Centre, 2006: 80). Since then a couple of museum studies courses have opened in the UAE; for example,

a masters degree in Museum Studies at Zayed University, and History of Art and Museum Studies at the Sorbonne University. This gives museum professionals a chance to get a higher education certificate in the field of museums. Moreover, it is critical that they highlight that the way objects are displayed is one of the reasons that hinder people from coming to the museum. As the experience of objects and sense of their power is critical in any museum, objects need to be displayed in a good quality context to reflect what they have to say and to better engage with visitors (Dudley et al., 2011: 315). This can vary from lighting, labelling, touch screens, to the design of the space and creating narrative if needed.

Makiya Al Hajeri, Manager of the Childrens' City[3] in Dubai, considers some physical factors that cause the lack of visitors, such as the location of the museum and the fact that there are no services, provisions or access for elderly people and people with special needs. Another problem Hajeri cites is the fact that there are no clear signs or maps to museums, and also that dense traffic and locations in rural areas can be a problem (Al Khaleej Study Centre, 2006: 91). Parts of the physical context, such as the architecture, the sights, sounds, smells and design, are very important factors, and object and experience cannot be isolated from each other (Paris, 2002: 5). The Al Khaleej seminar gave a general idea of the problems that museums are facing in the United Arab Emirates and in Sharjah in particular, directly from the managers and curators of the museums. Moreover, although the speakers agreed that most UAE nationals do not visit museums, and gave similar reasons and attitudes of people toward museums, there was no actual solution proposed in order to remedy this problem, and none of them gave their own experience or examples as museum curators or directors as to how they should overcome the issues. Another weakness in the literature is that there are no visitor evaluations or studies conducted into understanding this situation, which does not help us to understand the backgrounds and needs of visitors. Therefore, more research on visitor studies needs to be conducted to fill this gap and shed light on a way to improve visitor numbers.

---

[3] Science-based learning centre with galleries & exhibits, a planetarium, a theatre & a nature centre.

All the above publications were the main source of information related to Museums in the UAE and Sharjah in particular. They give a great overview of the museums scene in Sharjah, especially as most of the authors are actually working in the museums themselves. These publications were very useful for this research as there is very little published about museums in the UAE. They can be looked on as the foundation of my research, as they were written by experts and academics that have been researching and working in museums in the UAE and the Gulf for several years. They gave valuable information about museums in the Gulf in general and Sharjah museums specifically. However, they offer no solutions. This has been - and is - compounded by the lack of museum visitor evaluation and visitor studies.

3.4   Conclusion

Sharjah has an ambitious goal of being the educational and cultural centre of the Gulf and Middle East (Fox et al., 2006b: 268). From the government mission, overseen by the Ruler of Sharjah, the seven emirates developed, advanced and enhanced its identity by founding educational and cultural institutions including libraries, museums, theatres, art galleries, historical parks. There are presently 19 museums in Sharjah; 16 of them are under the Sharjah Museum's Department. Significantly, the museums in Sharjah are based on a Western model of museums. Importantly, the museum professionals have been trained by Western professionals and experts. Therefore, it could be argued that Western museum practices on Sharjah museums have been influential.

The researcher conducted her study at Sharjah Museum Department. This department, I contend, is one of the pioneering departments in the field of museum practice in the United Arab Emirates and the Arabian Gulf. Nonetheless, little has been written or researched regarding museum visitors in Sharjah or the UAE. In addition, museum professionals in the UAE have been considering this issue based on their personal and professional experience. The researcher has worked for Sharjah Museum's Department for two years, and, therefore, has access to the museums and its resources.

Chapter 4   Literature Review

During the next decade, the relationship between the museum and its many and diverse publics will become more and more important. And this relationship must focus on genuine and effective use of the museum and its collection (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994 : 6).

4.1   Introduction

Museum transformation, as the quote above suggests, is happening worldwide, and the United Arab Emirates is no exception. Researching museum visitors in the UAE is relatively new and this study will provide the foundation for it. This chapter focuses on the literature that addresses visitor studies and motivation, both as general concepts and their application within a museum context. This chapter will outline the main Western theories of visitor studies and their transferability to museums in Sharjah. While there are a large number of well-established studies on museum visitors in the Western world, there are almost no such studies for the United Arab Emirates. As a consequence, Western studies will be the foundation of my research into museum visitor attitudes in the United Arab Emirates. The researcher is going to critique how these studies may or may not work in the United Arab Emirates context, and will consider why this is the case. Indeed this Western-centred focus of most visitor studies literature has posed a particular and on-going problem in my work, something that only really became apparent when the field work was analysed. Thus, we need to consider why such research is less useful to our UAE case studies than was originally thought to be the case. Bear in mind that the researcher's main focus was UAE nationals and expats who had been living in the UAE for more than five years: the reasons for this will be discussed further in Chapter 5 Methodology.

In an attempt to provide better understanding of individual behaviour, the research problem aims to investigate the factors that influence a person's decision regarding where they want to spend their leisure time, and if a museum is a choice they would consider. Moreover, it will explain the limitations of these factors in the Sharjah context. Researchers have explored variables in cultural participation choices through a variety of different approaches. Both Bourdieu (1960) and Merriman (1991) agreed that the socio-cultural

context influences cultural participation choices habits in France and Britain. They focused on socio-cultural factors such as education, social class, upbringing and occupation (Savage, 2000, Bourdieu, 1984, Bennett, 1995). Similarly, Dimaggio and Useem (1978) found that social class is a determining factor for cultural participation in United States. Moreover, Bennett (2008) added other variables like age, gender and ethnicity to determine influences on choosing museums as places to visit. As mentioned in the introduction, these factors are not applicable in the Sharjah context, and therefore the researcher is not going to examine them in this thesis.

The other approach is psychological, and focuses on emotional value, the motivations, and the behavioural characteristics of individuals regarding visiting museums and leisure choices. Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (2007: 29) has identified a range of motivations that people have for visiting: social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. 48% of the research responses relate to social motivation, 38% to intellectual, 11% to emotional and 3% to spiritual motivations. The same study also suggests that families are most likely to visit museums due to social and intellectual drives. The most recent study by National Endowment for the Arts in the United States, regarding the motivations and barriers that influence US adults attending arts events and venues, indicate that socializing with friends and family members was the most common motivation for art attendance (Blume-Kohou and Leonard 2015: 2)

Finally, external factors, which can also be referred to as structural or environmental, such as the availability of museums, transportation, health, the provision of a café, and entrance fees, can all influence museum visits. This chapter will focus on psychological and external factors specifically, and attempt to place them within a UAE context to find out their relevance to that context. Both these latter approaches complement each other, and have proved to be more useful in helping to understand the situation in Sharjah, with some limitations that will be discussed later in this chapter.

4.2   Museums and Visitors Studies

In order to understand the interaction between museums, their visitors and society, the researcher will give a brief background to the history of museums, and consider how they

developed from institutions for the elite in the seventeenth century to ones which opened to a larger public (Hakimian, 2010: 184). Museums around the world developed over time and Sharjah Museums are no exception. The existence of museums such as the British Museum or the Louvre goes back a couple of hundred years. However, the origin of museums dates back to classical times, and is often tracked back to the Ptolemaic Mouseion at Alexandria (Vergo, 1989: 1). This establishment used to be a study collection with a library attached, where philosophers, scholars and historians gathered (Vergo, 1989: 1). Museums of the past were centres of learning where scholars took part in discussions, research and teaching (Solinger, 1990). Doering (1999: 74), states that museums traditionally focussed on the collection, preservation and exhibition of artefacts, and then the teaching of the public about their collections. He added that most museums existed to collect, preserve, and study their collections - whether or not they were visited. However, a change in the purpose of museums occurred, and according to Hooper-Greenhill (1994: 3) museums shifted from being "static storehouses for artefacts into active learning environments for people". Hein (2002: 8), notes that in the second half of the nineteenth century, museums in the United States and Europe came to be viewed as educational places with social responsibilities. Museums were looked upon as institutions that could provide education for the masses. Falk and Dierking (1992) , confirmed this by stating that museums have historically been focused on collections and research; however, they are now viewed by the public as educational and learning institutions. Weil (1997: 257), also agrees on the relation between the museums and the public, and has suggested that the function and purpose of museums has revolved by a full 180 degrees.

This shift started in the late nineteenth century; one of the first studies to identify this transition was undertaken before 1900 with visitors to Liverpool Museum, United Kingdom (Hein, 2002: 41). Moreover, Hood (1993: 1) found that one of the first articles that examined a museum from the point of view of visitors was written in 1909 about the Smithsonian Museum. The article said that "the Smithsonian had reserved a small cosy room for children, with pretty things - not too many - but each object was chosen to give a child a pleasure". Weil (1999: 30), states that,

Fifty years later [after WWII], caught up in the confluence of two powerful currents - one flowing throughout the worldwide museum community, the other specific to the United States - the American museum is being substantially reshaped. In a place of an establishment like institution focused primarily inwards on the growth, care and study of its collection, what is emerging instead is a more entrepreneurial institution that - if my vision of its ultimate form should prove correct - will have shifted its focus outward to concentrate on providing primarily educational services to the public and will measure its success in that effort by the overarching criterion of whether it is actually able to provide those services in a demonstrably effective way.

Some of the early nineteenth century museums considered visitors to be customers who could bring revenue to the museum. Therefore, education was looked at as an entertainment which could be profitable, and people would visit museums as they would believe that they were worth the price of the admission fees (Spencer, 2007: 107).

A study was conducted by Britain Thinks (2013: 4) to investigate peoples' perspectives on the essential purpose of museums. Participants mentioned a few purposes, which are: care and preservation of heritage; holding collections and mounting displays; creating knowledge for, and about society by offering entertaining education for all children and being a trusted source of information for all adults. However, looking at the visitor as an individual person who consumes culture implies that they may have different, more varied purposes. Now some museums are understood to be places of collective memory, places where people who have been marginalised can have their say, places for social purposes such as the promotion of human rights and the development of moral consciences. Some museums are concerned to include voices of communities that have tended to be marginalised from mainstream museum narratives, addressing in particular the excluded, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, and indigenous communities (Sandell et al., 2013: 3).

In the United Arab Emirates, especially in the Emirate of Sharjah, museums were always in principle for their visitors and about serving the public. The origins and development of

museums in the United Arab Emirates was mainly initiated by the government and the president of the country, as was mentioned in the introduction. The common idea that museums are "dusty" and boring places to visit still exists in some parts of the world, not least in Sharjah. Thirty years ago, British market research on museum visitors showed, as Trevelyan (1991: 55) has noted, that "there was a negative image of museums in all the groups. They were perceived as boring, musty, gloomy and stuffy". Moreover, Britain Thinks research on public attitudes to the future of museums as a part of the Museum 2020 vision, again referred to the perception that museums are a place for learning about history, and many have an image of being gloomy, dusty and distanced from visitors, a picture often formed during childhood experiences (Britain Thinks, 2013).

On the other hand, in the United States, Falk and Dierking (2000: 2) have stated that "twenty years ago museums were widely considered dusty anachronisms", but that they now have a high level of public awareness and prestige (Falk and Dierking, 2000: 2). They argue that there was not a big change in the museums themselves, but rather that public perception has shifted, particularly in respect of the role museums play in their lives. This shift might have happened because museums have paid attention to their visitors, and tried to interpret the museum collection to them. There have been more consultations and an understanding has developed that different audiences may need different things at different times, as was referred to in the introduction. Moreover, services, programmes, temporary exhibitions, multimedia and other facilities that museums provide can change people's perspectives towards museums. Education and parental influence can also be factors. More on this will be discussed below.

Although museum visitor studies as a discipline is very complex, diffuse and interdisciplinary, it provides a vital strategic management tool that provides information and data to promote museum plans to develop programmes and exhibitions. Hood (1983: 51) confirmed this by stating that,

> The demo-psychographic characteristics of both current and potential visitors - their values, attitudes, perceptions, interests, expectations, satisfactions. Once these factors are identified, we can examine how nonparticipants differ from participants

in order to determine whether or not museums are offering or can offer the kinds of experiences that nonparticipants value and expect.

Hooper-Greenhill (1992: 210) states that visitor studies is a hybrid discipline, drawing on theory from sociology, psychology, education, marketing, management, and communication studies. She adds that the discipline covers a wide range of material, such as demographics and other data on attendance and non-attendance, personality profiles of visitors, learning styles, attitudes, language, skills and time frames. Moreover, the field examines diverse subjects, such as patterns of visitor behaviour, the ability to understand exhibition messages, how to design, and how the presentation of elements within museums and exhibitions, such as signage, layouts, media and noise affects reading behaviour, orientation, and attention. Finally, it is concerned with the development of evaluation methods to assess learning, the short term and long term impact of exhibitions, social behaviour patterns, attendance and post-visitor interests.

The visitor studies field is relatively new in museum studies, but its origins date back 80 years (Black, 2005: 9). Black (2005: 9) added that visitor studies can be referred to as market research, and is usually carried out by museums "to develop a fuller understanding of visitors, their motivations, needs, expectations, the way they explore and engage with exhibitions and staff and to measure what they gain from the experience". Hood (1993: 17), said that Edward R. Robinson was, in 1928, the first person to carry an extensive systematic piece of museum audience research. During the last twenty years museums in Britain have begun to acknowledge their responsibility to their public, and this is because of the three main pressures that Hooper-Greenhill (1991: 135) mentioned, and which were discussed above. During the 1980s and 1990s, United Kingdom local authorities funded museums generously to encourage them to look at visitor research and the impact they have on society (Lawley, 2003: 75). Moreover, they wanted the museum to have a better interaction with their local communities. Museums were encouraged to adopt business-like management styles and develop strategies and new forms of management. The New Labour government has given a high strategic priority to museums and their mission in promoting social inclusion. Small projects are done by museums working with more diverse audiences; people with learning difficulties, members of ethnic minority groups,

unemployed young people, teenage mothers and elderly people in sheltered accommodation, mental health patients, people with disabilities and people with literacy problems, among others (Lawley, 2003: 82). Museum visitors are expected to be involved actively with museums, not only by visiting the museum but also by volunteering, taking part in management committees or working on developing displays and exhibitions (Ambrose and Paine, 2012: 112).

Museums' purposes have changed through history and are still changing. Studies about museum visitors have been done in the United States, the United Kingdom and other parts of the world to understand people's motivations, needs, values and expectations regarding museums. This will help museum professionals to develop events, programmes, and exhibitions, and to have better engagement with the community. Moreover, it will give answers to why the museum a place that someone would consider visiting as a leisure place whilst others would not, as we will see in Chapter 6, 7 and 8 Findings and Discussion Chapters. Therefore, it is essential to understand what a leisure time choice is and how people make these choices.

4.3   Leisure Time Choice

The main objective for museums used to be collecting, conserving, education, research and exhibition. But that objective has changed over time to that of being more competitive and trying to be more popular than other museums and activities (Kotler and Kotler, 2000: 271). Recently, most museums are competing with other cultural and activity centres. They have become more involved in other entertaining activities, rather than just being collections or educational institutions (van Dijk et al., 2012: 249).

Leisure has many definitions, but it is essentially constructed as activities that are not biologically necessary and are not constrained by the demands of work (Dictionary of Human Geography 2009). Moreover, in modern societies, the term "leisure time" is an adjective or noun referring to the time that is unaccounted for by work (Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture, 2011). Leisure time is used in this thesis to mean the spare time that a person has to do something he/she enjoys, as an individual or with others.

Miles (1986: 78) argued that most museum visitors expect to get intellectual stimulation, that others just passing time and that only small number of visitors are highly motivated to learn. On the other hand, almost 10 years later, Hooper-Greenhill (1994: 2) argued that a new role for museums had been found, as institutions for learning and enjoyment. However, she stressed that museums should not lose their role as educational institutions, even if they were placed within the leisure industry.

While some entertainment events were reasonably successful in attracting audiences, it became clear over time that these sorts of programmes were not enough to attract the numbers of visitors the museums aspired to have, particularly those from Emirati society itself. Hood (1983:50), mentioned that there are six factors that people consider while choosing a leisure activity, ranging from the rational to the emotional. Hood states that these are: (1) being with people, which is social interaction; (2) people want to learn, which is rational; (3) seeking a challenge or new experience; (4) doing something worthwhile for themselves, which is emotional; (5) feel comfortable with the surroundings (sensory); and (6) participating actively (rational). Another study was conducted at Rotterdam museum upon 30 visitors in 1996 by Jansen-Verbeke and Van Rekom (1996: 366) and this found that the main motivation for visiting the museum was to learn something, to see something new, and to go out and escape the daily routine.

Research by Kelly (2007: 8) highlighted five main motivations for museum visiting. The five main themes are: learning, experiencing something new, entertainment, doing something worthwhile and stimulating the interest of children and the family. For both Hood and Kelly, the key factors and motivations involve personal development and social engagement. Visitors want to socialize with their friends and family whilst simultaneously developing their knowledge. However, Rekom's factors are more personal, and do not involve social interaction. Yet as useful as these factors and categories may be, evidence shows that cultural background determines why people choose to visit museums in the first place.

In Sharjah, for instance, a person will think of themselves as a part of a social group and will consider other people's preferences, which is unlike some other cultures where society

is made up of people who are far more individualistic and self-centred. Qatar society is very similar to that of the UAE, as they are located very close to each other geographically and also share the same language, tradition and religion. A study was conducted on families who visit museums in Qatar, and they put social motivation ahead of any other reason for their leisure time. 72% of families are motivated by social factors, such as spending time together and enjoying time as a family. Mostly families go out together, and they generally choose a place where they can do different things based on their interests (Bull and Al Thani, 2013: 332).

The UAE is a consumer society and an individual's leisure time choices are based on this characteristic. Structural changes in the Arabian Gulf have affected the social and economic aspects of the region, and the United Arab Emirates was affected as well. Economic prosperity lead to a widespread increase in a consumption- rather than production-oriented attitude (Al-Mutawa, 1996: 337). However, acts of consumption and the desire to consume or collect are dependent upon diverse forms of mediation and the complex context of consuming (cultural, social environmental and education) (Rectanus, 2006 : 392). Gulf societies experienced severe hardships in the pre-oil era as a result of scarce material resources - today, indulgence in consumer life is perhaps a natural reaction to this age-long deprivation. The discovery of oil brought sudden large financial revenues: part of these have been channelled by the state to build the country's infrastructure, and the other part went into providing nationals with good salaries and jobs which developed a consumer-oriented, comfortable lifestyle. Al-Mutawa (1996: 338) argues that consumer spending has become almost a contagious disease spreading from one house to another, so that even those who cannot afford things borrow money to keep up appearances.

As the bulk of people's income goes into consumption, the society as a whole has strong consumer tendencies and high income people are more inclined towards greater consumption. They go to shopping malls for many different reasons, which are mentioned in Chapter 6 Finding and Discussion: Free and Leisure time Choices. The United Arab Emirates was ranked amongst the top five countries worldwide for consumer purchasing power for luxury goods, clothes and accessories, and as the upper social class adapt to luxurious items, they associate a brand meaning to society (Vel et al., 2011: 2). Warde

(2014: 282), suggests that consumption is to be seen as the means by which individuals and groups express their identities through symbolic representation in taste and lifestyle, with their desire focused on symbolic rather material reward. Upper-class Arabs are very careful about what they wear in public, as the way a person dresses indicates his/her wealth and social standing (Nydell, 2012: 104). So they are expected to wear expensive clothes, jewellery, watches etc. Middle-class people became more exposed to this elite market, and so they begin to adopt and purchase these items as well. Individuals of lower social classes are observed as frequent buyers of luxury goods to project a higher class image to the community at large. They are driven to purchase high fashion products to be part of elite society and gain social approval from their peers. Moreover, people may establish social relationships around commercial products, as people not only actively engage with their favourite products, but come to feel a sense of attachment to networks of devotees who admire the same brand (Warde, 2014: 288).

Due to the changes in the social economy in the UAE, the main interest of the people moved towards consuming goods more than other leisure activities, such as visiting museums, galleries and theatres. This is a common problem, as Paris (1997: 22) states, as museums today face a crisis of attendance, because visitors have more choices in respect of how they spend their leisure time. Paris argues that museums as cultural institutions have always faced this problem, as they serve a fickle public. The central issue at stake in Paris's article is the question of how museums can attract visitors in the twenty-first century. Paris describes four important psychological principles that can help museums attract visitors: (1) transactions with objects; (2) narrative knowing; (3) communities of practice; and (4) identity development. This is very relevant to communities that are already visiting museums: however, in Sharjah the problem is that most people do not consider museums as places to visit at all.

Falk and Dierking (2000: 2), state that thirty years ago only about one in ten Americans went to museums with any regularity. Ten to fifteen years ago the number had increased to almost one in four. Today, two or three out of five Americans visit a museum at least once a year. This number is increasing, and the majority of Americans will visit a museum at least once a year. Museums have not changed much, but public values and priorities related

to museums have, and so has the public's perspective on the role the museums can play in their lives. Falk and Dierking (2000: 2) argue that the motives were learning, as museums present themselves as places where people can learn. This shows that the habit of visiting museums takes many years to develop, and even in the Western world, where museums have existed and been established for many years, some museums face the problem of attracting visitors.

Museums in Sharjah in the 1990s were very slow in developing programmes and exhibitions that target families with children. There are museums that only target children, such as the Discovery Centre and Science Museum, and other museums that target only adult visitors, like Sharjah Art Museum and Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization. Museums need to bear in mind that most adults spend their leisure time with their children. The opening of the Interpretation and Education Department at Sharjah Museum Department in 2006 helped to design programmes for families. As Hooper-Greenhill (1994) has argued "adults are very keen to find venues which are both enjoyable and instructive and where a social experience for all will be possible". Moreover, Burhaima (2013: 528) states:

> Family programmes have become very popular in Sharjah's museums, especially Sharjah Art Museum and Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization. The high number of attendees for programmes aged 7-14 has led us to increase programme capacity from 25 to 50. All family programmes and indeed all educational programmes we deliver are available in both Arabic and English, and we have continued to expand and improve these programmes since they were established in 2007.

All education programmes offered at Sharjah Museums Department are free of charge, and lots of families feel engaged and happy to bring their children. Working in the Education and Interpretation Department for two years, the researcher often saw families coming back again as children enjoyed the experience.

Museums are trying to find their place between other leisure activities, as leisure activities these days are varied, and people have lot of choices as to where they spend their free time. Psychological (personal) and social motivations are the main motivations that determine a

person's choice of leisure time use (Hood, 1989, Kelly, 2007, Falk and Dierking, 2012, Jansen-Verbeke and Van Rekom, 1996, Simon, 2010, Merriman, 1991). Moreover, structural or external motivations can also affect their decision (Ambrose and Paine, 2012, Yucelt, 2001). These factors will be discussed further below, and will be explored in the findings and discussion chapter, 'Free and leisure time choices'.

4.4   Psychological Factors

As previously mentioned, the heart of the problem in Sharjah's museums is that there has been no research done to understand their visitors and what their motivations and needs are. Sharjah Museums need to apply psychological approaches, as visitors come from different backgrounds and nationalities, and have different motivations and interests. Psychology influences individual motivations and behavioural characteristics which encourage people to visit a museum.

Simon (2010: 34), argues that museums need to take an "audience centred approach" in order to personalize cultural institutions. As she explains, this means incorporating what staff think is important in the context of what visitors want or need (Simon, 2010: 34). Moreover, Simon insists on the importance of identifying, acknowledging and responding to people and their needs. Museum visitors can vary from the very young to the very old, and exist across different groups: families, friends, schools and couples. This is a useful approach, as asking people what they need is the best way to assess visitor expectations and respond to them. Moreover, people are going to feel they are involved in the museum and that their thoughts and needs are valued. However, according to Hudson (1975), it is impossible to meet the needs of every visitor who enters the museum. It is more manageable to try to identify the reasons why people visit the museum, and then museums can satisfy these reasons.

By identifying individual needs that motivate visitors to explore museums, Falk and Dierking (2012) developed visitor profiles. These profiles reflect personal identity and needs. That said, the same visitor might fall into different categories in different museums or on different days. The five motivation-types Falk and Dierking (2012: 44) identified are as follows:

1. Explorer: seeks to satisfy intellectual curiosity in a challenging environment.

2. Facilitator: looking for meaningful social experience for someone you care about in an emotionally supportive environment.

3. Experience seeker: exposure to the best things and ideas, e.g. tourists.

4. Professional/hobbyist: desire to further specific needs with a subject matter focus.

5. Recharger: physical, intellectual and emotional recharge in a beautiful and refreshing environment.

The five motivation types give an understanding of actual museum visitors and do not help to attract new visitors. However, to understand how individuals might consider thinking about or visiting museums we need to know his/her motivations prior to the visit. There are six categories of motivation that help to understand the social/cultural life of a visitor (Falk et al., 1998: 108). These motivations are place, education, life-cycle, social events, environment and practical issues. "Place" refers to whether individuals consider a museum to be a place to spend their time for leisure, recreation or culture. The educational motivation means whether visitors consider a museum to be a place to learn. "Lifecycle" refers to the museum-going scene as a repetitive activity that an individual or a family used to do and which the following generations also do. Social events include a special experience out with family or friends. "Entertainment" refers to whether museums are considered as places of leisure that individuals or families like to visit in order to have fun and enjoy themselves. Practical issues are the external factors that might influence a person's choice to visit a museum. For example, weather, entrance fee, time viability and crowed conditions. These internal and external factors help us to understand why a person might think of coming to a museum, and then try to understand what he/she is looking for in the visit. These factors are examined in the case studies conducted at Sharjah museums, and the results are shown in Chapter 7.

The motivation types can help us to understand that demographics and age should not be the primary focus in understanding visitors. Research needs to focus on their motivations in order to understand the needs of museum visitors. This model is the best framework to use in Sharjah, as it will help us to understand and meet the needs of visitors in a much more specific way. It will help us to understand the nature, motivation, expectations and

needs of the existing visitor base. Moreover, Falk's model will assist more productively in developing and retaining new audiences.

There are many reasons for families and individuals to invest time, energy and money into visiting museums, and one of the reasons is their intrinsic "emotional value". Suchy has spent the last forty years visiting museums and reflecting on what creates a valuable emotional museum visit. She believes that a positive visitor experience should be based on a long term welcome, warmth, pleasure, and a sense of trust and safety from the museum staff to visitors. In order to achieve this, Suchy suggests that museums use a "cultural consumer connection tool" (Suchy, 2006: 53). The tool has seven criteria: context (the physical location of the museum); communication (navigating through the museum); creativity (connection with exhibitions); collection (memories made around exhibits); celebration (appreciating cultural diversity); cuisine (resources to sustain energy); and community (insights about local culture). Suchy applied the tool in a case study at the Hood River Historical Museum in the state of Oregon. The museum's mission is to tell the story of Hood River. The museum collection reflects the community's local history. In 2004, the museum showcased their five generations of dresses and invited the public to an evening of elegance. The visitors were asked to wear elegant outfits, all of which were of personal, cultural, emotional or historical importance. Indeed, Suchy wore a dress over fifty years old, made by her mother for her graduation high school dance in 1970. She donated the dress to the county Historical Museum in memory of her mother, who passed away 1998. This transformed a simple donation into an enriching family bond.

Involving the local community in the process of building a museum or an exhibition increases their emotional connection with the museum, and fosters a social bond between the museum and the local community. Research was conducted at the Time and Tide museums, which opened in a coastal town called Great Yarmouth in Norfolk, England, where local people were involved in choosing exhibition themes (Watson, 2007). This was based on the argument that if local people have more input into what they want and what is important to them during the creation of the museum they will feel part of the museum, and this will make them want to go and visit it (Watson, 2007). The Museum will be a social venue to visit, not only a museum. People in the coastal town were involved in a series of

focus groups which met with the museum team. They wanted to emphasise the importance of fishing as an industry of the town. They were also interested in fostering a personal link with past and the social issues and living conditions of previous generations of their families. This gave the museum a stronger meaning to local people, because their issues and ways of living were presented in their own museum – the entire project gave people a sense of 'ownership', something which is sadly lacking in the case of most museums and is largely impractical in large national museums which are unconcerned with local history (Watson, 2007: 9).

In another study, research was conducted at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester and at Wigan Pier in Wigan (Bagnall, 2003). Bagnall (2003: 87), argues that the heritage consumption process is characterized by complexity and diversity in respect of visitor facilities. She believes that emotion and imagination are the main factors that build a strong relationship between the site and the visitor (Bagnall, 2003: 87). This is very similar to what Suchy stated previously. For instance, at Wigan Pier the museum used actors to bring history to life. This created a sense of how people's emotions may be organized within a social setting and that emotional expression is subject to historical processes of social change and modernization (Bagnall, 2003: 88). Furthermore, Bagnall (2003: 88) suggested that emotional mapping is the most common way to make the visit to both sites an emotionally rewarding experience to visitors. The emotional response makes visitors feel that they were consuming the past and getting a palpable idea of what it was like. Bagnall's findings suggest that the use of actors to recreate the past at the Pier is very important in stimulating the emotions and imagination of the visitors and other performances in which visitors participate, and thus enhances the visit. However, this may lead some visitors to reject the vision of the past that the museum presents, as it interferes with their personal memories.

Emotional value is a very important factor that visitors in Sharjah relate to while visiting a museum. The emotional connection is not only with the collection but also with the building itself and with the owner of the collection: the ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah. Many historic houses have been transformed into museums (Boumansour, 2011: 21), for example, Sharjah Heritage Museum and Bait Al Nabooda (Al Naboodah House), the

Calligraphy Museum, Al Eslah School and other museums in the heritage area. The personal connection with His Royal Highness Sheik Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, ruler of Sharjah, is critical, as a few museums hold his private collection, like Sharjah Art Museum and Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization (Boumansour, 2011: 21). Moreover, national pride and supporting the government's vision are key motivators that make UAE nationals visit museums (Schwarzer et al., 2012: 210).

Learning is one of the main personal motivators for visiting museums for individuals and families. As Falk and Dierking (2000: 2) have argued "learning is the reason people go to museums, and learning is the primary good that visitors to museums derive from their experience". Their argument is based on museums promoting themselves as a "bedrock member of the learning community" (Falk and Dierking, 2000: 3). Learning was one of the main factors which were uncovered in examining the interviews. Learning can be undertaken by a student who wants to find information, a mother bringing her child or a person who is interested in a specific art work or object. More about this will be discussed in Chapter 7 Finding and Discussion: Reasons Why People Choose to Visit Sharjah Museums.

Museum education has been a function of museums for as long as there have been public museums. Hooper-Greenhill (2008: 196) points out that during the nineteenth century, education was the prime function of museums. The ideal museums were understood to be advanced schools of self-instruction and places where teachers should go for assistance. However, she raised the question of whether the educational purpose of museums is still valid today, reflecting back on how far museums were educational, as there is a strong shift that through museums and education can bring different parts of society together and can alleviate social problems (Hooper-Greenhill, 2008: 196)

In the United States of America, museum education was introduced in the late nineteenth century. Museums started to be recognized as places for informal education. Robinson, (1997), argues that education is the main mission of museums today, and will continue to be so in the future. Robinson believes there will be museum universities in the future, as in the case of the Getty in Santa Monica, which is already a university campus. Museums

have always focused on lifelong learning and now they are in a unique position to provide this on a greater scale.

By exploring Hooper-Greenhill's concept of museum interpretation and how it is related to constructivist learning theory we can further understand visitor experiences in museums. Hooper-Greenhill suggests that visitors should engage with a museum in order to make sense of the experience of the museum and its collection. This can be an individual matter; however, the interpretations we make are constructed through the communities of interpretation to which we belong (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999).

Museums are important as they can operate at different levels - they are significant to us as individuals, as members of communities and as a statement of nationhood (Davis, 2007: 53). Museums around the world now attempt to provide for precisely the kinds of individuals who they wish to encourage to visit their facilities. In order to do this, museum directors should have a clear definition of the range of communities that they are targeting, whilst also aiming to provide exhibitions and programmes that can be accessed at different levels and therefore have as wide an appeal as possible.

As was mentioned earlier, it is almost impossible to meet every visitor need: however, it is very useful to identify the reasons and motivations as to why people choose to visit museums (Hood, 1983, Falk and Dierking, 1992, Prentice et al., 1997). Knowing demographics would only help to understand who visits the museum, but would not help to attract more visitors (Falk and Dierking, 2012: 61). People would have an emotional attachment to the museum if it started to build connections by involving local communities in exhibitions and museum building (Suchy, 2006). Moreover, learning is the main personal factor that would attract visitors to come to museum, as some would consider a museum a place where they could learn or gain knowledge. Other reasons would be socializing, change of routine, convenience, to strengthen personal and national identity, getting inspired and other reasons that will be discussed in Chapter 7 Findings and Discussion: Reasons Why People Choose to Visit Sharjah Museums.

4.5   Socio-cultural Factors

In the West there is a tradition of looking to class in order to understand how beliefs and values are formed. Therefore, in Western countries it is important to understand social class and its effect on people's attitudes, choices and consumption (Stylianou-Lambert, 2007: 15). Most analysis of visitor motivations in the West takes account of factors such as class (Bennett, 1995, Fyfe and Ross, 1995, Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, Merriman, 1991, Bourdieu et al., 1991). Hooper-Greenhill (1994: 20), argues that museum visiting in the UK remains primarily a white upper/middle class activity, and surveys in Europe, Sweden and America demonstrate similar results. She states that "social class and education background are important determinants on why someone would visit museums" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994: 65). Davis (2007: 60), argues that museum visitation is a cultural phenomenon, as most cultural approaches that try to understand museum visitors deal with how museum visitation relates to society.

Therefore, socio-cultural factors such as education, social class, occupation and upbringing influence museum visitation in the West. However, class is not a determining factor on why people choose to visit museums or not in the United Arab Emirates, as was discussed in the introduction, as class division is different there, and there are other factors at play, such as socializing, consumption, values, emotions, learning, and external factors, which have more influence on visitors. As society changes rapidly, research needs to be conducted to examine if class will be a factor or not in the future.

This study would also differ if it was applied in Sharjah, especially in respect of education, as this was not available to everyone until the late 1960s. It has been two generations since the start of the development of the education system in the UAE, and hence, it would be somewhat misleading to use Bourdieu's theory of social capital as a model for Sharjah without taking into account the fact that it was originally based on French society, where the latter is considered more sophisticated in terms of education and culture.

Moreover, sociologists developed a view of status groups ranked in terms of their appreciation of the arts, letters, style of clothes and language, and their use of leisure time. Income, occupation and education also have a close association with this status. Elite to

mass theory, which was developed by Peterson in 1992 in the United States, tries to explain the relation between the arts and the leisure choices of groups at different levels of status hierarchy. He argues that those in the middle class tend to imitate these above them, but without the requisite knowledge of taste standards or the resources of time and money needed (Peterson, 1992: 245).

The elite to mass theory makes it clear that predications about the arts and leisure choices of groups are related to different levels of the status hierarchy. Those at the top tend to choose fine art as a leisure activity. On the other hand, middle classes will choose derivative work and activities, and the group at the bottom will avoid fine art and indiscriminately choose sensational and mass media entertainments. However, in the last twenty years, the perspectives on the status and consumption of art have changed, and tastes for art have also changed from snobbish exclusivity to omnivorous appropriation, as status groups have been influenced by changes in social structure, the value of art work dynamics, and generational conflict. For example, high status Americans are more likely to consume fine arts but also more likely to be involved in a wide range of low status activities like football. There is a shift that is taking place, as there are structural changes where rising levels of living, broader education, and the presentation of art through media make elite aesthetic tastes more accessible to wider segments of the population (Peterson and Kern, 1996: 905). Therefore, it is clear that taste and value change for different societies, and can even be different in one society within a short period of time as societies change.

Since the establishment of the UAE, the nation has grown vastly and developed rapidly in all aspects of civil life. Culture and education have been considered as in no way less important than the extensive economic and urban development (Ataya and Deemas, 2011: 59). There are factors that affected cultural development in Sharjah, which are religion, education, leadership, parental influence, media and art (As'eed and Shorab, 2011: 102). Cultural capital and social class theory did not consider religion and tradition, but both are very important aspects in UAE society, and shape taste and decision-making.

Religion is the main force which shapes the values, behaviours and attitudes of nationals towards cultural development. Having the great support and insight of leaders who believe in the importance of the past, and are trying to provide tools to Emirati to preserve their history and learn about their past, is very important (El Reyes, 2014).

Parental influence is also a significant mechanism, as children learn greatly from their parents; for example, religion, language and values. Moreover, children build ideas, values, emotions, perceptions, skills and behaviour patterns from the memory of their society (Falk and Dierking, 2000: 40). Media and television affect people's choices and behaviours. Media can include newspapers, magazines, television, radio and social media. In recent years, social media has become one of the most popular activities on the web (Qualman, 2012: 1). Word of mouth through social media is becoming very effective as users share information and opinions that direct buyers toward or away from specific products, brand or services (Litvin et al., 2008: 461).

Finally, art as a component of culture has a very influential effect (As'eed and Shorab, 2011: 104). The most popular arts that are found in UAE society are: music, singing and dancing. Moreover, fine arts, applied arts such as the construction of ships and architecture and ornament, literature or poetry, stories, and proverbs, are also popular (As'eed and Shorab, 2011: 104). Most of these arts and performances are usually done as part of a group. Music, dancing and singing is a group activity that people perform together, and this shows how sociality and being part of a group is essential in UAE society. Therefore, engaging and being part of the event or interacting with the object is the way that people would appreciate museum collections, rather than having to look at an item and read the label.

The fine art movement in the UAE was started by art teachers who came from other countries like Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Palestine. Those teachers taught students about art and its techniques, and gradually generations of art teachers from the UAE emerged, who have moved into teaching art education. One of the first teachers from the UAE was Mr. Mohammed Khalifa Zebyan, who had the biggest role in teaching drawing at the school of Ahmadiyya in Dubai. In 1980 the Emirates fine art society was established, and other

colleges and universities started to teach all forms of arts as a major (Kuzam, 2007). Therefore, new movements of artistic and cultural expression in the UAE are growing fast. However, most UAE nationals are still not following this movement. An architect and government official, Khaled Bin Saqr al-Qasimi, says: "the art audience that is local is small or non-existent. Most of the local people at exhibitions are friends of the artists." (Batty, 2012). Hassan Sharif, Founder and member of the Emirates Fine Art Society, says,

> I had difficulty finding an audience for my work. But I knew I should not blame society. Our art history is very short. The first public art exhibition was by a group of school students who decided to show their drawings and paintings in the central library in October 1972, less than a year after the UAE was formed. (Batty, 2012)

This would explain most UAE nationals' attitude to art, and especially contemporary art. Moreover, it shows their attitude to museums that display art and, in particular, contemporary art work, institutions and visual art.

4.6   External Factors

There are external factors that determine if a person will go to a museum or not. These include seating, parking and restroom facilities, directional signals, refreshments and admission price (Ambrose and Paine, 2012, Yucelt, 2001, Davies, 1994, Merriman, 1991, Prince, 1990). Yucelt (2001), conducted a study of museum visitors in 24 historical and museum sites in Pennsylvania. The study was designed to discover service quality, and the needs, wants, interest and satisfaction level of all. One factor which was highlighted is the quality of physical structure and related amenities offered in museums. This evidence demonstrated that the quality of a museum's physical structure also affects visitors. The other factor was the distance to travel. Visitors indicated that the distance to each museum and availability of overnight stays in the area may be among the reasons for their visit. Therefore, improvements in the infrastructure of the areas surrounding each museum could be an effective strategic method to produce a higher number of visitors.

In the twentieth century, museum architecture explored a range of stylistic modes and social roles which attracted the attention of the public, urban planners and "star" architects

(Giebelhousen, 2006: 223). Moreover, the architecture of the museum can be a determining factor in attracting visitors, as the building itself can became the object of the museum's exhibition (Rectanus, 2006: 382). However, there is frequent criticism of contemporary museum architecture, as visitors might be overwhelmed by the museum itself and not pay a lot of attention to the content of the museum or the objects it holds. Moreover, the museum building might make people feel uncomfortable, as many early museums were designed to look like palaces, and this is automatically associated in peoples' minds with the elite, and not for normal ordinary working class people (Ambrose and Paine, 2012: 28).

How to get to the museum and where it is located is can be a factor in determining whether people come or avoid coming to the museum. Some museums are located in the city centre, and would be very easy to get to by public transport, but difficult for car drivers, especially if the museum does not offer parking. Other museums are designed to be convenient for car drivers, yet can be difficult to reach by public transport and a large percentage of the population do not have daily access to cars (Ambrose and Paine, 2012: 56). In Sharjah it is very common for families or individuals to have cars, and most of the museums have free parking spaces (except the one in the Heart of Sharjah). Therefore, the concern is whether there are enough signs on the street to direct visitors to where a museum is located and if navigation can locate the museum. Moreover, today the major cost of a museum visit is not money, but time, and the effort required to get to the museum and walk through it (Falk and Dierking, 2012: 42). This requires considerable time and effort which some people do not want to go though, and this is going to be a factor that will be used to analyse the case studies presented here.

4.7   Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher highlighted the main problems that museum visitor research has been facing worldwide. The literature and previous studies conducted regarding museum visitors helped the researcher to gain a wider image about recent developments in this field. Moreover, it was a starting point to discover the area of research which needed to be deeply studied in order to improve the museums visitors' situation. Considering other countries' and other societies' museums visitor studies research helped the researcher to

know which factors would affect visitors' decisions to visit a museum. After studying these literatures, the researcher found out that there are some factors that can be used to analyse the museum visitors in Sharjah and others that cannot. Factors which can apply in the Sharjah context are the psychological (personal) and external factors as mentioned previously. The factors which cannot be applied are the social and cultural factors that most Western museum visitor research used to examine visitation and participation in cultural institutions and events.

Visitors differ according their motivations, classification, age, gender, cultural background and a whole host of other issues. There has been a lot of research conducted into the background, development and visitors of museums in the United Kingdom and United States, but there is no such body of research for the United Arab Emirates. In Chapter 6, 7 and 8 the Finding and Discussions Chapters, the researcher is going to give examples of the theories mentioned in this chapter and how they might be adapted or not in the Sharjah context. First it will look at how people in Sharjah spend their leisure time and factors that influence their decisions. Then main question which will be answered is: why do visitors choose to come to museums or choose not to consider museums as places to visit? The next three chapters will answer this question, based upon the research conducted in Sharjah's museums.

Chapter 5   Methodology

The purpose of this research is to examine factors and reasons why people consider museums in Sharjah to be places to visit in their leisure time. Moreover, it will look at reasons and factors why they do not consider museums to be places they want to visit. After exploring the literature, this chapter will give an explanation of the relevant ontological research perspectives that the researcher will use. Moreover, it will establish appropriate philosophical and epistemological positions to ensure the objectivity of the research and methodology used to answer the research questions. Then it will give a description of the methodology employed in this thesis and the research process, in terms of sampling, data collection methods and any ethical issues which arose during the investigation.

5.1   Research Philosophies

Research should be based on philosophical and theoretical assumptions, which constitute the methodology. Those assumptions are utilized in answering the questions which guide the research process. Research questions are suggested to motivate the methods of investigation in good research (Bisman, 2010). The philosophical situation of the researcher is suggested to be the main element regarding the setting and answering of the research questions (Bisman, 2010). Therefore, the questions applied in a study represent a combination of a researcher's philosophical view and the assumptions of a specific methodology. The research philosophy has three main constituents, which are ontology, epistemology and methodology.

5.2   Ontology and Epistemology

Ontology refers to the enquiry undertaken regarding the notion of reality and existence, and the researcher can base their methodology upon either the realistic or the idealistic forms of ontological enquiry (Gomm, 2004). Hein (1998: 18) argues that there are differences in ontological views of the nature of knowledge, as conflicting philosophies exist in which knowledge is perceived as either existing within or without the individual. Realism suggests that the world has a definite character and a determined structure that can be felt

(Gomm, 2004) whereas idealism discusses an unknown reality that is comprehended differently by different individuals and is subjective (Gomm, 2004). This research assumes that people's motivations, experiences, beliefs, background and knowledge form the existing reality, therefore, the reality in question is subjective in its nature; i.e. this research assumes that the reality being tested - attitudes towards museums - is subjectively formed. Therefore, this research adopts a qualitative approach.

Epistemology is a part of philosophy that is associated with the question of what exactly is considered knowledge (Collis et al., 2003). It refers to the beliefs held by individuals about how they comprehend the knowledge that they possess. Epistemology studies the theory of knowledge based on the methods of gaining knowledge, the underlying rationale of this, and how further knowledge can be gained in the present reality. Epistemology is concerned with determining the creation of acceptable knowledge in an inquiry. The epistemological position approaches knowledge creation from two perspectives, which are: resource research, where the facts are taken into account; and feelings, where the inquiry considers feelings, perceptions, or motivations. In this context, the epistemological position of this research is interpretivism (Saunders et al., 2009: 678).

Interpretivism argues that many factors influence the objectives of a study, and that it is a challenge to isolate and monitor these factors in laboratory environments. Instead of applying law-like rules, this philosophy suggests that the reality should be sought in real-world settings by trying to understand the subjective realities and meanings of participants (Saunders et al., 2009). To understand and gain valid data for this study, the researcher relied on interpreting attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions about the museums that are formed by people's interactions in a natural setting.

5.2.1   Philosophical Position of this Study

The research addressed the questions "what motivates the public of the UAE to visit Sharjah museums and why is overall participation so low?". This research worked with subjective assumptions, as the researcher wanted to collect, analyze and interpret data by interviewing people. Therefore, qualitative research is the more appropriate approach, and its precise form in this instance was the case study.

5.3   Methodology

In any research, conclusions are drawn based on carefully planned studies using systematic observation (Lapan et al., 2012: 4). For this research, a qualitative research methodology was most suitable, as qualitative methods seek to understand individuals' perceptions of their environment.   This research aims to describe a situation and provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena, as it seeks to explain and understand peoples' choices, thoughts and backgrounds (Silverman, 2010: 103). Merriam (1998: 5) states:

> rather than determining causes and effects, predicting, or describing the distribution of some attribute among a population, qualitative researchers might be interested in uncovering the meaning of a phenomenon of those involved by understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their words and what meaning they attribute to their experiences.

Qualitative methodologies are diverse and contain elements from different schools of thought, which are integrated into different research models (Sarantakos, 2005).   The qualitative researcher in this research was interested in subjective meaning, and the way in which people make sense of their world and assign meaning to it (Sarantakos, 2005). The research investigates the subjective experiences of interviewees inside and outside museums, measuring their thoughts and feelings toward museums in Sharjah and questioning if museums are places they would consider visiting as part of their leisure time. This type of research is exploratory, and the number of people was therefore small. The questions to the interviewees were moderated, and the researcher explored their responses to identify their opinions, perceptions and feelings about the questions they had been asked. Bearing in mind that when the social scientists adopt an interpretive stance, they are not simply laying bare how members of social groups interpret the world around them, but are aiming to place the interpretations that have been elicited into a social scientific frame (Bryman, 2008 : 17)

There are a number of qualitative methodologies that could be used; however, the researcher will adopt a case-study methodology. Having decided that qualitative research methods are more suited to the task of understanding visitor motivations, case-studies were

conducted in three of Sharjah's museums, using semi- structured interviews. A limitation of this method is that qualitative research does not represent the whole population and therefore we cannot generalize the studies, as we are only researching a sample of the population.

5.3.1   Case studies

In this research case studies were used to produce the type of context-dependent knowledge that research on learning shows to be necessary to allow people to develop from rule-based beginners to experts (Flyvbjerg, 2004 : 392). A case study can be conducted on an individual, a group of people or institutions such as schools; or, in this case, a museum. They can also be conducted on a community such as a profession. Therefore, a case study is

> one which investigates the above to answer specific research questions and which seeks a range of different kinds of evidence which is there in the case setting, and which has to be abstracted and collated to get the best possible answers to the questions (Gillham, 2000 : 1).

For this research purpose, case studies were conducted at three of Sharjah's museums in order to investigate some general phenomena. All relevant data was gathered and organized into a case study. Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization (SMIC) was the first case study. This museum was chosen as it is the biggest museum in Sharjah and has the biggest collection of the 19 museums in the Emirate. Moreover, the museum is considered to be very spiritual and linked to the faith of Islam, as it gives an understanding of the religion. It is the most popular museum among visitors as it hosts temporary exhibitions from very famous museums around the world. The second case study museum was Sharjah Art Museum, which was one of the first art museums to open in the Arabian Gulf region, and represents the art scene in the United Arab Emirates. The Archaeology Museum was the final museum the researcher looked at, as it is the museum which tells the story of Sharjah's civilization, and therefore might have specific meaning for people living in Sharjah.

The case studies looked at the above three museums, and the researcher interviewed visitors who visited them in order to understand their motivations for visiting. The three museums were chosen based on their collection, size, location and convenience. The researcher choose three different museums which hold three different types of collection, as the researcher wanted to interview visitors with different interests. The museums were the three largest museums in Sharjah and had different types of collection that attract different types of visitors. Moreover, they were located in three different locations which helped the researcher to examine if location is a major factor in museum visitation. In addition, the three museums have different internal layouts. For example, Sharjah Archaeology Museum displays objects from the Stone Age to the civilizations in Sharjah and only this year opened a changeable gallery. However, Sharjah Art Museum has only one permanent collection, and the other galleries are changeable over the year. SMIC has different exhibitions which display different objects according to themes, and one changeable exhibition area which holds two or three international exhibitions every year.

5.3.1.1 Research Context

This study was situated within the museums sector, specifically, Sharjah Museums, with methods developed from approaches to museums' audience and community research. The next section expands on these venues to provide the overall context of the study.

5.3.1.2 Research Location: Sharjah Museums

The researcher conducted the interviews after gaining the approval of the selected museums' curators. The researcher asked the curator and the guides working in the museum about the best time that visitors came to each museum: this was 10:00 am till 1:00pm and from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm.

5.3.1.3 Sharjah Art Museum

The mission of the Sharjah Art Museum is to enrich the cultural life for the Sharjah community and its regional, national, and international visitors through its art collections, programmes, and facilities. Sharjah Art Museum was opened in April 1997. It is the largest

art museum in the Gulf with both temporary exhibitions and permanent collections. There is one permanent exhibition, which is the Orientalist collection of paintings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are other temporary exhibitions which are changed frequently throughout the year. While the researcher was conducting the interviews there were three major exhibitions. The first exhibition was of an Arab artist, Ibrahim Al Salhi. The second exhibition was of the collection of the Emirates Fine Arts Society, and the final exhibition was the Islamic Calligraphy Biannual. In the Museum there is a fine art library which has over 4000 titles written in Arabic, English, and other languages, along with visual and audio materials. There is also a shop which offers a wide range of museum and art inspired gifts, art materials and a well-stocked book section. Finally, there is a café which offers a variety of cakes, sandwiches, coffees and teas. The researcher positioned herself in the reception for the first day, but was then asked to move to the library which is next to the reception, where the Museum's guides informed her if there were visitors interested in being interviewed. Following instructions, guides were tasked with asking visitors whether they fitted the age, geographic and linguistic parameters required and whether they would agree to being interviewed. All of the participants were interviewed after they finished their visit to the museum. The researcher spent one week in the Museum from 2:00 PM till 6:00 or 7:00 PM. During that time just three people agreed to the interview: one expatriate male and two female visitors, one of whom was a UAE citizen and the other a UAE resident. There were a few other visitors, but they apologized as they did not have time to be interviewed. Museum entry is free for adults and families and it is open from Saturday to Thursday from 8:00 AM till 8:00 PM and Friday from 4:00 PM till 10:00 PM.

Figure 7 The front entrance of Sharjah Art Museum.

Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Website

Figure 8 East Wing Gallery at Sharjah Art Museum

Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Website

Figure 9 East Wing Gallery at Sharjah Art Museum
Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Website

Figure 10 Ruler of Sharjah with the artist Ibrahim Al Salhi
Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Facebook Page

5.3.1.4 *Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization*

The mission of the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation is to display, interpret, research and further develop the museum's collections for a wide range of local, national and international audiences, and to stimulate knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of Islamic art, history, science and culture (SharjahMuseums, 2014). The Islamic Museum was first opened in one of the houses in the Heritage Area in 1996. Then it was transferred to its new location as the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization. Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization's building first opened in 1987 as the Souq al-Majarrah [4] and was then renovated and reopened in 2008 as the Museum of Islamic Civilization. The museum has four main galleries, three permanent and one temporary exhibition gallery. First is the Islamic faith gallery, then the science and innovation gallery, and the final exhibition is dedicated to Islamic art. The gallery for Islamic art starts in the early Islamic period, and leads all the way to modern times. Finally, there is the temporary exhibition gallery, scheduled to hold regular exhibitions of international standing. While the researcher was conducting the interviews, the Owen Jones exhibition from the V&A Museum in London was on show. The museum also has a café and a shop. The museum entry fee is 5 Dirhams which equal to almost 1£ for adults and 10 Dirhams which equal 2£ for families, and it is open from Saturday to Thursday from 8:00 AM till 8:00 PM and Friday from 4:00 PM till 8:00 PM.

---

[4] Souq al-Majarrah was one of Sharjah's first air-conditioned and modernised bazaar-style markets.

Figure 11 Front Entrance of Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization.

Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Website

Figure 12 Faith gallery at Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization.

Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Website

Figure 13 Islamic Art Gallery at Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization.
Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Website

5.3.1.5 *Sharjah Archaeology Museum*

Sharjah Archaeology Museum was the first museum in Sharjah to open its doors to the public in 1993 (Ataya and Deemas, 2011: 60). Moreover, it was the first purpose-built museum in the United Arab Emirates. Sharjah Archaeology Museum is a permanent archive for all archaeological material recovered in the Emirate of Sharjah. The mission of the museum is to preserve, interpret, and exhibit its collections and to disseminate knowledge about them in a manner that encourages appreciation, learning, and enjoyment of Sharjah's archaeological heritage. Sharjah Archaeology Museum opened on Saturday, May 10th, 1997. The collection is divided into five time zones. The first four galleries allow the visitor to walk through time from the Stone Age to the Greater Arabia period. The fifth gallery showcases 15 years of excavation at a very special archaeological site in Sharjah. The site, known as Buhais 18, reveals what life was like in Sharjah 7000 years ago. The museum entry fee is 5 AED for adults and 10 AED for families, and it is open from Saturday to Thursday from 8:00 AM till 8:00 PM and Friday from 4:00 PM till 8:00 PM.

Figure 14 Front Entrance of Sharjah Archaeology Museum.

Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Website

Figure 15 Entrance of the first gallery at Sharjah Archaeology Museum.

Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Website

Figure 16 Meliha Gallery at Sharjah Archaeology Museum.
Photo credit: © Sharjah Museum Department Website

5.3.2 Ethics

This research was conducted in accordance with the Research code of conduct of the University of Leicester (2013). A consent form was signed by every interviewee taking part in this research. The researcher avoided causing stress and discomfort during the interviews. People were asked if they wanted to participate in the interviews and they were fully briefed about the purpose of the research and were asked if they were willing to be interviewed. Moreover, they were notified that the interviews would be recorded for the use of the researcher only and no one else would hear them. People who did not want to participate were respected and were not pressed for information. After the interviews, the participants were asked if they wanted a copy of the record and told that they could contact the researcher if they had any more questions or if they changed their mind. None of the participants wanted a copy of the recording and none of them contacted the researcher after the interviews. In the case of the museum research sites, the researcher contacted the museums' curators directly and asked for their permission to conduct the interviews within the museums. All the curators were very helpful as they are colleagues of the researcher and know her personally, as they all work under Sharjah Museum Department.

81

5.4   Research Methods

As mentioned above, the researcher used a case study approach. A number of data collection tools can be used with case studies; however, the researcher used only semi-structured interviews, personal experience and secondary data as their main sources of information.

5.4.1   Personal Experience

Experience has become a recognised dimension of research practice (Pickering, 2008: 19). Research which is practice-led and within a real social and work based community gives a tangible meaning rather than a hypothetical situation (Costley, 2007: ix). In developing the research, the researchers must consider their own assumptions, selections, perception biases and positions, and the rules followed in research decision making (Lapan et al., 2012 : 71). As Oishi (2003: 169), argued, " the role of the interviewer in assuring valid and reliable data for such important interpretations should never be underestimated". The researcher here is a UAE national who has great insight about the country and the community. In this research the researcher worked as an insider action researcher, making her aware of how her role influenced how she viewed the world around her and how it is perceived by others. The researcher needed to make choices as to when to step in to and out of each of the multiple roles she held (Coghlan and Brannick, 2005: 150).

The researcher worked in SMD, and that shaped and influenced her approach to the study. As Coghlan and Brannick (2005: 4), suggest, " inquiring from inside involves researchers as natives and actors, immersed in local situations generating contextually embedded knowledge which emerge from experience". Her first ever job at SMIC was as a trainee manager for adult and academic programmes in 2009. She had just graduated from Auckland University with a Masters in Education. This job was basically shadowing the manager of that section, who was English, and who had a degree and experience in museums from England. This section was part of the Education and Interpretation Department, which was responsible for all educational programmes across all the museums in Sharjah. The manager used to coordinate adult learning programmes across several museums, including gallery talks and lectures, cultural awareness workshops, participatory

workshops, and curator-led discussions. Moreover, she used to coordinate the volunteer programme at Sharjah Museums Department and give training to new volunteers. The researcher took the manager's position a year after, as the manager had to quit the job and return to her country. Moreover, the researcher became responsible for coordinating community and accessibility programmes in Sharjah Museum Department.

Later in the same year, the researcher was acting manager of the Education and Interpretation Department for three months while the manager there was on maternity leave. She had to oversee family, school, adult, academic, accessibility and volunteer programmes at 16 museums. After two years she got a scholarship from the Emirates Foundation to study for a PhD in the museum studies field. After three years studying at the University of Leicester she had to go back to work, and she was assigned to a new position as Academic Research and Programme Manager, and she worked in that position for 8 months. The researcher was responsible for all collaborations between SMD and academic institutions and universities. Moreover, she was responsible for any student or researcher who wished to conduct research at SMD. The researcher also started the volunteer programme again, as it had stopped because there were not enough staff to handle it. Moreover, she gave training in museum etiquette to the SMD guides with her manager after a week's training at Sharjah University.

At the time of writing, the Education team is fairly new; it only started in 2007. It was started by Pamela Erskine-Loftus who worked as Head of Interpretation & Education from September 2007 till September 2009 (2 years and 1 month). She started the team with two education specialists and by 2014 there were more than 15 education specialists around the 16 different museums. Being part of the Department when it was one year old gave the researcher the chance to experience a lot. Most of the programmes and events were experimental, and the team organised programmes on different days and at different times to see what would work best. Moreover, the team offered an evaluation sheet and an e-update sheet to those who wished to get education department programmes updates. Being in that environment gave the researcher a deep knowledge of the different visitors who come to the museums. Moreover, she worked closely with adult visitors and volunteers

who had a very significant role in helping to shape education programmes for either families, adults or communities.

The team were encouraged to be part of online webinars organised by The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and the researcher went to their conference twice, in 2009 and 2010. Moreover, the team had been encouraged to read articles and book chapters, mostly from western publications. This helped a lot in trying to filter what would actually work in the context of the UAE and what would not. Being an Emirati and having deep knowledge about the culture, heritage, tradition, religion, values and what was acceptable, helped the researcher to know what would work best and what would not. This had huge significance in this research and it was one of the strengths that the researcher had in this field.

5.4.2 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews utilising both open and closed ended techniques were deployed in situations lasting from 10 to 15 minutes. The blending of both directed / quasi-directed questioning and conversation was deemed the most suitable approach for allowing the interviewees to express in their own words, with minimal imposition from the interviewer, their thoughts on the motivations for museum visits. Conversation is a basic mode of human interaction (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). The researcher choose to use probability sampling, as it can make inferences from information about random samples extend to the population from which it was selected (Bryman, 2008: 207). Participants in the in-depth interviews were United Arab Emirates Citizens or had been living in the UAE for 10 years. The first language of the participants had to be Arabic or English. The age range of the participants had to be above 18. The interviews had to include both male and female participants.

Face-to-face interviews were preferred by the researcher so that non-verbal information could be monitored directly. This also made it easier to modify questions as required or to rephrase questions that were not immediately understood by the interviewee. Other visual clues which are not available in telephone interviews, such as indications of discomfort or anxiety, can also be picked up in a face-to-face interview (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). A

serious negative aspect of face-to-face interviews is that they make the research more costly. Additional costs can derive from several factors. If the desired respondents are located in geographically diverse locations, necessitating considerable travel either by the researcher or the respondents, then these travel costs will generally need to be funded by the researcher. It can also be that a more highly skilled or experienced interviewer needs to conduct face-to-face interviews in order to allay any fears the participants may have about their privacy, or to handle other situations that may arise during the interviews (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). However, the preference for this study was the face-to-face interview, in order to take advantage of the additional non-verbal information derived from the body language of the individuals. The interview questions were developed in English and translated into Arabic while conducting the interviews, in order to prevent possible language barriers for the interviewees in comprehending the questions and expressing their own ideas.

In total, 55 semi-structured interviews were carried out with UAE nationals and residents who live in the Emirates of Sharjah. Such interviews are currently the central resources through which contemporary social science engages with issues that concern it (Silverman, 1997: 150). The researcher wanted to understand peoples' perspectives regarding leisure time and museums. Semi-structured interviews were considered the best way to understand participants closely, especially as the researcher wanted to know information on both personal and social levels.

The researcher collected the data in four different phases. The first phase was the pilot interviews which were conducted in July 2011. These interviews were conducted in museum settings and basically used snowball sampling. 'Snowball' is the a type of non-probability sample which is chosen to find specific candidates who can be located through referral networks (Adams et al., 2007: 91). The researcher approached people through social media like Facebook, Twitter and Blackberry Messenger, and asked them if they were museum visitors and interested in taking part in the interviews, telling them that if so, they were welcome to approach the researcher. Ten people replied, and the researcher interviewed them at Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization (SMIC). Some of these

participants already had a personal connection with the interviewer or were within her circle of friends.

The second phase was in April 2012 for museum visitors. The researcher spent three weeks in both Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization (SMIC) and Sharjah Art Museum (SAM) to interview visitors. Around five to six hours were spent every day in each museum. After the first week, with four interviews being obtained at SAM, the researcher decided to spend the second week at SMIC, as it attracts a more general public. In total, 18 interviews were conducted. The interviews included open-ended and closed questions and lasted for around 15 to 20 minutes each.

More interviews were conducted again at Sharjah Archaeology Museum in December 2012. The researcher spent two weeks at the museums and interviewed only six people. She would go to the museum five to six hours a day, mostly in the morning and the late afternoon as these were the peak visiting times the curator and the guides advised. The last phase involved spending a month from the end of February till March 2013 interviewing non-museum visitors. These visitors were in three different locations/coffee shops in Sharjah. The researcher managed to interview 31 people in total. More about the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants will be discussed in Chapter 6.

5.4.3 Sample of museum visitors and non-visitors in the Emirate of Sharjah

Choosing a sample from the general population helped the researcher to understand and answer the research questions. It is almost impossible for an individual researcher to select the whole population to conduct research (Gobo, 2004). It would take time, money and impossible effort to reach the whole population and get feedback. The researcher has to identify the limited conditions that will be researched (Fisher, 2007: 167).

In general the researcher found non-probability sampling to be the most suitable method to use. This method chooses participants arbitrarily and due to this, it is almost impossible to select them systemically. Non-probability sampling is used while dealing with fewer numbers and limited sample sizes (Saunders et al., 2012: 268). Moreover, it has been chosen in areas where the number of populations considered very few of very hard to trace.

This method tends to be more convenient and less expensive for the researcher (Oishi, 2003). On the other hand, the researcher is aware that she did not cover a sample of people who do not visit coffee shops or shopping malls, and that this might affect the data quality.

For museum visitors, the researcher chose purposive sampling, where the sample was based on who she thought appropriate for this study. This form of sampling is often used when working with very small samples (Saunders et al., 2012: 287). The researcher interviewed museum visitors who visited certain museums on certain days. Each visitor who was a UAE national or resident was asked to be part of the research. This method may not represent the whole population, but can be the ground study in this field. Furthermore, convenience sampling was chosen for the non-visiting participants. The researcher interviewed people in public places and shopping centres on certain days at certain locations. This method was chosen as the researcher was limited in terms of finances and time.

The researcher found it complicated to choose the sample of non-visitors as there is no clear social classification of UAE nationals, as the political basis of traditional United Arab Emirates society is based on tribes. Unlike Bourdieu and Merriman, who chose to interview or send questionnaires to middle and lower class people for their research, this research does not consider class, as the stratifications in the UAE are different. A by-product of the new developments in society is an employee class which is comprised of the educated and skilled segment of the population. Because of the role they play in the process of progress and development, they are the group most likely to accept and adapt to change, retaining certain traditional tribal ways of thinking and behaving. The group of production workers in fishing, driving and herding have become unskilled workers: for example, guards and messengers, who enjoy reasonable economic comfort although positioned at the bottom of the social scale. The researcher chose to interview people from the working class and skilled workers, who are an equivalent to the middle class in the United Kingdom and France.

The researcher interviewed 31 participants outside of the museum setting. Some of the participants had already visited the museum or were regular visitors. Further explanation

will be presented in the analysis chapter. The interviews were conducted in public areas such as shopping malls and coffee shops. The researcher introduced herself, explained the importance of the research and asked direct questions (appendix 1). Moreover, the researcher considered the cultural and social differences of the chosen people, as they came from different cultural and social backgrounds.

5.4.4 Pilot Interviews

During the month of August in 2011, the researcher visited the United Arab Emirates and interviewed five people in pilot interviews. The people interviewed were UAE locals aged from 18 to 40 years old, and they came from different backgrounds and lived in different Emirates. Moreover, the researcher interviewed two expatriates who had been living in the United Arab Emirates for the past 10 years. Three of the interviews conducted were in Arabic and two were in English. The researcher approached the people to be interviewed by emailing and posting on Facebook pages, asking if anyone would be interested in being interviewed. Some of the people who contacted the researcher were museum visitors and some of them were not. However, all of them agreed that museums are important places in the community and we should have them in the country as places to visit to seek knowledge and education. The researcher chose this approach as it is difficult to interview people in Sharjah. There are few visitors to Sharjah's museums, which makes it difficult due to the length of time needed to collect even a minimal quantity of responses.

Dr. Erskine-Loftus, who conducted her PhD research at Sharjah Art Museum and limited her methodology to observation, used three semi-structured interviews, attendance data and photographs as the main sources for her data. That was due to the unfamiliarity within the society of some of the forms of data collection common in the West, for example, focus groups, surveys, questionnaires and extensive, structured interviews (Erskine-Loftus, 2011). Moreover, in Arab culture, people tend to give indirect, vague and ambiguous statements. This is because they want to maintain social harmony and any direct question or answer could expose the other to a public loss of face (Zaharna, 1995: 249).

5.4.5   Secondary Data

Secondary data is helpful and makes research more connected to what is happing and what has already been done. Also, it may confirm, modify or contradict the findings. The minor data may shed light on the primary data which has been collected. The secondary data gathering relevant to this study was gathered from various journals, research studies, educational reports, and research data from libraries, newspapers and magazines. Archived data are a rich source of research material and offer information that can be reworked, reanalysed and compared with contemporary data. (Corti and Thompson, 2004: 297). After gathering the data, it was analysed to examine the information which had been collected by the researcher. Analysing data involves making sense out of data being collected.

Secondary data is an essential component of research because it is utilised in building the theoretical framework, methodological basis and/or contextual background of any project. However, proper caution has to be exercised while undertaking research of a secondary kind, keeping in mind the obstacles that may arise while accessing this data. The available information may not provide a comprehensive study to the researcher as it is not written to suit the requirement of his/her research, may contain partial information, or the relevant data may not be available at all. The other possibilities are that the available data may relate to another province and its people, or may not pertain to the same subject that is being investigated. Under such circumstances, the researcher has to deal with the available information without making any alterations according to his/her specifications.

5.5   Data Analysis for the Main Interviews

The interview questions were in both the Arabic and English languages, and that is because these two languages are the main languages in the UAE. Moreover, the researcher is an Arabic native speaker and fluent in English, and other languages were not used as it would be costly for the researcher to get a translator. It was very convenient to use these two languages, as most people in the UAE will either communicate in Arabic or English. Arabic is the official language, though other languages spoken include Persian, English, Hindi, Persian, and Urdu. English is widely understood in the UAE (Federal Research Division, 2007).

89

Interviews were conducted in both languages and they were fully transcribed in the language they were conducted in. Only four interviews were done in English and the other 46 interviews were in Arabic. The transcription was done simultaneously and the researcher made sure that the meaning and emotion of the interviewee's words were captured. Moreover, the researcher was aware of cross-cultural considerations when dealing with UAE nationals and non-nationals, as she has a great understanding of her own culture, and was aware of those of non-nationals as well, as she had lived in New Zealand and the UK, and worked with them closely in SMD. It is very important to be sensitive to cross-cultural issues in constructing interviews in qualitative and quantitative research (Oishi, 2003). In response to this important factor, the researcher used the multiple translation method (Oishi, 2003). In this method the translation was done by a native qualified translator and then was revised by the researcher who is an Arabic native speaker. The English interviews were translated by a native English speaker and were revised by the researcher who is fluent in English. The transcriptions were literal (word for word), and the researcher decided not to translate the interviews as some Arabic expressions are very difficult to translate: therefore, the researcher only translated the quotations that were used in this thesis. These translations were made by a professional translator who has a background in UAE culture and accent, and was revised by the researcher and a native English speaker.

After the transcription, the data was saved and compiled into a complete database, after which the researcher started to code it. The researcher found and identified relationships between various themes. Themes were developed using thematic analysis, and units of data referring to the same meaning were given a particular code. Then one core category was selected, becoming the most significant or frequent code, and this was a guide to further data gathering and coding (Lapan et al., 2012: 129). This created categories that helped to give a clear idea about themes that would emerge into conceptualized findings and outcomes. Themes which were categorized were drawn from the theoretical ideas that the researcher brought into the research and the research questions (Harper and Thompson, 2012: 106). The researcher used tables in a Word document to organize the codes and

themes. She did not use any software programmes as they do not support the Arabic language and most of the data the researcher worked with were in Arabic.

A report was written about the interviews' main findings based on the tables created in Word and the researcher's notes. The researcher kept a research diary for each interview, and these included field notes and important information the researcher found while conducting the interviews. The data were already interpreted based on the place where the interviews took place. The researcher divided the data into two sections: one being the participants who had been interviewed within museums, and the second being the participants who were interviewed outside the museums (in shopping malls and coffee shops).

5.6   Conclusion

A qualitative research methodology was the most suitable approach to be used to answer the research questions. The researcher found that qualitative research gives an exhaustive flexibility and understanding to peoples' attitude toward museums. The use of interviews and multiple sources of data allowed the building of theory from this research. The following three chapters present the research findings and discussion.

Chapter 6   Findings and Discussion: Leisure Time Choices

People make choices about how they will use their leisure time and energy.   We often assume that we regard museums as unique and valuable; the public will similarly cherish them and want to share in them. (Hood, 1983: 50)

6.1   Introduction

There has been an explosion in the variety of leisure activities and options available to the public (Falk, 2009: 42).   Leisure includes a variety of activities, relationships and meanings, which are neither determined by social and environmental factors nor separate from them (Kelly, 1978 : 328).   As was discussed earlier in Chapter 4 Literature Review, Hood (1983) Miles (1986), Jansen-Verbeke and Van Rekom (1996), and Kelly (2007) addressed the criteria by which people choose their leisure time.   From the interviews conducted, the researcher is now going to examine the criteria that affect choices for leisure time amongst Sharjah's population.

It is essential to understand more about how individuals and families spend their leisure time as this will help to comprehend how, why and by what means people's choices are influenced.   As Falk and Dierking (1992: 50) argued "people make leisure decisions based on their personal reasons - reasons that have little to do with their demographics and everything to do with their personal value and interest".   This will help to understand how people choose their leisure time activities, and whether museum visiting is one of those options.   Therefore, the researcher seeks to understand the factors are that determine leisure time choices. Five main factors emerged from the interviews conducted, socializing, weather, change of routine, entertainment, convenience and services.

The next three chapters are based on the results of a total of 50 semi-structured interviews, carried out with UAE nationals and residents who live in the Emirates of Sharjah. The interviews were conducted in two different settings. The first setting was within three of Sharjah's Museums (Sharjah Art Museum, Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization and

Sharjah Archaeology Museum). The second setting was outside the museum: three different coffee shops around Sharjah (Starbucks at Corniche Al Buhaira[5], Matajer[6] close to Sharjah University City and Caribou Al Qasba[7]) in March 2013. More details about the reasons why the researcher choose these settings are presented in Chapter 5 Methodology. Mainly, the researcher wanted to interview participants in different museums at different locations with different themes, as this would give a wider picture of whether location, type of museum and subject matter affect people's choices. Moreover, the coffee shops were chosen as they are based in very popular vibrant locations for UAE nationals and residents to come and spend time in, as they are near to residential areas.

What follows is a description of the participants' socio-demographic characteristics, which is presented here in order that the reader may understand all participants in this study and who they are. The Q and A italic quotations presented below are representative comments from interviews with Sharjah museum visitors.

---

[5] Corniche Al Buhaira is a road overlooking Khalid Lake (it extends a length of 5 km). The Corniche Khalid Lagoon attractions are a favourite for families, individuals and tourists. There are restaurants, cafes and commercial and residential buildings.

[6] Matajer is a neighbourhood shopping centre. It features a supermarket, a range of shops, food and beverage outlets and services.

[7] Al Qasba canal is a popular and vibrant waterside development of offices, shops, art galleries and restaurants.

6.2 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Interviewees

	Interviews carried out outside the museum (café, shopping centre)				Interviews carried inside the museum			
Gender	M	F	Total		M	F	Total	
	14	17	**31**		8	17	**24**	
Nationality	UAE		Non-UAE †			UAE		Non-UAE †	
Nationality	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	12	16	2	1	3	6	4	11
Age	16-30	30-50	50+		16-30	30-50	50+	
	19	12	0		14	7	2	
Occupation	Student	Employed	Retired	Other	Student	Employed	Retired	Other
	10	13	1	7	7	12	1	4
Education	None	High School	University *		None	High School	University *	
	0	1	30		0	0	24	
Number of visits	Never	Once	Twice +		Never	Once	Twice +	
	3	19	9		0	18	6	
Museum visits	Alone	Group	Family + children	School visits	Alone	Group	Family + children	School visits
	1	4	6	20	9	8	7	21

Table 1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Interviewees
* University education includes: BA, Masters and/or PhD level
† Non-UAE nationals include residents from: Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Syria, the United Kingdom, the United States and France.

Black (2011: 18), argues that it is possible to understand the museum audience by "market segmentation". Market segmentation is the method of breaking down audiences into groups to understand their needs and behaviour. These groups can be classified by age, gender, education, class and occupation. This approach can be applied in Sharjah, and it will give an understanding of the visitors' backgrounds and will give an overview of their motivations and their needs. The information collected through the interviews was used to characterize the participants in terms of socio-demographics (gender, age, level of education, occupation and visiting party). Table 1 sets out the profiling variables with brief describing of them.

Thirty-one interviews were conducted outside the museum (in cafés and a shopping centre). The interviewers undertook a random selection of people, who were approached and asked if they would be part of the research. Most of the people were happy to be part of it and share their stories. The interviewer mostly interviewed UAE nationals, as they were the target group. Moreover, the interviewer tried to interview equal numbers of men and women. More than half of the samples were between the age of 16 and 30 (19 participants). This is because most interviews were conducted at Matajer Al Qarayen, which is just outside Sharjah University City, and is where students spend their spare time during their breaks. Therefore, gender and age were not determining variables in this case. Among the 31 interviewees, 10 were students, 14 were employed, seven were others (housewives, retired and not working). A considerable proportion of interviewees (30), had a university degree and 19 of them said they had visited a museum at least once. Nine said they had visited a museum twice or more and three said they never been to museums and were not interested in visiting. Remarkably, 20 out of the 31 said they had been to museums on school trips, and this shows that schools pay a lot of attention to the inclusion of museums in a day trip during the academic year. Six participants said they went with their parents and four with a group of friends or co-workers, and only one said he visited museums alone.

In contrast, 24 interviews were conducted inside the three chosen museums. 17 of the visitors were female and eight were male, which is almost half the number. There were nine UAE nationals; three of them were men and six were women. Non-nationals numbered 16; four of them were men and 11 were women. Again, the biggest age group to visit the museums were between 16 to 30 years old, (14). Then from age 30 to 50 there were seven, and only two visitors of 50 or older. 12 of the visitors were employed, seven were students, one was retired, and there were four others (either housewives or un-employed). For 18 of the interviewees it was their first visit to the museums, and six of them said they had visited the museums twice or more. Nine came to the museums alone. Six of them were from the pilot study and came through social media, as they knew that the researcher would be conducting interviews in the museum. Eight came as a group with their classmates, mostly to write a report or finish an assignment for university, and seven came with their children. Participants' occupations varied from university teachers,

university students, the owner of a real estate company, a lawyer, a housewife, and a fashion designer, business men, and retired. Five of them worked in the fields of history, archaeology or museums. Finally, 21 said that they had been to museums on school trips.

6.3   People of Sharjah and Their Leisure Time

What People of Sharjah do in their leisure time

<div align="center">Figure 17 What people of Sharjah do in their leisure time</div>

To understand where people in Sharjah spend their leisure time, the researcher asked the interview participants what they do in their free time. This included 24 people who were interviewed inside the museum, and 31 people who were interviewed outside the museum, giving 55 participants in total. Some participants gave more than one answer as to where they spend their leisure time.

As is shown in Figure 17, the most popular places that people in Sharjah enjoy going to are shopping malls, and they visit these with either their family or friends. The second choice is going to outdoor places, and these include: beaches, the desert, farmhouses or parks. This is also a social activity that individuals would consider doing with family and friends. Visiting a museum was the third most popular destination, and mostly people interviewed

within the museum said they like to visit museums in their free time; only one person who was interviewed outside said the same. Going to the cinema to watch a movie is another social activity that people consider in their leisure time; almost eight people mentioned it as a leisure activity. Going out with friends, visiting family, eating in a restaurant and travelling are also activities which are considered to be social. Three other activities, which are reading and writing, staying at home, and doing sports are the only three activities that the people surveyed would consider doing alone as an individual and not as a part of a group. Therefore, it is very common in Sharjah for individuals to spend their time as a part of social group, either with family or friends, and rarely alone. Below, more detail will be discussed regarding the five main factors which emerged for leisure time choices socializing, change of routine, convenience/services, entertainment and weather.

6.3.1 Socializing

Socializing and spending time with family members or friends are the main social activity at the weekend. Visitor studies literature will be investigated here to understand people's thinking in regard to socializing and choosing their leisure activity. Moreover, tourist literature in general, and the motives behind why people choose to visit shopping malls, are mentioned below. Kelly (1978) stressed that marriage, family, and friendship associations appear to have a significant influence on the use of non-work time than the more traditional social variables, especially when informal and everyday kinds of activity are included in the leisure spectrum. The most significant factor in the meanings, motivations, and satisfactions for leisure time was found to be the place in the family life cycle. The family is the prime associational and learning context for adult leisure.

All of the interviewees agreed that they plan their free time with either friends or family. Most UAE nationals plan their leisure time for weekday evenings or during the weekend. The most common places that they decide to go are shopping malls, coffee shops and restaurants. However, men prefer spending their time in coffee shops or Al Majlis where family or friends gather. Moreover, many of the men like to spend their time doing sports or camping in the desert if the weather is suitable. Women like to spend their time at shopping malls and restaurants. Families prefer to go to places as a family, but individuals

can do other activities. Picnics, sports and browsing in shopping malls are better at meeting the criteria of desirable leisure activities (Hood, 1983: 53). Museums are seen to be formal places, which restrict what visitors can do. Most free/leisure time activities are family oriented, and the parents always include their children.

Omar, 26, is a UAE national who works as an engineer in a petrol field. He spends one month in the field and then has a one month holiday. He likes to divide his spare time between going to the gym and spending time with family and friends. He enjoys going to restaurants and shopping malls, and he has been to Sharjah Science Museum and Sharjah Natural History Museum.

Q: Where do you spend your free time?
A: Most of the time in shopping malls.
Q: Do you spend it with family or friends?
A: I spend it with both, sometimes with friends and others with family, as I am married and I have one son.
Q: Who usually decides where to go?
A: With friends we decide together but with family I mostly make the decision.
Q: And what is the purpose of the outing usually?
A: Change of routine, sometimes dinner or lunch.

Omar is an example of the married young Emirati who likes to spend time with their friends and family. When he wants to use his leisure time, he wants to spend it in a place that he is familiar with. It's very common for Emirati families or groups of friends to go dining during the week or at the weekend, as dining is considered a priority for UAE consumers, according to the findings of the latest MasterCard survey on consumer purchasing priorities (Emirates 24/7, 2011) .

Other reasons shape people's decision to socialise depending on the motivation and the purpose of the visit. People may choose a place they are familiar with as it does not demand much planning, and because they want to feel comfortable and at ease in their surroundings (Hood, 1983: 53). Moreover, it is common to go to a place where all family members will be comfortable and can do different things. Morris Hargreaves McIntyre (2007),

demonstrated eight main factors that determine family visits, called the "hierarchy of family needs". Families need to consider every person in the family. In deciding whether to visit a museum or gallery as a family, they will consider eight factors: the family unit, whether the place is paid for or free, whether it meets all their needs, value for money, fun and enjoyment, educational value, feeling good, and suiting them (Morris Hargreaves McIntyre, 2007: 41). Moreover, being with a group is a priority either with friends or family. Parents who were interviewed always referred to their children, and that they want their children to have fun and enjoy their time. Transportation and value for money are two factors were not discussed. This might be because almost everyone in the UAE has a car, as it is the main form of transportation in the country, and people tend not to talk about money as it is a sensitive and personal subject.

Most of the participants that the researcher interviewed, whether inside or outside the museums, said that they enjoy visiting shopping malls. Mall visits can be spontaneous and do not need any planning, and this makes them easier to do. Dholakia (1999: 155), identified three main motives for shopping: utilitarian, family or social interaction, and shopping as a pleasure activity in its own right with social and relaxation dimensions. However, a museum visit can be a part of a cultural /leisure /educational visit, or it can be seen as part of a list of things to do in any given day (Falk et al., 1998). The two dimensions are organized and planned beforehand in order to get the most from the museum visit. A few participants agreed that they wouldn't mind going to the museum as a social activity with friends or family: as quoted below from the interviews, the three participants would not mind visiting a museum with friends or family members, as it would be considered a social activity.

Q: What would encourage you to visit a museum?
A: If there is a group, an organized trip to the museum with friends, I might be motivated to go. Waheed, 50, male, Egyptian.

Q: What are the museums you visited in Sharjah?

A: With family I visited the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, Sharjah Car Museum and the Maritime Museum. There were lots of interesting objects. Ismael, 29, male, UAE national.

Q: Why do you think you don't visit museums?
A: I never thought of going to museums, but it's ok, if someone asked me to go I would go with them. Laila, 18, female, UAE national.

A social activity is planned amongst groups, and primarily these activities are to go to shopping malls or eat out at a restaurant (this is evidenced in 90% of the interviewees' answers). Shopping malls are becoming a place for socializing and recreation besides shopping. People visiting the malls see them as places with purposes ranging from, food courts, restaurants, cinemas, children's play areas, interactive entertainment and social use areas which are now major components of any mall (Terblanche, 1999). They are more than places to buy products; they are places for social interaction, particularly in a country such as the United Arab Emirates, as the climate has made enclosed, air-conditioned malls preferable for many members of the public. In the United Arab Emirates, the retail sector has grown rapidly. UAE residents and visitors can easily see the growth in shopping malls all over the country. For example, Dubai Mall is a nine million square foot shopping centre, which is the largest mall in the world (Andersen, 2003). As we see, museums are facing competition from the other entertainment and cultural districts in city centre, internet, restaurants and shopping malls. Museums are trying to find ways to attract the general public to visit museums as part of their leisure educational activities (Kotler and Kotler, 2000: 271).

From the interviews conducted malls were the main visiting destination to the interviewees. Understanding motives that bring consumers to shopping malls over and over again can help to understand their needs and motives. Most of the interviewees put museums in comparison with other leisure places and institutions and it is rarely a place that would be chosen to spend their leisure time. Moreover, interviewees referred to being freer in shopping malls compare to museums as there is an expectation they need to be quiet. More

is going to be discussed in Chapter 8 Finding and Discussion: Reasons Why People Choose not to Visit Sharjah Museums.

6.3.2 Entertainment

Most leisure time is spent seeking entertainment, with family, friends or alone (Zillmann and Vorderer, 2000). In fact, leisure can be defined as the temporal location of entertainment (Spalding and Brown, 2007: 1). From the interviews that the researcher conducted, entertainment is linked to doing something fun and is especially related to children.

People who have children are mostly tied up with their children's needs and want to entertain them. Parents will consider places that include entertainment programmes, and spaces for kids and young people. They also want a "diversity" of restaurants, shops, food and cinemas. In the majority of shopping malls there are game sections where children can play and enjoy their time. In the same place the family can watch a movie and enjoy a nice meal. This is why most parents and families think shopping malls are the best place to spend their weekend. As some of the participants expressed when asked 'Where do you go in your free time?':

A: Every Saturday I go out with my family. We mostly go to Merdiff City Centre, as the children want to play and they have a play area there. My children always choose to go there. Rashid, 36, male, UAE national

A: In the weekdays we don't have free time. However, at the weekend we go out with family to shopping malls or restaurants. If the weather is nice we go to the beach or to a park. Bdoor and Amina, 21, female, UAE nationals

A: Shopping malls are the perfect place to spend your weekends. Kids can play and we can go shopping in the same place. Um Sultan, 29, female, UAE national

Comparing shopping malls with museums, and considering what they offer the public, means the malls are often the first option to visit, whereas a museum is not considered.

There is a concern amongst museum professionals regarding the competition from the entertainment and cultural districts in central cities, cyberspace, restaurants, sports arenas and shopping malls (Kotler and Kotler, 2000: 271). As mentioned earlier, many of the activities chosen are family oriented and the responses from the interviewees showed that most participants do not consider museums as places for families to visit with children. This is one of the five common forms of public opinion about museums mentioned by Simon (2011: iv) which is that museums are not comfortable social places. This is because individuals and families are expected to behave in a certain way in the museum, as one of the participants in the interviews for this research commented:

Q: Why are museums not an option when you choose your outing destination?
A: Museums should be quiet and children tend to be noisy and like to touch things and play with them. I don't think I can handle my kids while I am at the museum. Talal, 25, male, UAE national

Furthermore, many of the participants highlighted the importance of museums as a place to visit, but suggested that museums need to be more interesting and entertaining for families and children. This shows that people want to engage meaningfully in a museum experience, but because museums do not provide them with the appropriate guidance they do not often come (Perry, 2012: 86). This is because those visitors are not entertained enough in the museum. As Mahra, 34, female, a UAE national who is a single women but spends lot of time with her siblings, said:

Q: Where do you take your kids in their free time?
A: Instead of going to the park to play I prefer kids to go to museums. However, museums need to develop the skills of the child and make the visit more enjoyable. Mahra, 34, female, UAE national

Mahra believes that museums are places where children can learn and enjoy themselves at the same time. As Dierking (1989: 9) suggests, museums are supposed to be free-choice learning settings. Families may come to a museum to pass time and entertain themselves, but also to learn. The quotation above suggests that families expect museums to have control over children's' learning whilst being entertaining at the same time. However,

parents do not take any responsibility for trying to make the visit more enjoyable for their children. As museums are a place where visitors can create, share, and connect with each other around content (Simon, 2010: 351), visitors have to be actively engaged as cultural participants, not passive consumers.

6.3.3   Weather

Weather is one factor that people take into account when choosing their leisure time pursuits. Weather conditions influence the type, participation rate, frequency, and duration of leisure activity engagement (Spinney and Millward, 2011: 133). Whilst there is a considerable amount of research about the structural, behavioural and physical factors that for choosing leisure activity, much less on weather had been investigated, and, its influence in choosing certain leisure activities (Tucker and Gilliland, 2007: 909).

Warmer, drier summer weather encourages outdoor leisure activities (Aylen et al., 2014: 183). This is often embraced in the United Kingdom, but in the UAE people tend to go to open spaces if the weather is cold and especially to the desert or a farm. This is because the UAE is located in a dry climate region, which is known for its high temperatures and this will have a considerable impact on leisure choices. Data from the National Centre of Meteorology and Seismology in 2013, which is related to the main monitoring stations, indicates that the maximum average temperature recorded in Al Ain Airport Station was 37.7 C, in July. The maximum absolute temperature was recorded at Sharjah Airport Station in July, which was 48.8 C. The highest average maximum temperature was recorded in Al Ain in July 44.9 C and the minimum average temperature was 18.7 C, recorded in Umm Al Quwain station in January, while the temperature was recorded was 5.1 C in January, and the lowest minimum average temperature was recorded as 12.4C at Ras Al Khaimah Airport station, also in January (National Bureau of Statistics, 2013). Therefore, people tend to go to indoor places most of the year, as the weather can be extremely hot, and people prefer air-conditioned spaces like shopping malls or museums.

Abdullah mentioned that weather is the main factor that determines where the family spends their time. If the weather is nice they go to outdoor places, and if it is not, they go to indoor places.

Q: What do you do in your free time?

A: Honestly I organize my time between sports, family visits, and reading and completing my final research, that's about my daily routine.

Q: And at weekends?

A: At weekends, we attend large family gatherings at my mother's house, we call it the "Big House," and we exchange conversations, about social and economic subjects, in addition to the current political events.

Q: And you don't go out?

A: Depends on the weather, if it was okay we'd go camping.

Q: Camping, do you go shopping?

A: Shopping, camping, sometimes we plan a trip outside the country regardless of distance, and these usually last about 3 days to 3 weeks.

Q: Where is the museum's role in your life?

A: To be honest as a specialist I find the museum amusing and a very beautiful educational companion.

Q: Do you often pay a visit?

A: Of course, my last visit was twenty days ago, to the Ajman Museum, and I was amazed, it was very nice, I enjoyed it. In this Emirate, I have visited about two or three museums, including Sharjah Natural History Museum, and, as a consequence, the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization.

Abdullah emphasises in the above quotation the importance of weather in determining where to go. Moreover, he mentioned that his last visit to a museum was 20 days ago, and later on his recall of other museum's names shows that he is a frequent museum visitor.

Weather is considered as an external factor, which contributes to many visitors' decision-making process in visiting museums (Falk et al., 1998). Weather can be a positive factor that attracts visitors to come to museums, especially in summer and the hot season. The heat will make people think about places that have a good air conditioning system, and most museums do particularly in UAE. Some museums present challenges such as Sharjah heritage area museums, because of the structure of the buildings, as they are built in the old style and only have air conditioning inside the rooms, not in the courtyard. On the other

hand, if the weather is cold, people might consider museums which are in open spaces. Therefore, weather can be a major factor upon which museum a person will consider visiting.

6.3.4   Change of Routine

Falk (2009: 41) suggests that the public use leisure time primarily as mechanism to escape from the physical and mental exhaustion of work. It is the idea of understanding of themselves and the world around them and an opportunity to immerse themselves in new ideas, spaces and experiences (Falk, 2009: 41).   Most participants mentioned that during their leisure time they want to relax and have a change of routine. Leisure activities and how they spend their leisure time is chosen primarily to facilitate rest, relaxation, and make a contrast to work constraints and change of routine (Kelly, 1978: 316).

There are two type of leisure activities; serious leisure and casual leisure (Stebbins, 1997: 16). Serious leisure is based on the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity, and this might include visiting a museum. On the other hand, casual leisure falls into short lived activities that require little or no special training to enjoy. Therefore, most of the participants noted that they enjoy casual leisure in their free time as they do not have to put so much effort into it. Moreover, they agreed that they want to change their routine in their leisure time. As Al Ali (2008) stated, in the UAE the official weekend is Friday and Saturday, but most of the UAE's smaller private workplaces close only on Friday. Government offices open at 7.30 AM. and close at 2.30 PM., Sunday to Thursday. However, private sector offices tend to keep longer hours, from 8 AM. to 5 PM, and workers might get a mid-day break. This shows that people who work in the government sector have more free time to spend during evenings and weekends. On the other hand, people in the private sector will have limited time; the only free time they get is on Friday. This will make them think seriously about how to spend their time, as it's their only free time. People tend to spend their after-work time with friends during the week and with family at the weekends. Friday or Saturday can see the whole family gathering in the grandparents' house.

Q: What is the main purpose of your outing?

A: The goal is to break the routine; a person needs to recharge himself with positive energy, especially at the weekend try to break routine things. From Sunday to Thursday is a routine, change is required at the weekend. Ahmed, 22, male, UAE national

Ahmed is studying law at the University of Sharjah, and he has already visited most of the museums around Sharjah. Ahmed visits museums with his friends and family; he said he always plans to visit museums every few months, and that this inspires him and makes him feel proud of his land.

6.3.5 Convenience and Services

Convenience is an important factor, including accessibility, parking, food and amenities. Moreover, parents want to make sure that there are three essential things which make the perfect visit for the children: food, restrooms and a playground. As a 35 year old mother of UAE nationality said:

Q: Why do you like to visit shopping malls?
A: We like to visit places that have playgrounds or games for the kids to enjoy. We can leave the kids playing and we go shopping. 35, female, UAE national.

In her interview she stressed the importance of playgrounds or games, and this links to entertainment. But at the same time, she wants a place where she can go shopping. Having the family in one place where they can do different things was an important factor that determines where the family spend their time, as different family members have different needs and interests. The shopping centre building itself can accommodate thousands of cars, which is convenient for most of the shoppers who drive. These shopping malls can be used and visited by any social group in any age range. For example, teenagers tend to come to shopping malls after school in search of a less controlled area than the schoolyard or the home (Shields, 2003: 4). Shields adds that in these malls, the new combination of activities long thought to be associated with leisure activities marks a new phase in the recent history of urban centres and consumerism. Everyday shopping activities are foregrounded as if on a theatre stage, to be observed by passers-by who may vicariously

participate in the hustle and bustle and lively activity of consumption without necessarily spending any money (Shields, 2003: 182).

Few empirical studies have analysed the motivations that explain consumers' attraction to shopping malls (Bodkin and Lord, 1997: 94, Bloch et al., 1994). Convenience to be a core reason why the shoppers are attracted to malls (Bodkin and Lord, 1997: 98). It can be the distance of the mall to where they live or the availability of shops and amenities that is needed for the individual or the family services; and prices. Also, economic motives can be a factor as being able to consume goods and spend money while shopping can be an important and pleasant activity for the shoppers (Bloch et al., 1994). Moreover, emotional motives can bring shoppers to the mall; the pleasure of consuming in particular sites of consumption creates excitement and visual pleasure (Featherstone, 2007: 42). Multi-purpose shoppers have a combination of economic and emotional motives (Ruiz et al., 2004: 335). Bloch et al. (1994: 25), examined the effect of the physical environment of the mall on consumers' emotional states, and found that malls were viewed by consumers as places not only for shopping, but also for other activities, such as entertainment. In the same line, Nicholls and Kranendok (2002: 149) found that today's mall patrons tend to be more leisure-driven than shoppers in the early 1990s. Furthermore, Wakefield and Baker (1998: 520), argue that the mall physical environment influences the desire of the shopper to stay as it will influence the consumers emotional states. This will include the interior architecture of the mall, lighting, aromas, cleanliness and layout. Terblanche (1999), suggested that shopping malls aim to be mainly functional, recreational, social, and convenient places. These suggestions were based on the perceived benefits that consumers enjoy when visiting a regional shopping centre. The demographic and psychological characteristics of mall patrons have also been described (Bellenger, 1977: 31). Martin and Turley (2004: 464), studied the attitudes of young people (19-25 years old) towards shopping malls, and factors motivating consumption. They found that they were more likely to be focussed on the shopping mall's attractiveness, rather than being socially motivated to visit. In addition to the qualities of the malls' internal products, other qualities, such as travel components that include comfort, reliability of transport, effort, tension, distance, and value are important in affecting peoples' decisions about going to shopping malls (Ibrahim, 2002: 278).

The study of consumption and consumers has become independent and recognized as worthy of attention. It helps to understand consumer behaviours, expectations and desire. Mall developers attract consumers through the promise of wide assortments of stores and services available in a single location (Bloch et al., 1994: 24). These include restaurants, art exhibits, movie theatres, hair salons, clinics, play areas and fast food corners. Moreover, visitors do not only consume products and services, but also find experiences that are consumable. The act of consuming objects is itself a sign of personal and social identity (Cooper et al., 2005: 4). The interiors of malls have evolved to be comfortable spaces (Bloch et al., 1994: 24). A consumer's retail preferences and choices are affected by their psychological states, which are motives and emotions (Dawson, 1990: 408). Motives bring the consumer to the retail shop, but emotion is experienced in the retail market place. Pleasure is a result of exposure to a store's atmosphere, which involves retail behaviour, spending level, and the amount of time spent in the store. Moreover, the influence of store design, atmosphere, and environment on customer satisfaction and choices are important (Cooper et al., 2005: 31).

A study was conducted by El Adly in 2007 based on a questionnaire survey. To examine the attractiveness, image and patronage of malls (El-Adly, 2007: 936). 407 questionnaires were completed at UAE University in Al Ain, with faculty members, instructors, departmental staff, and students. From the questionnaires six factors emerged,: comfort, entertainment, diversity, mall essence, convenience and luxury. El Adly mentioned that "comfort" contains seven attributes, which are mall security, parking space, comfort, size, cleanness and having all the family needs (El-Adly, 2007: 938). "Entertainment" includes entertainment programmes, and spaces for children and young people. Shoppers also want a "diversity" of restaurants, shops, food and cinemas. "Convenience" was an important factor, including the accessibility, namely, the presence of a supermarket and late opening hours. "Luxury" was the last factor, and this is comprised of the external appearance and the popularity of the mall (El-Adly, 2007: 942).

6.4   Conclusion

It is important to understand what people do in their leisure time. This gives a clear understanding of the types of places and activities people enjoy going to or doing. Moreover, it is useful for researchers in order to understand what people look for and what determines their leisure time choices. These determining factors include socializing or being with people, entertainment, change of routine, convenience, services, and weather.

As was mentioned previously most of the participants said that shopping malls are the most desirable place they enjoy visiting. Moreover, they gave reasons for choosing the shopping malls as destination. These reasons are: entertainment, comfort, diversity of shops and restaurants, convenience, parking spaces and services. In the next chapter, the researcher is going to examine reasons why people choose to visit Sharjah museums and how the reasons are different or a like from visiting shopping malls.

Chapter 7 Findings and Discussion: Reasons Why People Choose to Visit Sharjah Museums

Over the last two decades museums have gone a long way towards transforming themselves from inward-looking, curator driven and collections-focused institutions to outward-facing audience focused destinations. (Black, 2011 : 75)

7.1 Introduction

People visit and use museums to meet all kinds of needs (Ambrose and Paine, 2012). Some are straightforward, such as getting information, meeting friends, or taking their children on holiday. Other reasons are more complex, this may include discovering the history or heritage of a place, or finding a sense of personal identity and exploring the museum collection (Ambrose and Paine, 2012 : 33). Therefore museums need, as Black (2011: 15), suggests, to convert one-time visitors into regular visitors. He proposes that this can be done by enhancing the quality and variety of museum learning experiences. But is important to remember that visitors are diverse and they would visit different museums at different times. For example, school and university students mainly visit museums during the week for academic purposes, but families, couples and individuals more often visit museums in the evenings or at weekends and during holidays for informal learning, leisure and other reasons.

The researcher argues that museum visitors seek social and recreational experiences from their visit, mostly to satisfy their general interest and curiosity in the collection, object and the museum in general and for social interaction. As Hood (1983) notes we need to focus on the psychological character of current and potential visitors. Museums need to understand the possible values, attitudes, perceptions, interests, expectations and satisfactions of their visitors. This can only be done by focusing on the process of the visit - including before, during and after - and how this is influenced by both the personal and social contexts of the visitor (Falk and Dierking, 2012: 24). Therefore, if museums are to understand the visitor experience they need to measure these dynamics.

The purpose of this chapter is to use these interviews to find out why people choose to visit museums, and to examine the motivations and psychological backgrounds of Sharjah museum visitors. The discussion to follow is based on what museum visitors expressed through on site interview, as the researcher wanted to explore why they chose to come to the museum on the day of their visit, as the motivation and need to do so is still in their mind. Quotes will be from the 24 participants interviewed in the three chosen museums.

The first part of this chapter will focus on the background of the visitors, and then discuss in general some of the overall reasons for their visit. The second part of the chapter will consider the factors which influence visiting in more detail, dividing them into two groups those internal to the visitor, and those external to them. The internal factors are personal goals or pre-visit agendas that influence visitors' behaviour and learning in museums (Falk et al., 1998). From the interviews, the internal themes examined are learning, socializing, national identity, and the external themes are assignment-related visits, weather, building, and location.

7.2   Reasons Why Sharjah People Consider a Museum as Place to Visit

As was discussed previously, there are many reasons for visiting museums, which may vary from personal attitudes and interests to the image of the museum (Prentice et al., 1997), However, personal and external factors are the main influences on a person choosing to visit a museum or not. There are no theories about museums visiting in the United Arab Emirates or Middle East; therefore, the researcher is going to test theories on museum visiting from Western writers. The researcher applied these theories and examined if they are applicable to Sharjah audiences, and how museum visiting culture varies.

Most museum visitors are aware of the possible benefits prior to their visit, and enter with related expectations (Falk, 2009). Some of them already have an image of the museum in mind and this gives them an idea of what to expect. However, the museums scene in Sharjah has changed in the last few years and museums are making an effort to improve their displays and services, so those expectations might not always be met. Wafa is a UAE national in her late twenties, who works in media. She was interviewed at Sharjah Museum

of Islamic Civilization, and it appeared work was the central purpose of her visit to the museum.

Q: Do you visit museums at weekends?
A: No, I don't.
Q: Have you never visited museums before?
A: I have visited, but only because I had a task. It was related to my career as a journalist, and I needed more information to complete it. So I had to do some research before doing a report for the TV. It was my first time visiting a museum, and I was in my early twenties.
Q: You didn't go before, with family or school?
A: I remember, when I was at school, yes, but it wasn't my choice, I had to go. It was the science museum, the one I visited.
Q: What did you think of it?
A: It was cool for a student, it was cool. Also I visited the desert park with the school. Sometimes I take my little sister to play in the Discovery Centre, which is not a museum but is considered part of Sharjah Museums.
Q: So when you came to the Museum for work you didn't see that you might want to come for leisure or entertainment?
A: I was shocked that there were many things that I learned through the Museum that I didn't know before, about the city of Sharjah itself. I visited a museum that shocked me, not the Aquarium, the other, the Maritime, because it mentioned many names of people that we know, and I didn't expect to read all these family names in a museum. It was a surprise for me.

As shown above, Wafa only came to the museums as part of a job related matter; other than that, she had only visited them with school when she was a child. She does not see herself as someone who is a museum visitor, but she has been to most of the museums for work purposes. Wafa falls into the category of professional visitors that Falk (2009) mentioned with regards to type of motivation; Wafa's desire is to fulfil specific needs, which would be her work. She never thought of coming to the museum as a learning or leisure place, but she actually was learning new things through her visits, even if she did not plan too. Her visit to the Maritime Museum had actually touched her personally and linked to her

personal life and people she knew. Museums offer self-directed learning in a free choice environment which is associated with acquiring facts and skills (Scott, 2009: 199). As Falk and Dierking (2000: 32) argue, "most human learning is self-motivated, emotionally satisfying, and very personally rewarding". This made Wafa value the museum as a place of learning and talk about history of the people. However, tasks related to work forced her to visit museums, not personal choice.

Other visitors come to the museum with no expectations and try to enjoy what the museum has to offer. Most of these visitors are brought by their parents or friends, and they come as a part of a group. An example is Julia, who is 17 years old, and was brought to the museum by her parents. Julia is an expat who is living with her parents, who are working in Abu Dhabi. For a weekend holiday they decided to visit Sharjah museums, which are almost two hours' drive away from the city they live in. Julia is encouraged to visit museums by her parents and they regularly take her to museums when they travel. Julia can be referred to as an explorer and experience seeker, based on Falk (2009) profiles of museum visitors as mentioned in Chapter 4. She is interested in seeing the collection and what the museum has to offer to satisfy her intellectual curiosity, and also she wanted to be introduced to and know more about the country she is living in. Moreover, her parents have a big influence on her, and they reinforce the habit of visiting the museums, supporting what Bourdieu et al. (1991) argued about parents' influence on children. However, this case does not represent UAE society, because Julia is an expat and she has a different cultural background, as she been brought up and lived in Britain most of her life.

Q: Have you visited museums here in Sharjah?
A: Yes.
Q: What was your impression of them?
A: It is pretty good actually, it is really worth it.
Q: What did you like about it? And did you have any expectations?
A: I didn't have any expectations. Each room had a specific meaning in regard to what it contained: it was easy to pick the calligraphy part of the museum and the exhibition part of the museum, and they are well contained and easily found.
Q: Do your parents encourage you to visit museums?

113

A: Yes, they joined me here.

Falk (2009: 188), argues that identity related needs and interest are the primary goals of the individual museum experience. Moreover, the realities of the museum play a role in the experience. Museums need to investigate and know visitors' needs, not only types of visitors. Some are straightforward needs: for example, seeking information or a place to meet friends. Others are more complex, such as discovering the history of the place, to find a sense of personal identity, or to explore the collection. Much literature suggests that people choose to visit museums as a leisure activity (Silverman, 1995). Families do not only visit museums for social interaction and entertainment, but also to learn, and this is shaped by their family background and mode of interaction (Hein, 1991). However, only a few of the participants in the interviews mentioned the word entertainment or leisure when they were asked why they chose to visit museums. Museums are considered to be for learning and education only, and are not always considered to be places of leisure. Individuals mostly judge leisure experiences based on leisure criteria. They tend to choose a leisure activity as they want social interaction; the leisure criteria are to be doing something worthwhile, to feel comfortable in the surroundings, to have the challenge of a new experience, and to have the opportunity to learn and do so actively (Hood, 2004). This was already discussed in Chapter 5, in regard to leisure choices and spending leisure time.

Figure 18 Reasons why people choose to visit museums in Sharjah

In summary, the majority of the participants interviewed in this study indicated that learning and getting information were their main reasons for visiting the museum. Half of the participants mentioned socializing as one of the reasons for their visit. Nine out of 24 said that they visit the museum to help them to enhance their identity, and an equal number came to the museum as part of a university assignment or as a requirement of their job. Two out of the 24 participants mentioned that they prefer to visit museums, as they are indoor spaces where they can spend time without feeling hot, as weather can reach up to 60 C degrees in the summer. Similarly, two participants came to see the building itself and the architecture: specifically, Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization and the museums located in old Sharjah, the Heart of Sharjah. One participant came to visit a museum as they were interested in attending a cultural event. Finally, only one person commented that the location of the museums was the main reason she came, as it was close to where she lived. One person mentioned the importance of the quality of the museum. In the next part of the chapter, we will explore these internal and external factors in turn, and examine the significance of their impact on the decision to visit museums.

115

7.2.1 Internal Factors: Learning, Socializing and National Identity

Internal factors or personal context and identity-related motivations, as Falk and Dierking (2012) argue, are two streams of thought on why a person might choose to visit a museum. The first is that I and/or my group desire to satisfy more personal and social-cultural need and the second is that a museum can be a place to satisfy these needs. From the interviews conducted with museum visitors, there were three main internal factors that brought them to the museum, which are: learning, socializing and national identity.

7.2.1.1 *Learning*

22 out of the 24 visitors who were interviewed came to museums seeking information. Some of them came for their own knowledge, and others came along with friends and family, to help them learn something new. For parents, going to a museum is a safe, non-threatening experience for their children. It is a place where they can get a hands-on experience and encounter real objects (McManus, 1994: 81).

Most research about motivations and museum visitors states that education is the first motivation that attracts visitors to museums (Moussouri, 1997, Packer and Ballantyne, 2002, Hood, 1989). Museums are one of the leisure settings that offer true learning opportunities (Anderson, 2004). They provide a learner-centered experience, which involves: exploring and examining; making choices; making personal connections; developing understanding; and controlling one's own learning environment (Packer and Ballantyne, 2002, Paris, 1997). Moreover, visitors may come to museums because of an external force that made them come to get information, such as an assignment or work-related matter - more will be discussed about this later in this chapter.

The common reasons for attendance that visitors gave in their interview were "to learn" and "getting information". Other terms used, like "education", "expanding knowledge", "doing something worthwhile," were all linked to higher-order fulfilment or a personal need to enhance self-esteem (Kelly, 2007). Museum visitors understand that museums are learning institutions (Falk and Dierking, 2012). However, Falk and Dierking suggested that this value of museums as an educational place is obvious to people, and that they do not

necessarily mention it as a reason for visiting. In my interviews, 13 participants stated that they visit museums to learn and six said they visit museums to get information.

Mitchell (1999: 51), found that most family groups cited "learning" as the main purpose of the visit. This indicates that museums are regarded as places for informal education, and thus museums are expected to have information for visitors. Information can be gained through labels, catalogues or a guided tour, multimedia, objects, theatre and socializing with other people or with museum staff. Parents mostly bring their children to museums as part of the "enculturing" process. This shows the ways humans build their knowledge through conversation, and the important role of family narrative in creating shared meanings between individuals (Falk and Dierking, 2000: 38). Therefore, museums should offer different kinds of family learning possibilities. For example, they should provide hands-on learning activities, diverse information paths, special guided tours, and they should encourage people to start a dialogue, as knowledge and meaning is created in exchange between generations (Lord, 2007: 73). Adult family group members often articulate their reasons for being in museums as being in response to the needs of their children (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994: 15). Birlly is a thirty-five year old mother with three children, the owner of a real estate company, and lives in Dubai. She stated that she comes to visit family members in Sharjah at the weekend, and likes to bring her children to the museums at the same time.

Q: During the week you are normally at work. Do you have free time?
A: No, it's only at the weekend I have free time for my children, so I take them out. I am interested in showing them the museums and such places, and they can gain information and entertain themselves there.
Q: Which museum did you like the best so far?
A: I like the traditional museums of each country which show life in the olden days.

Birlly visits her family, who live very close to SMIC, every Friday. In the interview she mentioned that she always saw the building and did not know what it was. A visit to the museum was recommended by her family members. Birlly spent one hour touring around the four exhibitions at the museum. Her visit was mainly for the purpose of educating her

children in a fun way, as she mentioned the word "entertain". At the SMIC, objects are displayed in glass cases, and only one gallery has interactive objects and modules: the science and technology gallery. Moreover, she mentioned that she likes traditional museums. She is the one who is responsible for choosing a place where her family spends time, and as she is interested in and likes traditional museums she wants to introduce them to her children. In the same interview, Birlly mentioned that she used to go to museums in India with her parents while she was a child. This shows that she is doing the same for her own children. Her children were excited, as it was their first visit to this particular museum. This visit to the museum may be a step towards them becoming possible future visitors to the museums. Birlly falls into the visitor category of a facilitator; a visitor who is socially motivated. Her visit to the museum is to enable the learning and experience of her children (Falk and Dierking, 2012).

Many expatriates and non-nationals who live in the United Arab Emirates visit museums to gain information and learn about the history of the country. This is because many of them do not have direct contact with UAE nationals, and so the internet, books and museums are the only places where they can learn more about the history of the country and the culture of its people. It is very difficult to have contact with UAE nationals, because of the high number of expatriates compared to the nationals. Expatriates number nearly 7.316 million, accounting for around 88.5% of the country's total population (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). An example is Sufyan, a 27 year-old male Arab expatriate who works as a sales manager. Sufyan has been living in the United Arab Emirates for the past five years, and in his first year he visited most of the museums around the UAE. Sufyan wanted to know more about the country he was living in, including its history, culture and people.

Q: What do you do in your free time?
A: It depends on the season. In spring time I go out to Al Qasba or the Marina, somewhere where I can walk, but in the summer… I do what everybody else in the Emirates does, go to shopping malls.
Q: Why are you in the museum today?
A: In my first year in the UAE I visited all the museums. I wanted to see everything and learn about the history, so I had a tour around all the museums and learned, but after one

year I stopped. I take my guests though, those who come from France, Tunis or America to see my favourite places.

For this visit to the museum, Sufyan brought his friends who came from France. He mentioned that he makes sure that he takes his friends to his favourite places, including SMIC, and this what makes him come back to the museums regularly. His main interest started after he came to work in the UAE. Sufyan wanted to know more about the country he lived in. His museum visits made him understand the culture and know more about the history of the UAE. Living in a new country is a challenging experience, and museums can be a useful way of getting to know the country. Sufyan falls into Falk and Dierking's categories of explorer and facilitator. The explorer is a person who is driven by curiosity and has a generic interest in the content of the museum, and they try to find something that satisfies their curiosity and need to learn. After Sufyan's needs were satisfied, he bought his friends to enable their learning, and give them the chance to have a similar experience.

7.2.1.2 Socializing

Museums can be seen as a public places where people can socialize. Visitors come for social outings with family and friends, to talk, interact and share experiences (Rand, 2004). Cave and Nielsen (2010), mentioned that people tend to visit museums to "get close to one another", the museum providing opportunities for the family to interact with each other better, for example, through programmes and events designed for the whole family. People who do not visit the museum often believe that museums cannot offer them any opportunities for social interaction. There are also other types of visitors who might come once or twice a year with family for a day out or for special events and festivals. Being with family and friends helped the visitors feel comfortable (Hood, 1993). However, if the person did not have a meaningful communication with his group or the museum's exhibits, this would not make him/her come to the museum again. Meaningful communication, as Perry (2012: 74) is "when both the visitors feel satisfied with the communication process they have been part of and the museum is satisfied that the visitors have learned (broadly defined) something of merit". Perry (2012: 75) added that some visitors come to museums alone or with a social group, and both of these types of the visitor share the same

expectation for communication. This would be by either engaging in a conversation with someone else or an interaction with the exhibition. The communication can occur through a visitor reading the label or talking with a member of museum staff. McManus (1987), identified four type of behaviours associated with museum learning which are: reading exhibit labels; engaging in conversation about the exhibit topic; spending time at the exhibit; and using exhibit interactives. Sometimes all these behaviours can take place at once, and at other times only one or two of them will occur.

Research was done on the communication potential of museums for families with young children at Stoke-on-Trent Museum and Art Gallery, in partnership with Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery and the New Art Gallery Walsall. The research found that children depend on their carers to come, and that parents mostly make the decision to come to museums or not. Moreover, it found that parents feel freer and more confident to interact with each other and with their children if they felt welcomed as a whole family by the museum staff (Cave and Nielsen, 2010).

Visitors to Sharjah Museums consider their visit to the museum as a social activity. Most of them visit the museum with family members or friends and it is rare that visitors come alone. The visiting public see museums as a social setting where families, couples and other social groupings can engage in comfortable recreation (Falk and Dierking, 2012). Most of the parents take their children to museums to learn and experience new and interesting things (Falk and Dierking, 2012). Kelly (1978)strongly identifies the importance of familial socialization on museum going, as people who were taken to museums by their parents when they were children are more likely to visit museums as adults (Kelly, 1978).

Marina is a visitor who participated in an interview at the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization. She is a 19 year-old student who is studying Chemical Engineering at Sharjah American University. Marina's parents used to take her to the Sharjah Heritage Museum when she was young, and these visits were positive, encouraging her to return to the museums when she became older.

Q: What do you do in your free time and at the weekends?

A: Relax.

Q: What do you do for relaxation? Do you stay at home?

A: Yes, even when I go out I don't stay out long, because I spend long hours at the university.

Q: Where do you usually go?

A: We go to Dubai.

Q: Do you live in Sharjah? Do you visit museums with your family?

A: Yes, my parents used to take us to museums, we visited the Heritage Museum here in Sharjah, we visited it many times, and we also visited another one in Dubai. This is the first time I have realized that there is an Islamic museum here. I am here to do an Arabic assignment, our professor wants us to write a report about the things that we like best in the museum, so this was the first time I had heard about it.

Mariana prefers to relax and stay at home when she has a free time. This is because she has lot of pressure from university projects and assignments. When she was young her parents moved from Egypt to settle in the UAE. They used to take her to visit heritage museums in the country to know more about its traditions and culture. She has positive memories of her visits to the museums and she enjoyed her visit to SMIC. Mariana said that she would visit the museum again if she has time.

All interview participants came along either with family or friends. Even students who came to finish an assignment came with classmates. The most common group is that of a mother with her children. Fathers tend to come along with the mother and the children, but rarely alone. As Stanton (1999: 6) argues "women, more often than men, initiated family museum visits". In United Arab Emirates culture, mostly it is women who are responsible for the children's education. Fathers are regarded as the source of power and income in the family (Krause, 2008: 32). Even if the father is not around in the house most of the time he knows what is happening at home. Therefore, mothers have a very strong connection with their children, as they are the ones who spend most of the time with them (Krause, 2008: 42). Of the participants, only one father (Mohammed, a 33 year-old UAE national) came along with his children. The reason he came to the museum was that his 14 year-old

daughter wanted to visit it. She had visited the museum with the school and wanted her parents to see it.

Q: Why did you decide to come to the museum today, what do you want to see?
A: It is a holiday, so I brought my children here; my daughter wants to see the archaeology museum.
Q: So she likes archaeology and she asked to come here?
A: Yes.
Q: Is it your first visit to the museum?
A: No, I think it is the second time, but there are many changes.

The interviewee mentioned above that during holidays he makes sure that he takes his children to places of their choice. In the case of this visit, the daughter made the choice to visit Sharjah Archaeology Museum. She came on a school trip and had a positive experience. This positive experience at the museum made it a place she wants to visit regularly. The father was very supportive and happy to bring his children to the museum.

Single visitors who are unmarried usually come with their friends or one of their parents, and usually it is the mother who comes. Two participants came along with their mothers to visit the museum, although whilst one of them had planned the visit in advance, the other one came to the old market and saw the building, and thought that she wanted to explore what was inside it. Sahar is a 23 year-old female Emirati national who enjoys visiting museums with her mother and friends.

Q: What do you do for entertainment in general?
A: Entertainment, you mean like doing things at the weekends or something like that?
Q: Yes.
A: Well, you see out here, entertainment often depends on who you hang out with as your friends, it could be like... I have a bunch of friends who are very artistic, so we go to art galleries sometimes to check out the exhibitions, or we go to the movies. Yesterday I actually went to see one of my friends, there was a poetry competition, a poetry reading competition.

Sahar has been influenced by her mother, who is a fashion designer and had an interest in art and culture, and made sure to take Sahar to museums and cultural events when she was a child. Sahar herself works in the museum field, as she holds a masters in museums studies and exhibition design, and calls herself a "museum freak" as she visits every single museum in any city she visits. This shows the influence of family background on children and the acquisition of cultural capital (Kracman, 1996: 214). Sahar mentioned that she chooses her leisure activity based on her friends. This shows that she considers going out with friends to be a social activity that needs to be enjoyable. Moreover, she noted that her friends who are artists enjoy going to museums and galleries. Bourdieu's research explored the relation between individual and family socialization which leads to cultural participation - however, he did not explore the influence of peer groups and their influence on art participation. Upright (2004: 130), argued that individuals do not live, work and play in isolation, and even if family has a critical role in the person's educational experiences and life choices, their peer group have an influence as part of his or her ongoing social relationships. An example of this is Sahar's situation, as she is very much influenced by her friends' choices, and when she goes out with friends who are interested in attending more cultural events she takes part with them.

Another participant was Meera, who is a 23 year-old female Emirati national who visited the Sharjah Art Museum with her mother. She was very interested in the collection and paintings, but her mother was not very impressed as she wanted to see more sculptures.

Q: Why are you in the museum today?
A: My mother and I come to the old Souq nearly every day. Yesterday my mother said: "We always pass by the museum but we have never visited it. What is there inside?" So I told her that I would take her to the museum, and now she says that it is full of pictures. She doesn't know what to expect. I think she expected to see models and something different upstairs.
Q: Is this your first visit to the museum?
A: Yes, it is our first visit to this museum, but I have visited museums before with school. It is the first time for my mother though.

Going shopping is a very common social activity in UAE society. Meera, with her sister and mother, comes almost every day to the old market which is located in the Heart of Sharjah. The Sharjah Art Museum is a big white building within walking distance of the market. Meera used to pass by the museum almost every day and the day of the interviews was the only day that she had chosen to visit the museum. Meera and her family did not know what to expect in the museum. This shows that they do not have enough information about the museum and what art museums in general display. The mother wanted to see more sculptures and models, and did not have a real connection with the paintings. Meera's mother is an example of what Bourdieu et al. (1991) describes as those going for art of a more realistic, functional or decorative character, who have no significant background knowledge of art history and are members of lower income groups. For example, the higher class visitors are more interested in paintings, and the working class are more interested in pottery, furniture and ceramics, as they perceive these objects as something they can relate to. The less educated the person is the more likely they might be attracted to famous artwork, as they learned about it at school or have seen movies about it. In contrast, people who like formally complex, experimental, abstract and expressionist art are often in possession of background knowledge in art history and are members of higher income groups who tend to appreciate and understand art.

Mothers bring their children to the museums, especially to the family workshops at the weekend to help their children engage with the museums in a fun and stimulating way. The more museums are welcoming to children, the more families will come. This is very important in the UAE, as the majority of museum visitors come in families and in social groups. There are visitors who remember their first visit with family. Most of them visit the museum again as they had a positive visit with their family. Farah is a 42 year-old UAE national, whose passion for museums was gained through her visits to museums with her family which she was a child.

Q: What do you do in your free time?
A: Not lately, but generally, I spend my free time with the family. I have lots of hobbies like photography, sports, swimming, volley ball, badminton, I go driving, I visit museums, I visit libraries.

Q: And what kind of museums do you like?

A: Well, we have very limited choices in UAE. Being raised in Dubai we have Al Fahidi Fort, Al Fahidi Museum, I've been visiting them all my life. In general, I like to visit different museums when I travel. I've been going to Al Ain Museum since my childhood. There are no museums currently in Abu Dhabi, but I've been to Fujairah's Museum. I am not sure if there is one in Ras Al Khaimah, but I visited Al Fujairah, Dubai and Al Ain is the main one.

Q: Do you visit with friends or family?

A: Family, in childhood my father was very keen to use our weekends for doing something from which we learn, not something just for fun.

Family unity is very important in UAE society. Individuals make time for family gatherings at least once every week or every two weeks. Farah mentioned that she spends most of her free time with her family and visits museums with them as well. She refers to her father as the person who made sure they visited museums regularly. Her father had a very strong influence on her, as she considers herself as a museum enthusiast. DiMaggio et al. (1978), suggested that the consumption of high arts activities such as visual arts, visiting a museum, opera, ballet, theatre, and classical music are largely passed down from one generation to the next. This is exactly what happened with Farah; however, in the interview she said that her brothers and sisters do not have the same passion for museums as she mentioned in the interview. This lead to my desire to try to figure out the reason why Farah follows her father's footsteps in comparison with her sisters and brothers. Farah's personal interests and values, and appreciation of visiting museums, are affected by her father and her personal interest.

7.2.1.3 National Identity

As was mentioned earlier in Chapter 3 Background to Sharjah Museums, museums were built in the Gulf in general and the UAE in particular as part of the creation of nation states (Erskine-Loftus, 2011). Moreover, the fast pace of change in the UAE after the discovery of oil means that many nationals alive today clearly remember a way of life entirely different from that Emiratis are born into today. The rapid change means the 'past' is in

living memory, but memories are fading. The UAE's rapid change creates the need to preserve and display the past, since the national, historical memory of the social self has been so quickly transformed (Picton, 2010: 78). Museums are revealed as being pro-nationalistic institutions instilling a sense of pride in the nation past (Prince, 1990: 80). Al-Qassemi (2011) who is a columnist and art enthusiast, said

> urbanisation may turn out to be, as many fear, the fire that is slowly eating up Emirati culture, leaving many of us helpless to stop it and left wondering what will be left to salvage. On the other hand, it may be the Emirati culture's best chance of survival in a globalized world.

Al Shehhi (2011) suggested a solution for cultivating a national identity among our younger generation, by sound education and upbringing. It should start with the parents, with collaboration from schools and other cultural institutions like museums.

Museums have a key responsibility in helping individuals to find their own identity. As Davis (2007: 53), stated "they remind us of who we are and what our place is in the world". Museums can help individuals learn more about their heritage and culture, about how people lived in the past, and also try to link this with their present and future. They are important to the person as an individual and as a member of the community and nation (Davis, 2007: 54). Falk (2009: 212), encouraged museum professionals to look at individuals' identity-related needs and interests. Falk added that the reason that most people do not attend museums is that they do not satisfy their leisure and identity related needs. Moussouri (2002: 24) draws on how museums may make an impact on visitors' identities as well as their attitudes, feelings and perceptions. That would be by: (1) making them aware of museums and galleries; (2) empowering them with a sense of cultural ownership; (3) providing identity-based experiences; (4) challenging their ideas about the potential of museums to represent different cultures; and, (5) increasing their confidence, self-awareness and self-esteem.

Abdullah, a 45 year-old Emirati national, who was interviewed at Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, believes that identity-building is the main role of museums. This was his first visit to the Museum, and he was inspired and amazed by the Museum's collection.

Q: Do you feel that there is a connection between you and the museums that you have visited? What is the role of museums for our local community?

A: Certainly, certainly! Especially the local museums, the historical traditional museums, I believe they are very important because they conserve and hold part of the country's identity and history. At a time when things are beginning to change, the growth of globalization, and the change of cultures, I see them as treasures that preserve a part of the cultural heritage of the country and the nation.

Q: What is the primary link or connection between you as a person and the museum?

A: Between me and the museum the best link is my major in history. Because I am specialized in history I consider the museum as something that compliments or is a companion to my major or specialty. But if this question was asked of another person who wasn't specialized, they may have another answer. I am more into the culture, tradition, and history.

Abdullah stressed the importance of museums, as they hold part of the country's identity. His view illustrates that he expects a museum to be about the history, culture and tradition of the country. He also talked about globalization and modernity, and their effects on the country's culture. Abdullah sees museums as places which preserve, and remind people about, their history and culture.

Abdullah is an Emarati national who stressed the importance of the museums for UAE nationals, but Marina is a 19 year-old Egyptian resident who was born and raised in the UAE, and believes that museums have equal importance to her. She answered the following question:

Q: Do you think that visiting museums can give you a good idea about the country?

A: Yes because we, the younger generation, we don't know anything about our ancestors: for example I don't know anything about my country Egypt, and many Emiraties don't know much about their origin. Museums give a good idea about people and life in the past.

As she had spent all her life in the UAE she agreed that museums are places where young people like her can learn more about the people of the land and the history of the country. It is very interesting that people such as Abdullah and Marina have a strong faith in

museums, and they do believe that museums will always have the true or official story of history. As Trofanenko (2006: 98) argued, museums are places of trust, which is gained through the objects and collections they hold. Moreover, national identities are formed based on the history given in the museums, as the official story of the society's past (Trofanenko, 2006: 96). Furthermore, museums can be described as keepers of collective memory, and can play a valuable role in providing an understanding of identity and in fostering sense of belonging to a place or community for their users (Ambrose and Paine, 2012: 7).

On the other hand, museums are not only about past identity, but should also be about the present and future identities. As Hill (2012: 1), suggested, "museums tell us about ourselves and the work as moving through time, but also serve to immortalise, to freeze in time" Moreover, Watson (2007: 269), argued that museums can be a "place where people's identities can be challenged, explored and rethought".

7.2.2 External Factors: Assignment, Architecture, Weather and Location

As previously mentioned, some visitors use museums to fulfil their personal needs and interests, these include external factors that influence other visitors. In this research the main external factors found were: an assignment for university that a student had to finish; the architecture of the building, and people wanting to know more about what was inside; weather, as people want to spend time in somewhere cool and air-conditioned; and the location of the museum, easy to get to or proximate.

7.2.2.1 Assignment

It is popular amongst schools, colleges and universities to visit museums for field trips. Sharjah Museums offer a wide variety of programmes and tours designed especially to meet the needs of the students. Moreover, the universities use museums as a place for students to conduct assignments, and they also use the museum building for research. This occurs primarily at Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization and at the museums of old Sharjah. Most Sharjah schools and universities take students to the museums at least once every three years or so. Teachers are interested in linking the school or university

curriculum with the museum collections and exhibits. Some of the university courses that use museums in their research projects are architecture, media, cultural textiles, fashion design, information technology, history of the UAE, Islamic civilization, art and others. Nine out of the 24 participants came to the museums as they needed to conduct research related to the collection or the building. One of these participants was Maryam, a 21 year-old female Emirati national who visited the museum as part of the management course at Sharjah American University.

Q: Where do museums factor in your life?

A: I go to galleries but not to museums.

Q: So what brought you here today?

A: We are doing a museum management course and we have to write a report about exhibitions.

Q: So is this your first time here?

A: No, we came here a couple of times. I am taking two courses, exhibition design and museum management, and we came to a couple of museums that we had to visit with school or university.

Q: So most of your visits are related to the reports?

A: Yes.

Q: So you wouldn't think of coming to museums if you had free time, for leisure?

A: No, no, I would like to come to museums in my free time if there were special exhibitions.

Maryam said that she goes to art galleries but she is not interested in visiting museums. She makes sure to attend openings at commercial art galleries. She believes that museums only display old objects and paintings, and she is interested in contemporary and modern art. The visit to the museum was compulsory to finish an assignment. Maryam mentioned that this is not her only visit to the museum, and that she has visited it a few times as other courses required it. This shows that one university teacher is very interested in involving museums as places which students can visit or do some research in. Burhaima (2013: 526), who is the Education and Interpretation Manager at Sharjah Museums Department, highlights the importance of the educational role of Sharjah Museums in supporting a

variety of educational institutions, schools and universities, whether through on-site or off-site programmes. Burhaima (2011: 38), added that "the main purpose behind all this work was to welcome students and to encourage their teachers to enhance their lessons by using museum objects, along with in-gallery activities".

Another example is Maryam, a 19 year-old female non-national who came to the museum to do research for her Arabic course.

Q: How did you hear about this museum?
A: From the university. We have an assignment and we need to visit the museum to do the research, plus I always see it on my way to university.

Maryam has been passing in front of the museum almost every day on her way to university, but she never thought of entering the museum. This assignment forced her to make the visit and she actually enjoyed it. Museums co-ordinate with universities to introduce museums to students and make them have a fun, stimulating trip, and this might make them future visitors to the museums (Burhaima, 2011: 526). Hooper-Greenhill (2008: 184), argues that museums capture the enthusiasm of pupils of all ages and abilities, regardless of their social or cultural background.

7.2.2.2 Location

Visitors are influenced by many factors on whether to visit museum or not. Structural factors, such as the location of the museum, accessibility, services, transportation, and cost are important to explore visiting patterns, but the public image of the museum is the most important exploratory factor (Prince, 1990). However, it is very important to highlight these factors, as they were raised by the interviewees. Davies (2005: 63), argues that there are "structural factors" which play a part in determining whether potential visitors to museums will become actual visitors. Such factors include the physical accessibility and location of the museums and the availability of the museum.

Most of the visitors living in Sharjah find it easy to drive to the museums. Asma is a 32 year-old female resident in the UAE, for whom the Museum of Islamic Civilization is only five minutes away from home.

Q: Are you a resident in Sharjah?
A: Yes, I was born in Sharjah.
Q: Did you face any difficulties in reaching the museum?
A: Not at all, it took me five minutes. It's not far at all.

Two visitors' responses also noted which the only reason that they visited the museum was because it is very close to where they live. However, they mostly participate in the events organized by the museum and have only once visited the collection.

Q: What encourages you to visit museums?
A: Most of my visits are for the events organized in the museum. Last month we went to the event Earth Hour at the Aquarium. I like to take my children to the Aquarium and the Maritime Museum as its only 5 minutes away from where we live. Farah, 34, female, UAE national

Q: What encourages you to visit museums?
A: The Natural History Museum location is prefect as it is on a highway out of the city and only 15 minutes away from where I live. Rashid, 35, male, UAE national

Most visitors go to the museums which are close to them, rather than those far away from where they live. These are more convenient to as visiting them does not require lot of effort and visitors avoid the traffic going out of Sharjah.

7.2.2.3 Architecture and museum building

The museum building itself is determining factor which may encourage visitors to come. Museums should be inviting and the inside should be bright and spacious (Trevelyan, 1991). A large number of Sharjah Museums are purpose-built (except the Sharjah

Heritage Area museums). Buildings are accessible and have designated spaces for parking. The three museums the researcher chose to conduct the interviews in are big buildings, with a great design that attracts visitors to come inside. Birlly, a 35 year-old female expatriate, saw the architecture of the museum from the outside and decided to visit.

Q: What made you think of coming here?
A: I normally like museums, and I've seen this museum from the outside so I wanted to get inside and see what you have got to show us here.
Q: So you just came past, you got in and you liked it?
A: Yes, I like the architecture of the building and that it suggests that there is something great inside.

7.3   Conclusion

The researcher visited three different museums in Sharjah. It is evident that there was a lack of visitors who were UAE nationals. In the three weeks, the researcher managed to conduct 24 interviews with visitors. All of the visitors came as a group, whether they came with family, friends or classmates. Most of the visitors had a purpose in visiting: whether to learn, educate their children, show things to their friends and family, or work on an assignment.

Visitors who enter Sharjah's museums each year have a wide range of interests, needs, and intentions, and a similarly wide range of responses to their experiences here. Nonetheless, this research gives an insight into people's motivations to visit. All visitors who were interviewed agreed that museums have a very important role for themselves and for the community in general. Furthermore, they agreed that museums are educational institutions that people should visit to gain information. However, their expectations are high, and visitors want museums to be more engaging and more developed. Inductive analysis was used to find common themes across the interviews. It emerged from the interviews there are internal and external factors that influence the decision to visit a museum. Internal factors include learning, socializing and identity-making. On the other hand, external factors include work or study assignments, weather, building, and location.

Chapter 8   Findings and Discussion: Reasons Why People Choose Not to Visit Sharjah Museums

In the twenty-first century, the greatest challenge facing museums is to recognise that museums are for people, and that future success depends on identifying and meeting their needs (Ambrose and Paine, 2012 : 27)

8.1   Introduction

Since the twenty-first century, cities along the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula have experienced rapid economic development. Museum buildings as cultural heritage projects are being launched to construct an image of the host cities as uniquely competitive within the global post-industrial economy (Rab, 2011: 41).   Sharjah has the best tertiary educational institutions and libraries within the Gulf, as well as some museums (Fox et al., 2006a: 268). However, the main challenge facing museums and curators today is how to create an environment which simultaneously engages the public and a diverse local population.

This chapter is based on the results of a total of 55 semi-structured interviews, carried out with UAE nationals and non-national residents who live in the Emirates of Sharjah. To answer the question "why don't people visit museums?" the researcher investigated the barriers and reasons why people do not consider museums as an option. These barriers include personal and cultural barriers, and institutional, environmental and structural barriers.

8.2   Reasons why people in Sharjah do not consider museums as places to be visited.

Western theories explore the barriers museum visitors may face. These barriers were examined and evaluated to determine if they apply in the United Arab Emirates or not. One study from Department for Culture, Media and Sport study (2010) in UK, which identifies reasons why people say they do not participate in certain activities. The report argues that the attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and skills that every individual builds come from their environment, culture, and past experiences (Angela et al., 2010). Three main barriers were

identified as inter-personal factors, which are social, environmental, and having someone to attend with. There are also intra-personal factors, which are attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and lack of confidence. External factors, which are the barriers out of the control of the individuals, include physical barriers, lack of time, money, health and wellbeing. Moreover, Davies (1994: 69) suggested that some barriers that stop individuals coming to the museums are: lack of awareness; lack of interest; historical perspectives; the non-visitor's perceptions; perceived associations; relevance; lack of time; accessibility and availability of transport; age and health; and admission charges.

Larger scale research was conducted by MORI, (2004), where they interviewed a sample of 4,039 adults (aged 15+) throughout Great Britain, at 190 different sampling points. Interviewing took place during 2004. These interviews indicated a few reasons why people had not visited a museum or an art gallery in the last 12 months. The reasons were: no time; not interested; nothing they want to see; difficult to get there; admission charges are high; poor public transport; museums are boring; children won't be interested; not user friendly; don't make people feel welcomed; and too many children and school parties (MORI, 2004). From the interviews conducted, the researcher came up with three main barriers: personal barriers (within); cultural barriers (from culture); and institutional and environmental barriers (which are outside factors). Time, admission fees and public transport were not relevant to this research, as none of the participants mentioned it in the interviews.

The recent research study by Blume-Kohou and Leonard (2015: 13) also found that there are two types of barriers to arts attendance, which are perceptual and practical (Keaney, 2008, McCarthy and Jinnett, 2001). Perceptual barriers are peoples' ideas about art, based on past experience and the expectations and attitudes of family, and social surroundings. Practical barriers are lack of time, money and transportation. Below, more will be discussed on personal, cultural and structural barriers that hinder Sharjah people from visiting museums.

For the purpose of this research the barriers which were identified are personal; cultural and institutional, environmental and structural. More will be discussed in details below:

8.2.1   Personal Barriers

Personal factors simply mean how individuals view museums. This can be the strongest factor in determining the value an individual places on knowing about the past and consequently visiting a museum. However, there are two categories of people who do not value the past. The first group are people who do not value the past and do not visit museums and the second group are people who do not value the past but visit museums for other cultural reasons (Merriman, 1991). Most of the participants in this research have a very strong sense of the importance of the past and value the past, but they tend not to consider museums to be places to visit. This is can be due to the attitude they have toward museums in general, or a negative experience they have been through in the past. The researcher asked the participants what museums mean to them personally. Everyone had their own view of the museum based on prior knowledge or experience. Sentences that came up included the following:

- Stone Age.
- Heritage, museums are supposed to be about heritage. They can be educational.
- Boring.
- Museums are beautiful places.
- Museums remind me of old things. Old memories.
- Museums are about the archaeology of the United Arab Emirates.
- A museum is the place where you hold the heritage and history of the people. It tells the story of the city.
- Everything old.
- Museums are about tradition and originality. Any cities which do not have a museum do not have a history.
- Archaeological findings, old things and heritage.
- Museums are about heritage.
- Heritage objects.
- Archaeological findings, old things.
- History, old objects.

- Museums are about the objects they hold. If it is a heritage museum it will have heritage objects. If it is a car museum it holds old cars.
- Museums are about rare objects which are currently hard to find. They are about old, heritage things.
- It is about visiting an old place which holds old objects.
- History, archives, the past, culture.
- Places which expose me to many things on culture, knowledge, information and skills.
- A museum is the place which presents everything old for tourists and other nationalities.
- The museum is to preserve the ancient heritage for future generations and different nationalities.

The sentences above show that most of the interviewees see museums as places that are related to history and hold old objects, which is related to the notion of community identity. Other responses associated museums with places where education occurred via collections. Past, history and treasure were three words that participants referred too. Science centre participants associate the experience with hands-on engagement (Scott, 2007). The quotations from the interviews above mostly associate museums with the past, heritage, and old things. Only one participant referred to museums as places which are defined by the collection they hold; she had visited most of the museums in Sharjah, and she knows that each museum holds different collections. As stated before, museums started in the United Arab Emirates as historical and archaeological museums, and in the 1990s museums started to open with different themes and topics. People do not have much awareness about which museums exist. Lots of participants asked if a wildlife centre is considered to be a museum, or if the Aquarium is considered to be a museum. There is confusion about what museums are in peoples' minds, and they do not fully understand what defines a museum. Moreover, as most of the museums in the UAE started as heritage, historic and archaeological museums, people still have that idea about museums today, even if different types of museums have opened recently.

8.2.1.1 Lack of awareness

Lack of awareness of the existence of museums and what they can offer is one of the barriers that can prevent people not considering museums as places to visit. Davies (1994: 67) stressed that lack of awareness is one of the most common issues that most surveys of non-visitors express, and it is a significant reason why people do not visit. Ignorance of the museums' existence, contents, programmes and their relevance to individuals and communities are the main barriers for people who might be potential visitors (Black, 2011: 48).

In order to utilize museums for personal learning, individuals need to be aware that museums exist. This awareness does not just happen for most people; it comes about through a recent past experience, seeing an advertisement or a word of mouth. For example, a family history of museum attendance predisposes people to visiting museums in the future; in other words, people who have gone to museums in the past are the most likely to go in the future, depending on whether they were taken to museums by their parents when they were children (Falk and Dierking, 2000: 75). This is very difficult to track, as the museum-visiting habit is very recent. Al Ain National Museum was the first museum institution established in the United Arab Emirates, in 1971. Most of the other museums were opened in the 1980s and the 1990s. This demonstrates that the idea of museums is a new concept to the United Arab Emirates community, and people cannot be expected to have attained the habit of visiting museums yet.

Museums have functioned throughout history from places as storehouse of collections, to places which conserve them for future generations, and now are open for public benefit and learning (McLean, 1995: 614). Communication is one of the most common themes that visitors referred to in the interviews. In this thesis, communication simply means transferring information from one person to another in verbal, nonverbal or written ways. This means transferring the information from the museums to the public. Words that kept recurring in the interviews were: marketing; communication; approaching people; outreach programmes; multimedia; and the internet. Few participants mentioned the traditional marketing strategies such as newspapers, television and radio; however, most of them

mentioned social media, and especially Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. As one interviewee noted:

Q: What would encourage you to visit a museum?
A: Advertising campaigns, cultural events, to continue such activities if it is simple, even with little attendance in the beginning, but by that time people's awareness will develop, and then strongly advertise what we offer, think about the museums, I mean we have created a Facebook page, people have leaned toward this trend, to social interactive websites, to issue a Facebook page focusing on museums and their events, projects and activities, there will be some sort of interaction between the people and the activities of this project. But if it wasn't available, meaning no one actually knows about it except the people working in the museum or one ad in the newspaper in a year or something like that, sending mobile messages, using the SMS technique is a new, it's a nice method that has been made active lately but in past years no one knew about any of the museums' activities, only sometimes in the newspaper, and hardly any people used to read it, but now if the new techniques are used I believe it will have a great significant impact. Abdullah, 45, male, Emirati national

The above quotation illustrates the importance of social media and social networking sites in connecting people together. Fletcher and Lee (2012: 505), argue that using social media would increase the participants' engagement toward museums, because social media is a multi-way communication that can update audiences on what is happening in the museum. Museums started making more use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube, to communicate their activities and exhibitions and increase public engagement (Spiliopoulou et al., 2014: 287). Looking at Abdullah's age, he is a mature adult, and he is very keen to use social media to know what activities are being promoted. Moreover, many museums and educational institutions use social media to communicate with their visitors. Sharjah Museums Department uses Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and SMS massages to promote its exhibitions and programmes. In September 2014, they had 1885 followers on Instagram, 4479 likes on Facebook and 7, 5999 on Twitter. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 63) stated that social networking sites enable people to connect with each other by creating personal information profiles. These profiles allow them to connect with

their friends and colleagues where people can upload any kind of information they want to share with other people, like photos, videos, audio files and text. Social networking sites can be a free marketing strategy that museums can use, since word-of-mouth is a very efficient strategy for publicity for museums (Yucelt, 2001: 12). Two other comments about social media were:

Q: What do you think would encourage you to visit a museum?
A: The only thing that young people would follow is social media and BlackBerry Messenger. Have the museums ever thought of taking a picture of an object and sending it via BBM to people? Rashid, 36, male, UAE national

Q: What do you think would encourage you to visit a museum?
A: I like to use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and it would be great if the museums had them to reach people. Baina, 18, female, UAE national

Museums need to make people aware of what they have to offer (Black, 2011). Marketing is the main strategy, whether it is by TV, newspaper, street banners, radio or social media. In some museums the concept of marketing is limited to publicity or public relations. Marketing goes further than this. An approach based on simple publicity is content to transmit information about what is happening, when and where. An approach using genuine marketing methods tries to link products to the intended target audiences and asks questions about how appropriate the product is for the consumer. Most of the participants agreed that there is not enough marketing for museums, and this is the main reason why they do not come. Moreover, they are not sure what museum collections are until they actually visit the museums. Two of the participants mentioned:

Q: What would encourage you to visit a museum?
A: The media do not talk about the museums, even the newspapers or the radio. Rashid, 36, UAE national.

Q: Why do you think a museum visit is not an option for your outing?

A: There is no marketing for the museums, not in the media, TV and posters. For example, Dubai shopping festival has advertisements in all shopping malls even before it starts. Humaid, 25, male, UAE national.

8.2.1.2 Attitude toward the museum

Most of the participants who visited museums in Sharjah commented that one single visit is sufficient. Unless you are taking tourists or children to the museum to show them the heritage and the history of the UAE they do not want to visit the museum again as there is nothing new in the museum to see. As a few interviewees noted:

A: Most of the museums we already visited. Once is more than enough. There is nothing new. Humaid, 25, male, UAE national.

A: There is nothing new. Once is enough, I know the museum and what objects it has and its mission. What more is there to see? Ahmed, 22, male, UAE national.

A: Museums are old and you do not need to visit them more than once. Ali, 34, male, UAE national.

A: Visiting the museum once in a lifetime is enough. Budoor, 21, female, UAE national.

Museum programmes, workshops and events are designed to satisfy and attract members of the community and visitors (Kotler et al., 2008: 346). Programmes can include lectures, classes, exhibition openings and gallery tours. All of the respondents agreed that if the museums had more events or workshops in their area of interest area they would visit the museum. Omar is a 25 year old student at Sharjah University and works at a bank in Sharjah. He noted:

Q: Do you visit museums regularly?
A: I personally think there are no events in the museums. I already visited the museum twice so why should I go if there are no events? For example, they could do events every

month and invite people to come. There should be more organized events and galleries, and they should be entertaining. Omar, 25, male, UAE national

From the quotation above is shows that Omar is not aware of the programmes and events which are organized by the museums. This can be because of the lack of awareness or poor marketing from the museum side.

Two of the participants said that most museums display only a part of history and not all. They were more interested in the history of the land, not just the country, as the country was only established in 1972. As Trevelyan (1991: 22) argued that some people express interest in the past but feel that museums do not display it in the best way. The two interviewees wanted to know the history of the people who were living on the same land centuries ago. They added:

Q: What was your impression about the museums you visited in Sharjah?
A: The information in the museum is limited and there is not much information before the establishment of the UAE. Like they only display the part they want, not all. Rashid, 34, male, UAE national

Some of the interviewees commented on the museum collections and did not think that they were worth visiting. This is because they believe museums are boring and the ways museums display objects are dull. They are looking for something more fun and stimulating. As one of them suggested:

Q: What did you think of the natural history museum?
A: Of the museum's collection only 60% to 70% is good. It is boring and it only displays objects and written description beneath it. We want something fun. Omar, 43, male, UAE national.

Most of the participants thought that museums were only for certain people and not for them. The main belief is that museums are only for tourists who visit the country and for children to understand their heritage. They argue that museums need to be appealing to children, as they are the main reason why people might consider visiting a museum.

141

Trevelyan (1991: 29), supports this idea by saying the museums should make a special effort to appeal to children.

A: Museums are for children. They can attend workshops and learn new things. Maisoon 23, female, UAE national

A: Museums are for tourists and children. They want to know heritage. Um Sultan, 37, female, UAE national.

A: Museums are for people from other nationalities to know the country better. Moza, 22, female, UAE national.

In Falk's research, most of the visitors mention that they go to museums in order to learn; occasionally about something in particular, more often just learning in general (Falk et al., 1998). Interestingly, most of the UAE nationals commented that they know the heritage of the UAE and Sharjah, and this is why they do not need to visit the museums to learn about it: Trevelyan (1991: 35), suggested that people tend to not visit museums as they feel they have already seen what museums have to offer, and there is no point in making another visit.

A: There are things in the museums we already know; I don't want to go out to see something old. I want to see something new. Sultan, 25, male, UAE national.
A: All museum objects we have already seen and know. Um Nawaf, 28, female, UAE national.

Again it is very interesting from the interviews to see that in Sharjah most people prefer to do something they are used to doing, and none of the participants mentioned that they wanted to spend time doing something worthwhile or learning. More will be discussed on attitudes about education and the role of parents and schools below. This shows that participants consider leisure time as their own, family or friend's time, and they will use it to socialize rather than to learn or experience something new.

One participant considers that school trips to museums would be more rewarding rather than going with the family. She believes that parents need to take children to places where they can play and have fun and that museums are not those places. She commented:

Q: Do you consider visiting a museum as a family?
A: I believe that museum trips should be with the school. Family trips should be more fun and taking the kids to museums might be boring. Teachers should take children to museums for them to change the school routine. Maisoon, 35, female, UAE national

Other participants added that it is the schools' role to take children to the museums, as they are educational places and are linked to the school curriculum. They might think this as they are not used to going to museums with their parents and their only exposure to the museums was on school trips.

Q: With whom did you use to go the museums as a child?
A: I do remember schools used to take us to the museums a lot. I think I mostly take my children to play and it is the school's responsibility to take the children to museums to know about their heritage. Ali, 35, male, UAE national

In most Western educational theories about the role of parents' involvement in children's learning, there is agreement that social class plays an important role (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991: 21). Families from the middle classes have matching values to schools; therefore, they have a very strong sense of responsibility towards their children's learning (Lareau, 1987: 79). However, ethnically diverse families living in poor socioeconomic conditions tend to face difficulties and lack confidence about being involved in their children's' education. These theories cannot be applied in the UAE context, as class division in the UAE is totally different, and the reasons why parents do not get involved in their children's' education are different too. In the United Arab Emirates there has been little to no literature demonstrating the impact of parents' involvement on education in the Middle East and the UAE. Moussa-Inaty and De La Vega (2013: 292) argued that parents viewed involvement as important, but heavily relied on schools. In the same research it was mentioned that parents encourage their children to read at home, but did not mention other activities. Research done by the Family Development Foundation found that women in the

UAE spend 15 to 90 minutes per day with their children (Al Ahbabi, 2014). Such a limited time means they do not have the time to be involved in the children's' learning. Al Ahbabi (2014) comments,

> women are expected to work, take care of their homes and husbands, work out and attend social gatherings. Some busy mothers may choose to leave the care of very young children to a nursery, a nanny or another family member such as a grandmother.

A: We were not raised to visit the museum. I live very close to the museum and I never visited the museum. Waheed, 50, male, Egyptian.

A: We are not used to visiting museums with my family. Maybe we used to go with our school. Moza, 22, female, UAE national.

The above quotations from participants confirm that they did not visit museums while they were children. They did not get into the habit of visiting museums as a family. They always associate museums with school visits and it is not their role as parents to take their children to museums, but instead it's the role of the school. As most participants associate museums with institutions, and in this case with school, if this trip was negative a person would have a negative image of the museum. As Davies (1994: 70) argues, that this can lead them to have a negative image of museums and no desire to visit them. Almost all of the participants visited the museums as part of school or university trips. This is why they particularly associate museums with education and school. They do not see them as places they want to visit in their free time; rather, they want to go to a place which is more fun and entertaining.

A: It is the role of the school to take children to the museum as part of the curriculum (national education). Ali, 35, male, UAE national

A: I visited the science museum with the school. It was a great visit. Omar, 26, male, UAE national

A: When I am studying I am very stressed. So when I have a break I want to do something different. Museums remind me of study. Waleed, 20, male, UAE resident

Only two of the participants did not have an interest in visiting museums because they thought they were boring places, and even if they had an event or a tour guide to show them the museum they still would not be interested in visiting. This is a positive indicator as these two are the only ones who said they are not interested in visiting museums and both of them are friends. Others interviewees had already been to the museum at least once and considered museums as places they value, as was discussed in the previous chapter. There is a common idea from the groups that a visit to a museum is dark and quiet, and does not offer any activities that respondents would like to do (Merriman, 1991). Museums can be associated with dusty visits during one's childhood, rather than being places that individuals would choose to visit, which creates a negative impression. Maisoon and her friend Mona believe museums are very important in society, but they are not interested in visiting them as they think they are boring. This might be due to a childhood experience or because they have no interest in visiting museums. When they were asked if they have any hobbies, they said they do not and they prefer to go to restaurants or coffee shops with each other.

A: I am not interested in visiting museums. I get bored. Maisoon, 37, female, UAE national

Some participants had this idea that museums hold only archaeological findings. This idea came as they used to visit museums with schools when they were children and they were not aware that other museums had opened with different topics and themes.

A: Museums are archaeology only. Sultan, 25, male, UAE national.

Half of the participants agreed that having a museum with a story would be very interesting to them. Moreover, they prefer to have the information given to them through photos and videos rather than written text, as reading the text is boring. As one participant suggested:

A: It would be great if the museums displayed pictures, photos and videos about their objects. It would be interesting to link them together and make a story from them. Ali, 26, male, UAE national

Traditionally most museum exhibitions have been one way conversations; curators bring together the objects and establish the conceptual framework, then write the exhibition statement and labels. The designer packages the curatorial material and then the education staff prepare interpretive material which is delivered to the visitors (McLean, 1999). However, a problem might occur through focussing on very specific audiences and ignoring others, because exhibitions need to be more meaningful to scholars, students, collectors, escapists, tourists, first time visitors, autodidacts, leisure seekers, families, and people of different cognitive and physical abilities (Lord and Piacente, 2014). Exhibition curators need to pay attention to their visitors' needs and interests. Lord and Piacente (2014: 12), argue that the purpose of museum exhibitions is to transform some aspect of a visitor's interests, attitude or values effectively, due to the visitor's discovery of some level of meaning in the objects or content on display - a discovery that is stimulated and sustained by the visitor's confidence in the perceived authenticity of that content.

8.2.2   Cultural Barriers

The cultural approach sees museum visiting as part of a broader cultural phenomenon, and it uses cultural sociology to focus on larger social aggregates (Merriman, 1991). Individuals need to be understood within social contexts (Goulding, 2000). If individuals have visited museums or attended cultural events from childhood, they value them because they value such experiences from their early years. So it would be natural for them to visit a museum as they were brought up this way. This might be one of the reasons people do not consider visiting museums, as from the interviews there any only a few people who refer to going to museums with parents when they were children. However, there are also people who are interested in visiting museums, but never used to visit them with family

The researcher tried to measure cultural capital theory with participants who were interviewed in the museum. However, it was very difficult to use it on a bigger scale, as the UAE is a new society, and education has only been introduced in the last 40 years. This

theory needs to be tested again in the future to see if it can be applicable to UAE society. Or the researcher can argue that because people were not in the habit of visiting museums with their parents, they are not, as adults, in the habit of visiting museums as a leisure activity.

Three intellectual tendencies, mentioned in the literature review, which were developed by Al Sayyar (1990) and Ghobash (2012) - the traditional conservative tendency, comparatively liberal tendency, supportive tendency towards change in all its manifestations - were caused by rapid social change. From the interviews the researcher concluded that these tendencies are apparent, but in variations. Most people the researcher interviewed tend to be from the middle group. They appreciate modern life and change but they still hold onto their history and heritage. There was only one participant who was very traditionally conservative and one who was not interested in the past and fully supported change and was ready to embrace change in every aspect.

Q: When you hear the word 'museums', what comes into your mind?
A: Something old. It represents UAE archaeological findings.
Q: So you told me you don't visit museums: is there any reason?
A: I feel that I already know what is inside the museum. I do not want to see something old. I want to see something new and modern. Sultan, 25, UAE national

Sultan is one of the participants from the interviews who is supportive of change and modernity. He suggests that maybe if there are cinemas, theatres and nice coffee shops and restaurants at the museums he might think of coming. He is not interested in visiting the museum to see the collection, as the collection is old and dead and there is no meaning to seeing it. Sultan is fascinated with the rapid change in the country and he is always looking forward to new technologies.

8.2.3   Institutional, Environmental and Structural Barriers

Structural factors include the proximity of the museums to where people live, the museum's location, and transport modes available and financial barriers to entry. Museum entry fees and the associated costs can be an influential factor on museum visiting;

147

especially for people on low incomes. However, most museums in Sharjah charge minimum fees and others are free. Yet even if the museum entry fee is low or free, other expenses associated with visiting a museum, such as transportation, travel and food expenses, might still have an impact for some potential visitors. Moreover, the cost might be not how much money is spent, but also how much time is going to be spent getting to the museums and spending time in the museum (Falk and Dierking, 2012). People also consider the amount of time and energy they will put into visiting the museum (Merriman, 1991). In the next section four main barriers will be discussed briefly, which are: location, opening hours, accessibility and services, and, finally, staff attitude.

8.2.3.1 *Location*

Half of the participants agreed that location is very important. However, visitors coming from other Emirates complain about the traffic between Sharjah and their homes. Maryam is a 28 year-old Emirati national who mentioned traffic as important. She lives in Dubai, and because of the traffic has to think carefully about whether to visit or not.

Q: Do you consider that you have enough time to do whatever you like in the week?
A: Yes.
Q: And you said you like to meet friends and read. Do you go to museums in your free time?
A: It depends on the events.
Q: What kind of events do you like?
A: Cultural events, I'd go to museums, the only reason is that the museums are located in Sharjah and we live in Dubai, so it is too far away to bother driving, especially with the traffic, so I wouldn't usually go. I do visit the art galleries in Dubai, but that is different.

In Sharjah there are 19 different museums, and each museum has a different location. There are museums very close to the city centre, and others which are close to the airport in the suburbs. Wafa, a 25 year-old Emirati national, argued that museums do not play their role fully, as they are far from where people live.

Q: Do you think museums have a role in society?

148

A: Yes, I think that a museum has a role. In our case many people think that the UAE emerged just forty years ago, even the nationals, some of them think that UAE appeared suddenly on the map, they don't know that it has an old and deeply rooted history. So yes I think this is the role, it is about our identity and also about feeling some attachment to this land and knowing more, and it also helps our vision for the future.

Q: And do you think people use it for this cause now, in the UAE community? Do they use the museums to help them preserve their identity or to help them remember their history?

A: No, not really.

Q: Why do you think they don't use the museum for this?

A: I think first of all because the places that we live in are mostly far away. Most of us live far away from most of the museums. And secondly because there is not any sort of encouragement to go, or maybe because people don't know that these things exist. Maybe they hear the name of the museum, but they don't know what it is exactly, I told you, I myself was surprised to know what the Maritime Museum had. People also have more options, to be honest. For leisure time maybe they prefer to go to shopping malls than to go to museums.

Wafa recognises the importance of museums in society and narrating the story of the land. She also added that they are important for strengthening people's identity and their connection to the history of country they live in. However, she believed that museums in Sharjah do not play this role and this is because people do not know that they exist. Another reason she notes is the location of the museums. The museums are located in different parts of Sharjah, and most of them are located in the Heart of Sharjah (old Sharjah) which is very crowded. Heart of Sharjah is the old city of Sharjah and there are seven museums which are located in this area: Sharjah Al Hisn Museum, which is expected to reopen in November 2015, Bait Al Naboodah Museum, which is expected to reopen in 2015, Majlis Al Midfa Museum, Al Eslah School Museum, Sharjah Heritage Museum, Sharjah Art Museum and Sharjah Calligraphy Museum. Wafa lives in the new suburbs of Sharjah.

Visitors indicated that distance to each museum and no availability of overnight accommodation in the area may be one of the reasons for not visiting the museum.

Therefore, improvements in the infrastructure of the surrounding areas of each museum should be a strategic goal. Most of the museums in Sharjah are located in the old town, and the roads are very congested in that area. Moreover, three participants did not know where the museums were located. As three of the participants said:

Q: Why are museums not an option for your outing?
A: I do not know where the museums are located. Omar, 26, male, UAE national.

Q: Why are museums not an option for your outing?
A: The Museum of National History is very far to reach. Amina, 35, female, UAE national

Q: Why are museums not an option for your outing?
A: I do not like to drive to old Sharjah, there is traffic, 24 hour traffic. Sultan, 25, male, UAE national

8.2.3.2 Opening hours

Davies (1994: 78), points out that museums are not open on Sunday in the UK when people might want to visit, as it's a holiday, and this will put off potential visitors. However, this changed and most British museums are now open on Sundays. Museums in Sharjah are open seven days a week from 8 AM to 8 PM except Friday, when they are open from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM[8]. One participant mentioned that the reason he does not visit the museum is because of its opening hours:

Q: What museums did you visit in Sharjah?
A: I went to Sharjah Natural History Museum.
Q: Did you enjoy it?
A: Yes, I wanted to go again to visit the Natural History museum around 8 PM and the museum was closed. I wish it stayed open longer so we could visit it in the evening. Rashid, 35, male, UAE national

---

[8] Some museums are closed one day during the week for maintenance.

Museums' opening hours have changed during the years, and they are open for longer hours now to attract visitors. The problem here is that some visitors are not aware of the new opening hours and this might be the main reason why they do not consider a museum as an option to visit.

8.2.3.3   Physical structure, Accessibility, Services

The quality of a museum's physical structure can affect visitors' satisfaction, and museums should always invest to maintain physical structures (Yucelt, 2001: 11). There are many definitions of quality in this research; it means seating, parking and restroom facilities, directional signals and the admission price. Casual visitors enjoy their visits, but want more information and orientation, a higher level of comfort and services, and more human contact in museums. Increasingly, museum constituencies are asserting their claims for programmes (Kotler et al., 2008).

Parking and signs to where museums are located is very important as public transport is not very popular for people in Sharjah, especially UAE nationals. The main transportation in the UAE are privately owned cars, and each person in a family tends to have their own car if they are working. Nine of the 16 museums have good parking availability and the others do not, especially in the Heart of Sharjah[9]. Sharjah's historic area (Al Mureijah and Al Shueiyheen) is suffering from traffic congestion and environmental degradation, and that makes it unattractive for visitors and inhabitants (KUBAT et al., 2012). Many of the participants highlighted the problem with traffic in Sharjah, and said that they might not consider driving in Sharjah, because of traffic. Traffic congestion in Sharjah has been troubling drivers for years, and it is becoming worse as the population continues to increase, resulting in an increase in the number of vehicles on the road (Ghazy and Ozkul, 2009).

A: Parking is very important as it will be very difficult to get into museums if there is no parking. Talal, 25, male, UAE national

A: The place is clean and the parking is always available. Farah, 35, female, UAE national

Going to the museum for a day trip requires a place where people can drink or have a meal. Every museum needs to have a range of food services that matches the needs of different visitors (Kotler et al., 2008). Moreover, the food prices need to be reasonable for families and individuals. The availability and the price of food and coffee shops are very important for most of the participants, as they agreed it would encourage them to visit the museum.

A: There are no restaurants or playgrounds for children in museums. Rashid, 36, male, UAE national.

A: If there were coffee shops, modern coffee shops in the museum, it would make people come to the museum. Sultan, 25, male, UAE national.

A: There are cafeterias at the Aquarium but the prices are too high. I prefer to bring our own food. Farah, 35, female, UAE national.

8.2.3.4   Staff attitude

Customer service may be the single most distinguishing factor in why visitors go to one museum rather than another (Rubenstein and Loten, 1996). Institutional barriers created by museums and their staff can stop people from visiting. This includes inappropriate staff attitudes and behaviour, direct and indirect discrimination, and inappropriate rules and regulations. Having friendly receptionists and more events are two important aspects that some of the participants in this research mentioned. Hospitality and a smile is important in UAE culture, and people expect that when they enter the museum. One interviewee had a negative experience in a museum and commented:

Q: What does a museum mean to you?

A: Something old and negative.

Q: Did you have a negative experience with a museum?

A: First thing is the reception, you find it inappropriate. Not civilized. Omar, 43, male, UAE national.

The quality of staff and tour guides is one of the important factors described by Yucelt's 2001 research, "Marketing Museums: An Empirical Investigation". Among museum visitors, variables such as friendliness, courtesy, knowledge, ability to interpret and availability of staff and tour guides were included (Yucelt, 2001: 3-13). Respondents from my interviews felt that the quality of staff and tour guides is very important to create a satisfied museum visitor. The visitors have expectations of museum staff and tour guides. They expect them to be friendly, have interpretive skills, be available and have the ability to answer any questions visitors may have.

Q: What was your impression about the museum?
A: The thing that I noticed is that there are no guides around when you are at the Aquarium or National History Museum. If you want to ask or clarify something you cannot find anyone around. Farah, 35, female, UAE national

One of the participants was very disappointed with the museum guides and thought that they did not have enough information or knowledge about the object displayed, and this is why he lost his interest and trust in the museum. He shared his experience by saying:

Q: Why are museums not an option for your outing?
A: People working in the museums need to know about the objects. The ones working now are not museum people. Omar, 43, male, UAE national

8.3   Conclusion

Museums have been always seen by most Sharjah museums visitors as places to learn, but not in a fun and stimulating way. They believe that education is the main function of public museums. However, people want to spend their leisure time doing something fun and entertaining and therefore museums are the last places they think of. Leisure activities are based on lifestyle, and the definition of entertainment that individuals and families have. Socializing, changes in routine, convenience, service, entertainment and weather are the main factors that influence peoples' decisions on how to spend their leisure time. It is within the overall government mission, overseen by the Ruler of Sharjah, that the parts of the old city are being restored and rebuilt to be opened to the public as museums and other

venues (Fox et al., 2006b)   However, they are not big attractions to UAE nationals compared with other leisure activities, such as shopping malls, parks, beaches and desert activities.   Given the relatively small sample size in the current study and the cross-sectional nature of the data, the findings presented here should be considered preliminary.

Chapter 9   Conclusion

9.1   Introduction

This research is important in the field of museum and visitor studies in the Emirate of Sharjah specifically, and in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Middle Eastern region in general. It is ground research on visitors to museums in the region, and it can be used as a reference for other visitor research to draw on. As there is an ambitious programme for major museums now being accomplished in the Emirates and Arabia (Lord and Piacente, 2014 : 39), it is essential to understand exciting and possible visitors' motivations, expectations, needs and purposes. To identify actual and potential audiences, museum professionals need to look at age, education, social and economic background, attitudes, motivations, leisure needs and educational goals. Moreover, social, cultural and psychological factors which affect visiting patterns are also important (Durbin, 1996 : 49). It is very important to understand what museums have to offer to their visitors, as museums need to meets visitors' needs and expectations. Moreover, it is very important to understand what brings people to museums and what prevents them from coming. In the UAE, museums have always been locally government-funded cultural institutions. There is at least one museum in each of the seven emirates that represents the history of the city. In Sharjah, there are around 19 museums, and 16 of them are under Sharjah Museum Department. These museums are based on the vision of the government and Ruler of the City. This research argues that museums do not attract enough UAE nationals and residents, as they do not consider a museum to be a place they would visit regularly.

As mentioned before, the literature that the researcher used included visitor studies and research on visitors' motivations. All these theories were UK- and US-based, as there are no visitor studies projects in the United Arab Emirates and the Middle East. Theories suggest that factors such as cultural capital, leisure time choice, emotional value, psychological and socio-cultural factors, and other structural issues influence a person's choosing of a museum as a leisure place. Other factors, such as time, availability of the

museum, availability of the transport, age and admission charges also influence people's decisions (Merriman, 1991). The researcher analysed the theories, and explained why they would and would not work in UAE and the emirates of Sharjah in particular.

This chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part answers the research questions and gives the main findings. The second part discusses the research's contribution on practical and theoretical levels. The third part discusses the limitations and directions for future investigation.

9.2   Research Questions and Main Findings

This research was conducted based on the need to understand museum visitors in the UAE, as there are a growing number of museums in the United Arab Emirates and Sharjah in particular. The aim of Sharjah Museums is "to achieve locally and internationally an understanding, appreciation and respect for Sharjah's identity and for the value of its cultural and natural heritage" (SharjahMuseums.ae, 2014). This aim focuses on the museums' visitors and what the museums can offer them. The main argument in this research is that there are major factors are reasons that encourage people in the UAE to visit museums, which are psychological and external. Other factors such as social class and cultural capital are not determining factors, as suggested in the Western studies of the same issue. Therefore, the researcher had two main research questions: (1) what motivates the public of the UAE to visit Sharjah Museums and (2) why is overall participation so low?

This study has found that generally people come to museums at least once in their lifetime and that would be either with school, family or friends. However, they do not come back again as they believe that they do not need to visit again. In this research, the participants are UAE nationals and residents who have lived in the UAE for 10 years or longer. Participants were over 18 years old, as the researcher wanted to interview adults who come to visit museums. The researcher conducted interviews with visitors inside the museum to understand their motivations and why they came to museums. Moreover, some other interviews were conducted outside of the museums, mostly in coffee shops and shopping malls, to ask people if they have visited museums and if museums are places they would consider to visit as a leisure activity.

Reasons why people would or would not choose to visit museums can range from image through to attitude and interests, to external constraints. They can vary from sociological and anthropological aspects, such as social class, family influence, group influence and cultural factors (Prentice et al., 1997 : 45-70). They can be the personal characterises that a visitor brings to the visit and situational characteristics that they find in the museum setting itself (Packer and Ballantyne, 2002: 183-198). The researcher wanted to examine if these factors influenced visitors and non-visitors in the UAE. It is important to point out that the responses are based on individual experiences and the image people have of museums. Therefore, responses are not wholly attributed to facts about museums in Sharjah.

Semi-structured interviews were used as the main research method. These can be referred to as informal, conversational or soft interviews (Longhurst, 2003: 117-132). The flexibility of the semi-structured interview allows interviewees a degree of freedom to explain their thoughts (Horton et al., 2004: 339-357). The researcher wanted to have friendly, direct contact with the participants. This gave the researcher an opportunity to get to know the participants in person and feel at ease when conducting the interviews. It was very helpful that the researcher was a UAE national and can speak Arabic and English fluently, as this helped to better understand the national and non-national participants. Moreover, the UAE nationals felt confident talking with the researcher as she comes from same country. In both settings (in the museums and outside the museums) the researcher used the cold calling method, where she called people (who were usually strangers) to ask them if she could interview them. This is a very nerve-racking process, as interviewers often get a high refusal rate (Longhurst, 2003: 117-132). This was not the case with this research, as most of the people approached agreed to take a part in the interviews.

24 interviews were conducted inside the three chosen museums. Moreover, 31 interviews were carried out outside the museums. The initial plan was to interview UAE nationals only, but later the researcher decided to include residents who had been living in the UAE for 10 years and more. This is because they are considered to be part of the community, and understanding their needs and motives is equally as important as understanding the UAE nationals' needs and motives. It is very easy to recognize UAE nationals from their traditional clothes. Women tend to wear a loose-fitting black cloak (Abaya) worn with a

black headscarf, and men wear white ankle-length garments (Kandura) worn with a white or red-and-white headscarf. Residents tend to be any other nationality from the Middle East or any other county, as there are lots of nationalities who come to live and work in the UAE.

As Falk et al. (1998: 107), argue, human behaviour is a complex subject, and that includes museum visiting. Thus, the measurement of demographic categories cannot offer enough information on why people visit museums. Falk and Dierking (2012: 23), proposed an interactive experience model where visitor experience is not passive. It includes the physical context of the museum, which is influenced by personal and social contexts. This model shows experience is a very dynamic process which includes the experiences before, during and after the visit. Therefore, it is very important to analyse visitor expectations and understand what brought them to museums and their expectations of the visit. Falk and Dierking (2012) , suggested that a person would decide to choose to visit a museum based on a pre-existing attitude toward visiting experiences, and this is influenced by visitor expectations which are part of the social context. In Sharjah, the social context has a stronger influence on peoples' decisions to visit a museum in comparison with personal ones. Being part of a group (either a group of family or a group of friends or classmates) is a very important factor in determining whether a person will choose to visit a museum or not. This research looked into what determined peoples' leisure choices. Hood (1983: 50-57), defined six criteria of desirable leisure activities which are: (1) being with people or social interaction; (2) doing something worthwhile; (3) feeling comfortable and at ease in one's surroundings; (4) having the challenge of new experiences; (5) having an opportunity to learn; (6) participating actively. These criteria were tested in a Western context, however, and the research in Sharjah found that there are some stronger reasons than others, and some criteria are not applicable for Sharjah visitors.

Moreover, understanding the overview of the United Arab Emirates as a country, and its culture and society, is very important to put this research within a context. The geography, location, economic prosperity and religion affect the society and culture of the country. This gave an understanding of the reasons why museums were built in the UAE, and national background. As Ataya and Deemas (2011: 60) suggest,

the first national museum was built in Al Ain as early as 1971, intended to house the collections discovered in the earliest archaeological excavations of that city. Many more museums have since been built across the Emirates, dedicated to collecting, displaying and interpreting local archaeology, traditional heritage, art and ethnography.

There are three main internal factors as to why people would choose to visit museums, including learning, socializing and identity. Visitors come to the museums seeking for knowledge. Learning is one of the main reasons to visit museums, either for satisfying their general needs, or informal education, or for social interaction (Prentice et al., 1997: 45-70). Most parents take their children to learn something worthwhile; tourists come to museums to know more about the country. Students go to the museum to write reports and as part of their assignments. Moreover, socializing is a very important factor as it is very rare that someone visits a museum alone and visitors are used to going as a group, either with a group of friends, family or classmates. Visitors also highlighted the importance of museums to strengthen not only their identity but also to preserve the country's identity and bring up the nation's past. External factors that attracted visitors to museums are the location and architecture of the building, and transportation. Most people drive in the UAE, and public transport is limited to a certain category of people who use it on a daily basis (Al Busaidy, 2013). However, museums outside the city are more popular, as they are located on highways and parking is available. Inside the city centre, because people drive, congestion on these roads is bound to increase, and that means that people will find it difficult to drive to leisure activities such as museums and art galleries (Davies, 1994: 73). The architecture of the building, and how the building is designed, are factors that attract or do not attract people to visit. A report published by Trevelyan (1991: 9) suggest that museums should look inviting and that the inside should be bright and spacious.

On the other hand, there are three main reasons why people do not visit museums, and these are personal barriers, cultural barriers and institutional barriers. Personal barriers include lack of awareness and attitude towards museums. Cultural barriers include viewing museums as cultural phenomena, and parents, education and social class as something which influences a person's decision to visit a museum or any other cultural institution.

159

Institutional barriers are location, opening hours, physical structure, accessibility and staff attitude.

This thesis has argued that personal barriers are the strongest barriers as to why people do not visit museums. The personal circumstances refer to many driving forces which contribute to a person's initiative to go to museums, and these have been listed by scholars as: the potential to gain knowledge; intellectual growth; enriching experience; inquisitiveness; the promise of something new; discovery; sense of self; leisure and amusement; fleeing from the humdrum of daily life; appreciation of beauty; respectful encounters; prior encounters; and being at ease.

Lack of awareness of the existence of museums and what museums offer were two main reasons that participants referred to for not visiting museums. Most of the participants did not know how many museums were in Sharjah and they did not know what programmes, exhibitions and services museums offer. Moreover, a person's attitude towards museums from a previous visit, or linking museums to an unpleasant experience can create a negative image for museums. Visitors perceive museums as users and not as planners or insiders. Their view is not limited to an intellectual discipline or to individual exhibits or objects but is highly contextual, including personal, physical and social contexts. It must be seen as a whole or "gestalt" (Falk and Dierking, 1992 : 8). Some of the participants said that they are not interested in visiting the museum, and visiting museums once is more than enough. They believe that there is nothing new in the museums and museums are only for tourists and children. Also, some participants believed that it is the role of the school to take children to museums.

Cultural barriers which are considered if museum visiting is perceived to be a broader cultural phenomenon and must be explain as such. The socio-cultural argument suggests that people are socialised into visiting museums and then the more practical or structural factors determine which places they visit (Davies, 1994 : 63). Bourdieu (1984) finds a close link between cultural consumption and the socio-economic and cultural specifics of a person and the family he or she is born into; the requisite cultural aids that are relevant to the absorption of culture are conveyed by families down the generations (van Eijck, 1999:

160

309). As suggested by Dimaggio and Useem (1978), the cultural capital of an individual is shaped by his or her academic credentials, social and financial capabilities, as well as the possibility of them achieving further financial and other progress in the future. Based on Bourdieu's argument, it can be argued that the theory of social and cultural capital forms the basis for participating in cultural events and a tendency towards cultural inclinations.

In the context of Bourdieu's theory, it can be hypothesised that art is highly preferred by members of higher social classes, because they possess higher cultural capital in relation to individuals in the middle to lower social classes.   This can also be called cultural consumption, and that is linked to the socio economic and personal characteristics of a person and his or her family of origin (van Eijck, 1999: 309-328). It is about passing on cultural resources, also referred to as cultural capital, from one generation to the next, and these resources consist of: knowledge of culture and the arts; appropriate manners; cognitive sophistication; and good taste (Bourdieu, 1984). In the UAE it is difficult to determine if this theory could be used, as social class definitions and divisions are different. Also, the country is still a young one, and people still do not have the cultural capital and resources. The cultural scene has a long history in the UAE, but the government has only paid so much attention to it in the last few years. Therefore, it will be useful if research can be conducted related to cultural capital in 10 years' time.

Institutional barriers included the location of the museum, opening hours, physical structure, accessibility and staff attitude. Museums in Sharjah are all over the city, and some of the museums are located in very congested areas - for example, museums located in old Sharjah (the Heart of Sharjah) - which makes people think twice before deciding to visit the museum. Opening hours can be another barrier related to lack of awareness, as museums' opening hours have changed over the years, and now all of them are open from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM except Friday, when they open from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Physical structures, including parking, seating, restroom facilities and directional signals are some barriers people mentioned during the interviews. Staff attitude was the last barrier, and participants talked about the quality, knowledge and trustworthiness of the staff. Visitors to the museums thought that the guides were not knowledgeable enough about the museum collection and that they were not trustworthy. Friendly and well trained staff, accessible

161

and reliable exhibition labels, adequate lighting, clean restrooms, affordable food services, parking, and good signage, or their lack, all make for a successful or bad museum experience (Ingenthron, 2001).

9.3   Significance of the Research

This work contributes to the existing knowledge of museum visitor studies in Western theories based in the UK and the United States. This study builds a piece of museum visitor research which is based in the UAE and provides an analytical view on how and whether these studies can be applied in the UAE or not. This is the first research that gives an understanding of UAE nationals and residents, their views about museums, and their motivations to choose to visit museums in the UAE or not. The empirical findings in this study provide a new understanding of museums' situations, and how they are looked at by UAE nationals and residents. Museums in the West are "inviting people to actively engage as cultural participants, not passive consumers. As more people enjoy and become accustomed to participatory learning and entertainment experiences, they want to do more than just 'attend' cultural events and institutions" (Simon, 2010: ii). In Sharjah, museums are looked at as places linked to formal educational institutions (schools, colleges and universities) and not as places to visit to be entertained or to have fun. This research explained why museums have this image and gives an understanding of how museums are perceived as important cultural institutions that preserve and show the country's history and identity.

Among the core tasks performed by museums and galleries is communication. This, according to Hooper-Greenhill (1994), is therefore intimately tied to their other functions, including the archive, the preservation and handling of the works of art, as well as the supervision of the entire establishment.   Recently, much has been written about highlighting aspects of the museum related to its communicative role. One such opinion is that the idea of a museum as an archive to be consulted by academics has given way to the institution as a medium of communication (Lumley, 1988). Another view, held by (Hodge and D'Souza, 1999) is to treat these as twin roles: that is, to see museums as not only repositories but also as agents of communication. Both feel that a museum exhibit performs

the role of mass media, and needs to be approached with a specialised eye that can comprehend the flows of communication and is familiar with the workings of mass communication mechanisms.

Museums also provide a unique educational space, seen by many as liberal learning settings that are frequented by a wide variety of visitors (Falk and Dierking, 2000). By offering exposure to entities, learning and data that spectators can identify with and enabling them to perceive their own cultural context in a manner that promotes fresh links, connotations and knowledge, museums possess the potential to mould personalities (Bradburne, 1998, Weil, 1997)

The conventional part played by museums lies in maintaining archives that people can then access. Curated works are exhibited along with relevant literature. While this role remains in the contemporary context, there has been an emerging commitment towards making exhibits more available to audiences and refreshing the elements that constitute the ways guests encounter the display. According to Hooper-Greenhill (2001), the case with even the most up-to-date museums is that their mode of engagement is the dissemination of information, as if communication is a one-way imparting of knowledge from an objective entity. Spectators are then perceived as a homogenous mass with no socio-cultural particularities.

A comprehensive way to tackle museum communication involves familiarity with entities spanning the museum, and operational features that have a bearing on the museum's appearance or the overall experience of being in it. Hooper-Greenhill (1994), delineates the scope of this exercise to include the inside and outside characteristics of the museum structures, the conduct and working of the entire employee base right up to those occupying the most senior positions, the overall ambience of the museum (which is in large part a product of management trends), the motivation levels of the employees, and, finally, the importance attributed to ease, a sense of direction and basically directing guests during their visit to the museum.

Among the vital components of the effective management of museums is gaining an insight into what inspires visitors, and these incentives can be divided into two categories: intrinsic

and extrinsic (Screven, 1986). Intrinsic reasons focus on the worth of going to a museum, the consistency of the historical background, chronologies, individual significance, the chance to indulge in conversation, and the extent to which a person perceives the chance to prove him or herself. Under the second category come responses and compensation, like prizes or benefits for accomplishment. (Goulding, 2000), also adds that the visit should be an enjoyable one.

This research will be useful to researchers as well as museum professionals in Sharjah, the UAE, the Middle East, and abroad. It offers theoretical implications as well as practical ones. Moreover, it offers basic understandings of people, and what will make them to decide to visit museums or not. Moreover, it highlights factors about why people come to museums and barriers meaning they do not come. It may be used by museums to understand how they can invite and be more appealing to visitors. Most importantly, it shows how museums can convince visitors to come back again to museums, as from the sample that the researcher interviewed, most of the interviewees visited a museum at least once in their lifetime and getting them to come back again is the struggle that museums are facing.

This research will serve as a basis for future studies for museum professionals, who can use this research to give an understanding of the leisure choices that people in the UAE have, and the visiting factors and barriers as mentioned earlier. This would be the groundwork of visitor research in the United Arab Emirates and the Middle East. Professionals who work indirectly and directly with visitors will be able to understand their needs and expectations, what brings them to museums and what makes them visit a museum once or never. It is very important to understand that culture plays an important influence in individual choices, and people in the UAE tend to think as a group rather than as individuals.

9.4   Limitations and Struggle

This part of the conclusion chapter highlights the limitations of this research and the struggles the researcher faced while conducting it. The most important limitation lies in the fact that the researcher was examining participants as individuals and not see them as a part of group. Expats might be viewed as individuals, and they might consider going out alone -

however, UAE nationals must be viewed at as part of a group. They rarely go out alone, except if they want to go to work or to study. It was more about parents with children, mothers with daughters, friends, classmates and others. Therefore, it might have been more appropriate to examine or conduct focus group interviews rather than one to one interviews, as most participants came to visit a museum as part of a group or even went to a coffee shop with someone else.

Income, education and marital status were sensitive topics to be addressed, as some interviewees were not confident to talk about these topics and share these pieces of information. Therefore, it was very difficult to determine if these factors have any influence on leisure choices and museum visiting. This information might be accessible though anonymous questionnaires, as people may feel more confident to write their personal information.

The methodology of this research focused on semi-structured interviews which explored peoples' perceptions from different visitation categories (inside the museum and outside the museum). This method was appropriate for the purpose of this research, but the sample is not representative of the whole population; as a result, it cannot make any statistical generalizations about what percentage of the population visit museums or what percentage of the population has certain attitudes toward museums. The current study has only examined people who live in Sharjah and the sample was relatively small. I also interviewed them in public places and did not have access to visit people in their houses or distribute a survey that people could fill in in person or online.

9.5   Recommendations for Future Action

This research is only an initial effort to understand what motivates and influences peoples' decisions to visit a museum. Also, the research focuses on adult visitors and does not include other types of visitors, such as families and school groups, and the reasons why they choose to visit museums. Moreover, this research was conducted in only three museums in Sharjah (Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization, Sharjah Art Museum and Sharjah Archaeology Museum). This is why more research needs to be conducted to

understand different types of visitors in different museums, and try to understand other factors or reasons that this study did not include. This can be done by:

- Using different research methods like questionnaires and social media. The researcher only used semi-structured interviews to collect data to answer the research questions. Different methods like questionnaires could be helpful to get information from a wider range of audiences. Moreover, social media is very popular in the UAE, and many people use Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to communicate. The researcher could have used these to approach more audience members and groups to know their views about museums. It was very important for the researcher to have a sample of selected individuals in this research as she needed to make a probability sampling from a large population. However, for future research to get wider views and especially for remote or hard to reach respondents, both questionnaires and social media are two possible options.

- Further evaluations and research on local museums are needed. There is no research on museums in the United Arab Emirates and no visitor studies. Moreover, there is no research on what museums offer for their visitors. There is a missing link between museums and their visitors, and this is not because museums do not pay attention to their visitors, but because there is no awareness about what collections museum hold and what they offer to their visitors. It would be also helpful to interview experts and professionals at the museum and look at their views, ask what kind of relationships they want the museum to have with the visitors, and interview the visitors to examine if they are delivering the message they want to spread.

- More research is required into visitors to understand their needs, and the evaluation of exhibitions and other programmes to support ongoing development and improvement in museum practice. There are many temporary exhibitions and it would be helpful if museum professionals or researchers evaluate the impact the museums have upon visitors.

- Regular surveys are needed to learn more about visitors and possible visitors, as society changes very fast in the United Arab Emirates and also museum

166

development there is ongoing. There should be regular studies and research on visitors to the museums, and possible visitors, to know more about their needs, interests and motivations. This will help to give a better understanding of the museum visitors and how to meet their expectations and needs. Moreover, it is very important to explore the relation between what museums offer compared to the needs of visitors as mentioned in the research.

- More research is required in the future to determine if social capital has an influence on museum visiting patterns. As was mentioned earlier, it was very difficult to determine if social capital was a factor that made people choose to visit museums in the United Arab Emirates, but it will be very important to test it again in the coming years as it might start to be a factor in the future when more generations have been educated.

- What is now needed is a cross-national study involving museums from different Emirates and their visitors to see how they are different and how people see museums within their own Emirates.

9.6   Conclusion

In the past decade there has been a rapid growth of museums in the UAE and Sharjah. Museums used to be housed in renovated historical buildings, but now they are modern buildings designed purposely to be museums by international architects. The rapid growth of museums demands further research on visitors. These research findings have a number of important implications for future practice. The research findings provide the following insights for future research. This study discussed and described the recent development of museums in the UAE and Sharjah, and it aimed to generate new knowledge, test and explore hypotheses, and all of this provides information and knowledge for the improvement of museums. However, more research is necessary in order to answer questions such as: what do museums offer to their visitors? What are the museum's strategies to attract museums? How do museums locate themselves as places within leisure activities?

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questions to museum visitors:

Objective 1: To find out if adults think that museums are places to learn and entertain themselves.

1.   Age, gender, Emirates and language.

2.   How many leisure/free hours do you have?

3.   What do you do for entertainment?

4.   Where do you go at the weekends?

5.   Are museums places you want to visit to enjoy your time?

6.   How often do you visit museums?

7.   Do you visit local museums or international museums or both?

8.   What type of museums do you enjoy visiting?

9.   Do you visit museums alone or with a group/friends/family?

Objective 2: To know if adults can define the main role of a museum and how important it is for them.

10.   Do you think museums are important and why?'

Objective 3: To know what words adults associate museums with.

11.   Can you explain the word "museum" to me in your own words?

12.   What do they think museums do – entertain or educate or facilitate learning?

Objective 4: To measure the types of people (traditionalist/semi -traditionalist /modernist).

13.   What do you think of the change that has happened over the 40 years since the founding of the UAE?

14.   What do you think museums should display? Old or new objects?

15.   What type of museums do you like?

Objective 5: To measure visitors' cultural capital.

16.   What kind of art do you like?

17.   What subjects did you like when you were at school?

18.   What is your qualification?

19.   Did you used to go to museums with your parents?

Appendix 2: Questions for museum non-visitors.

Objective 1: Background of the interviewee.

1.   Age, gender, Emirates and language.

2.   How many leisure/free hours do you have?

3.   Where do you go at the weekends?

4.   Where do you go, who with and how often?

5.   What is the main target when you plan any trip?

Objective 2: To know if adults can define the main role of a museum and how important it is for them.

6.   What does the word 'museum' mean to you?

7.   Where did that association come from?

8.   Do these associations prevent you from visiting?

9.   Are there any practical reasons why you don't visit?

10.   What might motivate you to visit?

11.   What do you think is the role of the museum in society?

12.   Do you think the museum is important?

13.   Why do you think that the government is building all these museums?

Objective 4: To measure the type of people (traditionalist/ semi-traditionalist/ modernist).

14.   What do you think of the change that has happened over the 40 years since the founding of the UAE?

15.   What do you think museums should display? Old or new objects?

16.   What type of museums do you like?

Objective 5: To measure visitors' cultural capital.

17.   What kind of art do you like?

18.   What subjects did you like when you were at school?

19.   What is your qualification?

20.   Jobs of mother and father?

Appendix 3: Sample of an interview with a UAE resident:

Name: Farhana.

Gender: Female.

Occupation: Engineer.

Location interview took place: Sharjah Art Museum.

- Can I ask you about your name?
  - My name is Farhana Bint.
  - How old are you?
  - I am 28.
  - Where are you from?
  - I am from Malaysia.
  - How long have you been living here?
  - Almost 5 years now in Dubai.
  - What do you do?
  - Mechanical engineer.
  - What's your qualification?
  - My qualification is engineering , mechanical engineering.
  - Did you study in Malaysia?
  - I studied in Malaysia.
  - Do you have much free time during the week or the weekend?
  - Yes I do because my work is from 8 – 5.30 in week days, at night I am free and in weekends I am free. And the weekends are Friday and Saturday.
  - And what do you usually do in your free time?
  - Going out, beach, malls, it is Dubai and sometimes I go to museums, usually I go to Al Ain and travel around, I drive around the UAE.
  - Have you been to many museums?
  - Yes yes, in the UAE I've been to the historical sites in Al Ain, then I went a lot to Dubai Museum in al Shandagha, Bastakia, because I keep bringing people and friends. Because the museum presents culture.
    And it actually conveys all the required information you need to know about the UAE.

- Do you usually go to museums with friends or with family?
- With friends actually, because my family came here once, that's why I was here with them only once.
- And in the past did you used to go to museums with family?
- I did.
- So you went with your family - do your father and mother have passion for museums?
- Not really, it is actually myself.
- What does your father do?
- My father is a civil engineer.
- And your mother?
- My mother is doing management, she manages kindergartens and schools.
- Are they interested in our culture?
- I don't know, when I say that my mother works in schools, this is related to the culture of people, that's pretty much it.
- Are you interested in going to art galleries?
- When I was at the university I went to a lot of theatres and events with my friends. Because my family are conservative and we don't usually mingle with art people, so it is one of my passions, that's why I go outside the boundaries.
- Why do you like museums?
- It is weird, it actually gives you.... for example the Sharjah Art Gallery I went to, it actually had a collection of art pieces, you have to look at it and try to understand, although most of the time I don't. There was actually one piece that moved me. This is actually weird you can be moved with just drawings.
- And do you think a museum has a role in society?
- With regards to the museum in Dubai that I always bring people to for visiting, it is actually how to introduce the society, how they started off, how they lived before and improved by year, by year, because I recall the video at the centre side in that particular museum, it was actually very insightful and it has a lot of information about how UAE people started off, how they developed oil.
- And when you think of the word museum what other words come to your mind?

171

- Old, mostly old then after that weird stuff.
- How can you define a museum with your own words? Any definition for the museum from your point of view?
- I think it is a place where I can find new information I would never have thought about before. I suppose this is the best way to do it.
- Do you think museums should display old or new objects?
- It depends on what type of museum it is, once when I went to museums in France and in Athens, they had collections divided into two sections, they have the old ones and the contemporary ones, those were actually good, I mean you don't only see old pieces, we also see how it develops the current one. I prefer both.
- What type of museums do you like?
- Art and medical stuff because it shows real stuff, I went to a few in Scandinavia.
- Medical stuff?
- No this one was actually about war, the Nazi people, that one was nice.
- So maybe it is history museum, it is about culture.
- Do you like art?
- Yes I like art.
- What kind of art do you like?
- I don't have any preference really, sometimes the abstract is nice, sometimes the sketch which is black and white is nice. It depends on the type of art but not sculpture. I am not a big fan of sculpture.
- Have you been to the museums of Sharjah?
- No, no idea, I've been to Sharjah Art Museum because I actually drive from Dubai to Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah, I stopped at some place, the museum is actually right beside the road, that's the only reason why I got stumbled with that place. I really like that place.
- And do you think driving from Sharjah to Dubai is OK?
- Yes yes, it is 5 minutes from the airport. If you drive you have no problem.
- What is the best way to approach you regarding museum exhibitions and events and stuff do you think? Is it easier to be approached through social media or emails or telephone texts?

- Not quite sure about that because the one on the address, the Wild Arabia about the national geographic thing, is actually been advertised by the radio, right? And is actually being put on the road side on the corniche at Abu Dhabi and now at Dubai Mall. It is a very good approach to advertisement.
- This is the best way you think?
- Yes because I don't normally go to certain places and look at what the collection is now. Normally I get stumbled into something, that's it.
- If I ask you what is the thing that you want to see in the museum that you haven't seen yet, is there a certain subject or a certain period of history or anything?
- I don't know really because most of the time when I go to museums I actually I see things that I can't think of, new things, I usually don't have any expectations.
- You may need a guide to show you around the museum or the labels should be better, or facilities, like parking or the toilets not clean?
- No I don't have any complaints so far. I suppose the best thing to do in UAE museums in general is actually advertisement. For example do we have any museums in Abu Dhabi?
- Yes there are.
- There are? This is one of the things, I don't know where it is located and that kind of stuff.
- When you came to the UAE did you look for the tourist boxes?
- Actually a friend gave me the Dubai Explorer, not for museums but for hiking spots.
- Did you see anything about the museums?
- When they gave me the Explorer I got it only to look for the hiking, but I went with my sister one time, we drove from Dubai to Dibba, and there was a very old mosque there, it looks funny, yes that one is nice. And actually I almost had an accident because I was looking "where is that mosque, where is that mosque?" and it was like it is there, there.

Appendix 4: Sample of an interview with a UAE national:

Name: Mohammed

Gender: Male

Work: Supervisor in the Ministry of Labour

Education: High school.

Location: Sharjah Archaeology Museum

- You said your name is Mohammed Obeid Al Hamoudi, are you Emirati?
- Yes, from Abu Dhabi.
- Why did you decide to come to the museum today, what do you want to see?
- It is holiday so I brought my children here, my daughter wants to see the archaeology museum.
- So she likes archaeology and she asked to come here?
- Yes
- Is it your first visit to the museum?
- No I think it is the second time, but there are many changes.
- Did you come long time ago?
- Yes very long.
- Did you feel the change?
- Yes.
- What do you do in your free time? In holidays and weekends?
- Fridays are dedicated to the family, we gather at my mother's house, but we go out on Saturdays.
- Do you visit museums frequently?
- No, only when we come to Sharjah.
- Haven't you visited Dubai or Abu Dhabi museums?
- No, Abu Dhabi museums have just opened in Saadiat.
- When you travel do you visit museums?
- No, I visited only Sharjah Museums and the Museum of Fujairah
- And when you go to Saudi Arabia?
- No, no.
- Don't you think of visiting museums?

- No, no.
- When you hear the word museum, what comes to your mind?
- When archaeology museums are mentioned, I think of old things, things that go back to 1000 years at least.
- What do you think about the changes that took place in the UAE over the past 40 years?
- What changes? Do you mean the development?
- Yes.
- They are very good, people envy us for this.
- Should museums display old or new things?
- It depends on the type of museum, if it is a heritage museum it should display old things, if it is a science museum it should display modern scientific things.
- Which museums do you prefer?
- Scientific.
- Do you like art?
- No.
- Didn't you study art at school?
- Drawing you mean? Yes, when I was a kid.
- What did you study?
- Secondary school only.
- What do you do now?
- I am a supervisor in the Ministry of Labour
- Do you remember visiting museums when you were at school?
- Yes, we visited Al Ain Museum once
- Do you like this museum?
- Yes, sure but I have a few comments, when I look at the objects I don't feel that they are really old, I think they are new, they go back to 200 or 100 years maximum, but the labels say they go back to 5000 years BC.
- Yes, they are restored.
- But they don't look old to me, and I am confused, how can they be sure about object age? How do they know that it goes back to 5000 BC, how?

175

- Archaeologists use certain ways to date the findings, there is a special department in the museum for this job, and some archaeologists come here from Germany and France to handle the objects and write their studies.
- But is this true?
- Nothing is true all the time, they have to guess and they discuss these facts through lectures and seminars. Do you want us to keep you updated about these lectures via email?
- OK.
- If you are interested, we will.
- Not very much, but it is good to learn.
- Thank you.

References

999 MAGAZINE 2014. UAE parents don't spend even an hour of quality time with their kids. *Emirates247.* UAE: Emirates247.

ADAMS, J., KHAN, H. T., RAESIDE, R. & WHITE, D. 2007. *Research methods for graduate business and social science students,* London, Sage.

AL-MUTAWA, M. 1996. 'Factors Influencing the Consumer Process in UAE Society'. *International Sociology,* 11**,** 337-357.

AL-QASSEMI, S. S. 2011. *'How Urbanisation Is Changing Emirati Identity'* [Online]. United Kindom: The Huffington Post. Available: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sultan-sooud-alqassemi/emirati-culture_b_1006547.html.

AL ABED, I. & PETER, H. 2001. *United Arab Emirates A New Perspective,* London, Trident Press Ltd.

AL ABOUDI, N. H. 2009a. *Pages from the Archaeology and heritage of the United Arab Emirates,* Abu Dhabi Ministry of Culture, Youth & Community.

AL ABOUDI, N. H. 2009b. *Pages from UAE's archaeology and histroy,* Dubai, The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development.

AL AHBABI, R. 2014. 'Society can support children more by making life easier for mothers in the UAE'. *The National* [Online]. Available: http://www.thenational.ae/opinion/society-can-support-children-more-by-making-life-easier-for-mothers-in-the-uae.

AL ALI, M. 2013. The Impact of Social Change on Museum Development. *In:* ERSKINE-LOFTUS, P. (ed.) *Reimagining Museums: Practice in the Arabian Peninsula.* Edinburgh & Boston: Museumsetc.

AL BUSAIDY, A. 2013. 'Public transport is preferable in UAE, on holiday and at home'. *The National* [Online]. Available: http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/comment/public-transport-is-preferable-in-uae-on-holiday-and-at-home.

AL HABSI, R. 2011. *Social Change in United Arab Emirates from 1971 to 2004,* Dubai Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development.

AL KHALEEJ STUDY CENTRE. 2006. 'Current situation in respect of museums in the United Arab Emirates'. *In:* CENTRE, A. K. S., ed. UAE Heritage: Seminars, 2006 Sharjah Sharjah Al Khaleej Study Centre.

AL NAYADI, M. A. 2011. 'The Al Ain National Museum'. *Museum International,* 63**,** 26-34.

AL SAYEGH, F. 2006. 'Challenges of the historical roots facing the UAE'. Emirates Lecture Series, 2006 Abu Dhabi Abu Dhabi Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research.

AL SAYYAR, A. 1990. 'Family and social change in UAE'. *Studies in UAE society* Sharjah: UAE Sociologist Association.

AL SHEHHI, J. (ed.) 2011. *'UAE's identity crisis is a growing concern',* Abu Dhabi: Al Nisr Publishing

ALEXANDER, E. P. & ALEXANDER, M. 2008. *Museums in motion: an introduction to the history and functions of museums,* Lanham, Md, AltaMira Press.

ALNEAIMI, A. 2011. Preface. *Museum International,* 63**,** 8-10.

AMBROSE, T. & PAINE, C. 2012. *Museum basics,* Abingdon, Oxon; New York, Routledge.

ANDERSEN, C. 2003. EMAAR announces 'Dubai Mall' the world's largest shopping centre.

ANDERSON, B. 2006. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism,* London, Verso.

ANDERSON, G. 2004. *Reinventing the museum: historical and contemporary perspectives on the paradigm shift,* Walnut Creek, Calif, AltaMira Press.

ANGELA, C., MICHAEL, P., STEPHEN, M., ELENI, R., ZOE, S. & BEN, H. 2010. Barriers to participation: Analysis to inform the development of the 2010/11 Taking Part Survey. London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

AS'EED, M. & SHORAB, Y. 2011. *Emirates Society Originality and Contemporary,* Kuwait Al Falah Books

ATAYA, M. & DEEMAS, A. R. 2011. Museums and the Representation of Islamic Culture: Sharjah Case Study. *Museum International,* 63**,** 59-68.

AYLEN, J., ALBERTSON, K. & CAVAN, G. 2014. The impact of weather and climate on tourist demand: the case of Chester Zoo. *Climatic Change,* 127**,** 183-197.

BAGNALL, G. 2003. Performance and performativity at heritage sites. *Museum and society,* 1**,** 87-103.

BATTY, D. 2012. 'The rise of the Gulf art scene'. *The Gurdian* [Online]. Available: http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/apr/16/rise-of-gulf-art-scene.

BELLENGER, D. N. 1977. Shopping Centre Patronage Motives. *Journal of Retailing,* 53**,** 19-38.

BENNETT, T. 1995. *The birth of the museum: history, theory, politics,* London, Routledge.

BENNETT, T. 2008. *Culture, class, distinction,* London, Routledge.

BIN ALWAN, R. 2011. *The Economic and Social Situation in Cost of Emirates 1945 to 1971,* Sharjah, Al Khaleej Publication

BIN SARRAI, H. 2005. *Oman from third century BC to seventh century AD,* Hawaly, Al Falah Bookshop.

BISMAN, J. 2010. Postpositivism and accounting research: A (personal) primer on critical realism. *Australasian Accounting Business and Finance Journal,* 4**,** 3-25.

BLACK, G. 2005. *The engaging museum: Developing museums for visitor involvement,* London, Routledge.

BLACK, G. 2011. *Transforming Museums in the Twenty-first Century* New York, Routledge.

BLOCH, P. H., RIDGWAY, N. M. & DAWSON, S. A. 1994. The shopping mall as consumer habitat. *Journal of retailing,* 70**,** 23-42.

BLUME-KOHOU, M. & LEONARD , S. 2015. When Going Gets Tough: Barriers and Motivations Affecting Arts Attendance. Washington: National Endowment for the Arts, .

BODKIN, C. D. & LORD, J. D. 1997. Attraction of power shopping centres. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research,* 7**,** 93-108.

BOUCHENAKI, M. 2011. The Extraordinary Development of Museums in the Gulf States. *Museum International,* 63**,** 93-103.

BOUMANSOUR, F. 2011. The Role of Museums in Emirati Culture. *Museum International,* 63**,** 11-25.

BOURDIEU, P. 1984. *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste,* London and New York, Routledge.

BOURDIEU, P., DARBEL, A. & SCNAPPER, D. 1991. *The love of art: European art museums and their public,* Cambridge, Polity Press.

BRADBURNE, J. M. 1998. Dinosaurs and White Elephants: the Science Centre in the 21st Century. *Museum Management and Curatorship,* 17**,** 119-137.

BRISTOL-RHYS, J. 2009. Emirati Historical Narratives. *History and Anthropology,* 20**,** 107-121.

BRITAIN THINKS 2013. Public perceptions of – and attitudes to - the purposes of museums in society. London: Museum Association.

BRYMAN, A. 2008. *Social research methods,* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

BULL, J. & AL THANI, S. H. 2013. Six Things We Didn't Know: Researching the Needs of Family Audiences in Qatar. *In:* ERSKINE-LOFTUS, P. (ed.) *Reimagining museums: practice in the Arabian Peninsula.* Edinburgh: MuseumsEtc.

BURHAIMA, A. 2011. Programmes Designed for Visitors to the Museums of Sharjah. *Museum International,* 63**,** 35-40.

BURHAIMA, A. 2013. Adaptation of Western Museum Education Practices. *In:* ERSKINE-LOFTUS, P. (ed.) *Reimagining museums: practice in the Arabian Peninsula.* Edinburgh: MuseumsEtc.

CAVE, V. & NIELSEN, H. 2010. Planning and designing for children and families. Edinburgh MuseumsEtc.

COGHLAN, D. & BRANNICK, T. 2005. *Doing action research in your own organization,* Thousand Oaks; London, Sage Publications.

COLLIS, J., HUSSEY, R., CROWTHER, D., LANCASTER, G., SAUNDERS, M., LEWIS, P., THORNHILL, A., BRYMAN, A., BELL, E. & GILL, J. 2003. Business research methods. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

COOPER, C., TIMOTHY, D. J. & HALL, C. M. 2005. *Shopping Tourism, Retailing and Leisure,* Clevedon, Channel View Publications.

CORTI, L. & THOMPSON, P. 2004. Secondary analysis of archived date. *In:* SEALE, C. (ed.) *Qualitative research practice.* Thousand Oaks, Calif; London: SAGE.

COSTLEY, C. 2007. *Worker as researcher,* Bradford, Emerald Group Press.

DANIEL, T., AL NABOODAH, H. & HELLYER, P. 2003. *Archaeology of the United Arab Emirates,* Sharjah, Trident Press Ltd.

DAVIDSON, C. 2007. The emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai: contrasting roles in the international system. *Asian Affairs,* 38**,** 33-48.

DAVIES, S. 1994. *By popular demand: a strategic analysis of the market potential for museums and art galleries in the UK,* London, Museums & Galleries.

DAVIES, S. 2005. Still popular: Museums and their visitors 1994–2004. *Cultural Trends,* 14**,** 67-105.

DAVIS, P. 2007. Place Exploration: museums, identity, community. *In:* WATSON, S. (ed.) *Museums and their Communities.* New York: Routledge.

DAWSON, S. 1990. Shopping Motives, Emotional States, and Retail Outcomes. *Journal of Retailing,* 66**,** 408.

DELGADO-GAITAN, C. 1991. Involving Parents in the Schools: A Process of Empowerment. *American Journal of Education,* 100**,** 20-46.

DHAL, S. 2011. 94 per cent of Dubai children reared by nannies. *Gulfnews.* UAE: Gulfnews.

DHOLAKIA, R. R. 1999. Going shopping: key determinants of shopping behaviors and motivations. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management,* 27**,** 154-165.

DICTIONARY OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY 2009. 'Leisure'. *In:* GREGORY, D., JOHNSTON, R. & PRATT, G. (eds.) *Dictionary of Human Geography* West Sussex: Blackwell Publishers.

DIERKING, L. D. 1989. The Family Museum Experience: Implications from Research. *The Journal of Museum Education,* 14**,** 9-11.

DIMAGGIO, P. & USEEM, M. 1978. Social Class and Arts Consumption: The Origins and Consequences of Class Differences in Exposure to the Arts in America. *Theory and Society,* 5**,** 141-161.

DIMAGGIO, P., USEEM, M. & BROWN, P. 1978. *Audience studies of the performing arts and museums: a critical review* Washington, National Endowment for the Arts

DOERING, Z. D. 1999. Strangers, guests, or clients? Visitor experiences in museums. *Curator: The Museum Journal,* 42**,** 74-87.

DUDLEY, S., BARNES, A. J., BINNIE, J., PETROV, J. & WALKLATE, J. 2011. *The Thing about Museums : Objects and Experience, Representation and Contestation,* Hoboken, Routledge.

DURBIN, G. 1996. *Developing museum exhibitions for lifelong learning,* London, Stationery Office.

EL-ADLY, M. I. 2007. Shopping malls attractiveness: a segmentation approach. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management,* 35**,** 936-950.

EL REYES, A. M. 2014. 'To learn from past experiences :collecting the UAE national archives'. *In:* ERSKINE-LOFTUS, P. (ed.) *Museums and the material world: collecting the Arabian Peninsula.* Edinburgh: MuseumsEtc.

EMIRATES 24/7. 2011. UAE residents spend much more than neighbours in eating out. *Emirates 24/7* [Online].

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CONSUMER CULTURE 2011. Leisure. *In:* SOUTHERTON, D. (ed.). London: SAGE Publications, Inc

ERSKINE-LOFTUS, P. 2011. A Brief Look at the History of Museums in the Region and Wider Middle East. *A2.* Dubai: Arup

ERSKINE-LOFTUS, P. 2012. The museum-cultural heritage relationship in the GCC: the effects of the use of western style museum theory and practice on local visitorship and tourism. *The 2012 Gulf Studies Conference.* Exeter: University of Exeter.

FALK, J. & DIERKING, L. 1992. *The museum experience,* Washington, D.C, Whalesback books.

FALK, J., MOUSSOURI, T. & COULSON, D. 1998. The effect of visitors 'agendas on museum learning. *Curator: The Museum Journal,* 41**,** 107-120.

FALK, J. H. 2009. *Identity and the museum visitor experience,* Walnut Creek, Calif, Left Coast Press.

FALK, J. H. & DIERKING, L. D. 2000. *Learning from museums: Visitor experiences and the making of meaning,* Walnut Creek, Calif, AltaMira Press.

FALK, J. H. & DIERKING, L. D. 2012. *Museum Experience Revisited,* United States of America, Left Coast Press.

FEATHERSTONE, M. 2007. *Consumer culture and postmodernism,* London, SAGE Publications Limited.

FEDERAL RESEARCH DIVISION 2007. COUNTRY PROFILE: UNITED ARAB EMIRATES. Abu Dhabi: Library of Congress.

FISHER, C. M. 2007. *Researching and writing a dissertation: a guidebook for business students,* Essex, Pearson Education.

FLETCHER, A. & LEE, M. J. 2012. Current social media uses and evaluations in American museums. *Museum Management and Curatorship,* 27**,** 505-521.

FLYVBJERG, B. 2004. Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *In:* SEALE, C. (ed.) *Qualitative research practice.* London: SAGE.

FORTE, M., PESCARIN, S. & PUJOL, L. VR applications, new devices and museums: visitors' feedback and learning. A preliminary report'. The e-volution of Information Technology in Cultural Heritage. , 2006 Nicosia, Cyprus. The 7th International Symposium on Virtual Reality, 64-69.

FOX, J. W., MOURTADA-SABBAH, N. & AL-MUTAWA, M. 2006a. 15 Heritage revivalism in Sharjah. *Globalization and the Gulf***,** 266.

FOX, J. W., MOURTADA-SABBAH, N. & AL MUTAWA, M. 2006b. *Globalization and the Gulf,* London, Routledge.

FYFE, G. & ROSS, M. 1995. Decoding the visitor's gaze: rethinking museum visiting. *The Sociological Review,* 43**,** 127-150.

GHAZY, A. & OZKUL, T. 'Design and simulation of an artificially intelligent VANET for solving traffic congestion'. Mechatronics and its Applications, 2009. ISMA '09. 6th International Symposium on, 23-26 March 2009. 1-6.

GHOBASH, M. 2012. *My Identity,* Dubai Shamsa Bint Suhail Publication.

GHOBASH, R. 1992. *Socio-cultural Change and Psychiatric Disorder: An Epidemiological Study of Women in the Emirate of Dubai* Doctorate, University of London.

GIEBELHOUSEN, M. 2006. Museum Architecture: A Breif Histroy. *In:* MACDONALD, S. (ed.) *A companion to museum studies.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

GILLHAM, B. 2000. *Case study research methods,* New York; London, Continuum.

GOBO, G. 2004. Sampling, representativeness and generalizability. *In:* SEALE, C. (ed.) *Qualitative research practice.* Thousand Oaks, Calif; London: SAGE.

GOMM, R. 2004. *Social research methodology,* New York, Palgrave Macmillan

GOULDING, C. 2000. The museum environment and the visitor experience. *European Journal of Marketing,* 34**,** 261-278.

GULFNEWS. 2005. Shaikh Zayed in quotes. *Gulfnews* [Online]. Available: http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/uae/general/shaikh-zayed-in-quotes-1.306268.

HAKIMIAN, S. 2010. The Beirut National Museum and Collective Memory: Sanctuary, Repository, or Interactive Space? *Near Eastern Archaeology,* 73**,** 182-188.

HANDLER, R. 1988. *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* Madison, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press.

HARPER, D. & THOMPSON, A. R. 2012. Thematic Analysis. *Qualitative Research Methods in Mental Health and Psychotherapy.* Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

HEARD-BEY, F. 2005. The United Arab Emirates: Statehood and Nation-Building in a Traditional Society. *The Middle East Journal,* 59**,** 357-375.

HEIN, G. 2002. *Learning in the Museum,* London, Routledge.

HEIN, G. E. 1991. Constructivist learning theory. *Institute for Inquiry*.

HEIN, G. E. 1998. *Learning in the museum,* London, Routledge.

HEIN, H. S. 2000. *The museum in transition: a philosophical perspective,* Washington, DC, Smithsonian Institution Press.

HILL, K. 2012. *Museums and biographies: stories, objects, identities,* Woodbridge, Boydell.

HODGE, R. & D'SOUZA, W. 1999. The museum as a communicator: a semiotic analysis of the Western Australian Museum Aboriginal Gallery, Perth. *The Educational Role of the Museum, Routledge***,** 53-63.

HOOD, M. 1983. Staying Away: Why People Choose Not to Visit Museums. *Museum News,* 16**,** 50-57.

HOOD, M. G. 1989. Leisure criteria of family participation and nonparticipation in museums. *Marriage & family review,* 13**,** 151-169.

HOOD, M. G. 1993. After 70 years of audience research, what have we learned. *Visitor studies: Theory, research and practice,* 15**,** 17-27.

HOOD, M. G. 2004. Staying away: Why people choose not to visit museums. *Reinventing the museum: Historical and contemporary perspectives on the paradigm shift.* Oxford: Altamira Press.

HOOPER-GREENHILL, E. 1991. *Museum and gallery education,* Leicester, Leicester University Press.

HOOPER-GREENHILL, E. 1992. *Museums and the shaping of knowledge,* London, Routledge.

HOOPER-GREENHILL, E. 1994. *Museums and their visitors*

London, Routledge.

HOOPER-GREENHILL, E. 1999. *The educational role of the museum,* London, Routledge.

HOOPER-GREENHILL, E. 2001. *Communication and communities in the post-museum: from metanarratives to constructed knowledge,* Leicester, University of Leicester.

HOOPER-GREENHILL, E. 2008. *Museums and education: purpose, pedagogy, performance,* Abingdon, Oxon; New York, N.Y, Routledge.

HORTON, J., MACVE, R. & STRUYVEN, G. 2004. *Qualitative research: experiences in using semi-structured interviews,* Amsterdam, Elsevier Ltd.

HUDSON, K. 1975. *A social history of museums: What the visitors thought,* London, Macmillan

IBRAHIM, M. F. 2002. Disaggregating the travel components in shopping centre choice: an agenda for valuation practices. *Journal of Property Investment & Finance,* 20**,** 277-294.

ICOM. 2010. *Museum Definition* [Online]. ICOM. Available: http://icom.museum/the-vision/museum-definition/ [Accessed 4 Feb 2015].

INGENTHRON, M. K. 2001. Tips on Serving Visitor's Needs. *In:* ADAMS, R. (ed.) *Museum visitor services manual.* Washington DC: American Association of Museums.

JANSEN-VERBEKE, M. & VAN REKOM, J. 1996. Scanning museum visitors: Urban tourism marketing. *Annals of tourism research,* 23**,** 364-375.

KAPLAN, A. M. & HAENLEIN, M. 2010. Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons,* 53**,** 59-68.

KEANEY, E. 2008. Understanding arts audiences: existing data and what it tells us. *Cultural Trends,* 17**,** 97-113.

KELLY, J. 1978. Situational and social factors in leisure decisions. *Pacific Sociological Review***,** 313-330.

KELLY, L. 2007. Visitors and learners: Adult museum visitors' learning identities. *Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Technology, Sydney*.

KHALAF, S. 2002. An Anthropological Look at Dubai Heritage Village. *Journal of Social. Affairs,* 19.

KINO, C. 2015. In Sharjah, a Local International Art Scene. *Tmagazine.* New York: The New York Times.

KOTLER, N. & KOTLER, P. 2000. Can museums be all things to all people?: Missions, goals, and marketing's role. *Museum Management and Curatorship,* 18**,** 271-287.

KOTLER, N. G., KOTLER, P. & KOTLER, W. I. 2008. *Museum marketing and strategy: designing missions, building audiences, generating revenue and resources,* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

KRACMAN, K. 1996. The effect of school-based arts instruction on attendance at museums and the performing arts. *Poetics,* 24**,** 203-218.

KRATZ, S. & MERRITT, E. 2011. Museums and the future of education. *On the Horizon,* 19**,** 188-195.

KRAUSE, W. 2008. *Women in Civil Society The State, Islamism, and Networks in the UAE* New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

KUBAT, A., RAB, S., GUNEY, Y. I., OZER, O. & KAYA, S. Application of Space Syntax in Developing A Regeneration Framework for Sharjah's Heritage Area. *In:* GREENE, M., REYES, J. & CASTRO, A., eds. 8th International Space Syntax Symposium, 2012 Santiago de Chile. 8th International Space Syntax Symposium.

KUZAM, A. 2007. *Study of the fine art scene in the UAE* [Online]. Bahrain: Jehat. Available: http://www.jehat.com/Jehaat/ar/Tashkeel/studies/aadel-khozam.htm [Accessed 29 Septamper 2014].

KVALE, S. & BRINKMANN, S. 2009. *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing,* Los Angeles, Calif; London, Sage Publications, Incorporated.

LAPAN, S. D., QUARTAROLI, M. T. & RIEMER, F. J. 2012. *Qualitative research: an introduction to methods and designs,* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

LAREAU, A. 1987. Social class differences in family-school relationships: The importance of cultural capital. *Sociology of education***,** 73-85.

LAWLEY, I. 2003. Local authority museums and the modernizing government agenda in England. *Museum and Society***,** 75-86.

LITVIN, S. W., GOLDSMITH, R. E. & PAN, B. 2008. Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *Tourism management,* 29**,** 458-468.

LONGHURST, R. 2003. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups. *Key methods in geography***,** 117-132.

LORD, B. 2007. *The manual of museum learning,* Lanham; Plymouth, Altamira Press.

LORD, B. & PIACENTE, M. 2014. *Manual of museum exhibitions,* Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield.

LUBAR, S. 2007. *Exhibiting memories,* New York, Routledge.

LUMLEY, R. 1988. *The Museum time-machine: putting cultures on display,* New York; London, Routledge.

MACDONALD, S. J. 2012. Museums, national, postnational and transcultural identities. *In:* CARBONELL, B. M. (ed.) *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

MARTIN, C. A. & TURLEY, L. 2004. Malls and consumption motivation: an exploratory examination of older Generation Y consumers. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management,* 32**,** 464-475.

MCCARTHY, K. & JINNETT, K. 2001. *A New Framework for Building Participation in the Arts*, RAND.

MCLEAN, F. 1995. A marketing revolution in museums? *Journal of Marketing Management,* 11**,** 601-616.

MCLEAN, K. 1999. Museum exhibitions and the dynamics of dialogue. *Daedalus,* 128**,** 83-107.

MCMANUS, M. 1987. *Communication with and between visitors to a science museum,* London, Centre for Educational Studies, King's College, London.

MCMANUS, P. M. 1994. Families in museums. *In:* MCMANUS, P. M. (ed.) *Towards the museum of the future: New European perspectives.* London: Roultedge.

MERRIAM, S. B. 1998. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. Revised and Expanded from" Case Study Research in Education.",* San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

MERRIMAN, N. 1991. *Beyond the glass case: the past, the heritage and the public in Britain,* Leicester, Leicester University Press.

MILES, R. S. 1986. Museum audiences. *Museum Management and Curatorship,* 5**,** 73-80.

MITCHELL, W. L. 1999. Moving the museum onto the Internet: The use of virtual environments in education about ancient Egypt. Silver Spring: IEEE Computer Society Press.

MOHAMMED, E. 2006. The debate on UAE national identity *gulfnews* [Online]. Available: http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/uae/general/the-debate-on-uae-national-identity-1.106921.

MORI 2004. Visitors to museums and galleries in the UK. London: MORI

MORRIS HARGREAVES MCINTYRE. 2007. Audience Knowledge Digest: Why People Visit Museums and Galleries, and What Can Be Done to Attract Them. Available: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120215211132/research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/documents/audience%20knowledge%20digest.pdf.

MOUSSA-INATY, J. & DE LA VEGA, E. 2013. From Their Perspective: Parental Involvement in the UAE. *RISE-International Journal of Sociology of Education,* 2**,** 292-312.

MOUSSOURI, T. 1997. *Family agendas and family learning in hands-on museums.* Dissertation/Thesis, University of Leicester.

MOUSSOURI, T. 2002. A context for the development of learning outcomes in museums, libraries and archives. Leicester: University of Leicester.

NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS. 2010. *Population Estimates 2006 - 2010* [Online]. Abu Dhabi: National Bureau of Statistics. Available: http://www.uaestatistics.gov.ae/EnglishHome/ReportDetailsEnglish/tabid/121/Default.aspx?ItemId=1914&PTID=104&MenuId=1 [Accessed 05/12/2013 2013].

NATIONAL BUREAU OF STATISTICS 2013. Descriptive Analysis to Climate. Abu Dhabi: National Bureau of Statistics, .

NICHOLLS & KRANENDOK 2002. The seven year itch? Mall shoppers across time. *Journal of Consumer Marketing,* 19**,** 149-65.

NYDELL, M. K. 2012. *Understanding Arabs: A Contemporary Guide to Arab Society (5th Edition),* Boston, Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

OISHI, S. 2003. *How to conduct in-person interviews for surveys,* Thousand Oaks, Calif; London, Sage Publications.

PACKER, J. & BALLANTYNE, R. 2002. Motivational factors and the visitor experience: A comparison of three sites. *Curator: The Museum Journal,* 45**,** 183-198.

PARIS, S. G. 1997. Situated motivation and informal learning. *The Journal of Museum Education,* 22**,** 22-27.

PARIS, S. G. 2002. *Perspectives on object-centered learning in museums,* London; Mahwah, N.J, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

PERRY, D. L. 2012. *What makes learning fun?: principles for the design of intrinsically motivating museum exhibits,* Lanham, Md, AltaMira Press.

PETERSON, R. A. 1992. Understanding audience segmentation: From elite and mass to omnivore and univore. *Poetics,* 21**,** 243-258.

PETERSON, R. A. & KERN, R. M. 1996. Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore. *American Sociological Review,* 61**,** 900-907.

PICKERING, M. 2008. *Research methods for cultural studies,* Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

PICTON, O. 2010. Usage of the concept of culture and heritage in the United Arab Emirates - an analysis of Sharjah heritage area. *Journal of Heritage Tourism,* 5**,** 69-84.

PRENTICE, R., DAVIES, A. & BEEHO, A. 1997. Seeking generic motivations for visiting and not visiting museums and like cultural attractions. *Museum Management and Curatorship,* 16**,** 45-70.

PRINCE, D. R. 1990. Factors influencing museum visits: An empirical evaluation of audience selection. *Museum Management and Curatorship,* 9**,** 149-168.

QUALMAN, E. 2012. *Socialnomics: How social media transforms the way we live and do business,* London, John Wiley & Sons.

RAB, S. 2011. Maritime Culture in the UAE: The Construction of Museums and Heritage. *Museum International,* 63**,** 41-50.

RAND, J. 2004. The visitors' bill of rights. *Reinventing the museum: Historical and contemporary perspectives on the paradigm shift***,** 158-59.

RECTANUS, M. W. 2006. Globalization: Incorprating the Museum. *In:* MACDONALD, S. (ed.) *A companion to museum studies*

Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

RUBENSTEIN, R. & LOTEN, J. 1996. *Cultural Audience Studies:Sources and Resources* [Online]. Canada: Department of Canadian Heritage. Available: www.pch.gc.ca/progs/arts/library/rubenste/index_e.cfm [Accessed 1 January 2012].

RUGH, A. B. 2007. *The Political Culture of Leadership in the United Arab Emirates* New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

RUIZ, J.-P., CHEBAT, J.-C. & HANSEN, P. 2004. Another trip to the mall: a segmentation study of customers based on their activities. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services,* 11**,** 333-350.

SANDELL, R., DODD, J. & GARLAND-THOMSON, R. 2013. *Re-Presenting Disability : Activism and Agency in the Museum,* Hoboken, Routledge.

SARANTAKOS, S. 2005. *Social research,* New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

SAUNDERS, M., LEWIS, P. & THORNHILL, A. 2009. *Research Methods for Business Students,* Essex, Pearson Education

SAUNDERS, M. N., SAUNDERS, M., LEWIS, P. & THORNHILL, A. 2012. *Research Methods For Business Students,* Essex, Pearson Education.

SAVAGE, M. 2000. *Class analysis and social transformation,* Buckingham, Open University.

SCHWARZER, M., MARKOPOULOS, L. & DEEMAS, A. 2012. Social Change and the Rules of the Game: A Conversation About Museum Values in the United Arab Emirates. *In:* ERSKINE-LOFTUS, P. (ed.) *Reimagining Museums: Practice in the Arabian Peninsula.* Cambridge: MuseumsEtc.

SCOTT, C. 2007. Branding museums. *In:* RENTSCHLER, R. & HEDE, A.-M. (eds.) *Museum Marketing: Competing in the Global Marketplace.* Oxford: Elsevier.

SCOTT, C. A. 2009. Exploring the evidence base for museum value. *Museum Management and Curatorship,* 24**,** 195-212.

SCREVEN, C. G. 1986. Exhibitions and information centers: Some principles and approaches. *Curator: The Museum Journal,* 29**,** 109-137.

SEKARAN, U. & BOUGIE, R. 2013. *Research methods for business: a skill-building approach,* Hoboken, N.J, Wiley.

SHARJAH COMMERCE AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY. 2015. *Sharjah* [Online]. Sharjah: Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority. Available: http://www.sharjah-welcome.com/ [Accessed 25 Feb 2015].

SHARJAH ISLAMIC CULTURAL CAPITAL. 2014a. *Capitals of Islamic Cultural* [Online]. Sharjah Islamic Cultural Capital. Available: http://sicc.ae/en [Accessed 4 Feb 2015].

SHARJAH ISLAMIC CULTURAL CAPITAL. 2014b. *Cultural Destinations* [Online]. Sharjah: Sharjah Islamic Cultural Capital. Available: http://sicc.ae/en/sharjah/cultural-destinations/ 17 Feb].

SHARJAH MUSEUMS DEPARTMENT. 2011a. *Al Mahatta Museum* [Online]. Sharjah Sharjah Museums Department. Available: http://www.sharjahmuseums.ae/Inner-Pages/Our-Museums/Al-Mahatta-Museum.aspx 30 January 2015].

SHARJAH MUSEUMS DEPARTMENT. 2011b. *Sharjah Aquarium* [Online]. Sharjah Sharjah Museums Department. Available: http://www.sharjahmuseums.ae/Inner-Pages/Our-Museums/Sharjah-Aquarium.aspx [Accessed 30 January 2015].

SHARJAH MUSEUMS DEPARTMENT. 2011c. *Sharjah Fort Museum* [Online]. Sharjah Sharjah Museums Department Available: http://www.sharjahmuseums.ae/Inner-Pages/Our-Museums/Sharjah-Hisn-Museum.aspx [Accessed 30 January 2015].

SHIELDS, R. 2003. *Lifestyle shopping: the subject of consumption,* London, Routledge.

SILVERMAN, D. 1997. *Qualitative research: theory, method and practice,* London, Sage Publications.

SILVERMAN, D. 2010. *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook,* London, SAGE.

SILVERMAN, L. 1995. Visitor Meaning-Making in Museums for a New Age. *Curator: The Museum Journal.* California: California Academy of Sciences

SIMON, N. 2010. *The participatory museum,* Santa Cruz, Calif, Museum.

SIMON, N. 2011. The Participatory Museum. *URL: http://www. participatorymuseum. org/read.*

SIMONET, D. & VINCENT, C. 2013. The Management of Museums in Sharjah. *In:* ALEXANDER, D. (ed.) *Public Administration and Policy in the Middle East.* New York: Springer.

SOLINGER, J. W. 1990. *Museums and universities: new paths for continuing education,* New York; London, Macmillan.

SPALDING, R. & BROWN, A. 2007. *Entertainment, leisure and identities,* Newcastle, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

SPENCER, R. C. 2007. Involving the community: The museum as fourm for Dialogue and Learning *In:* LORD, B. (ed.) *The manual of museum learning.* Lanham; Plymouth: Altamira Press.

SPILIOPOULOU, A.-Y., MAHONY, S., ROUTSIS, V. & KAMPOSIORI, C. 2014. Cultural institutions in the digital age: British Museum's use of Facebook Insights. *Participations: Journal of Audience and Reception Studies* 11.

SPINNEY, J. E. L. & MILLWARD, H. 2011. Weather impacts on leisure activities in Halifax, Nova Scotia. *International journal of biometeorology,* 55**,** 133-145.

STANTON, S. 1999. Museums, Families and Cultural Models. *Visitor Studies Today,* 2**,** 6-9.

STEBBINS, R. A. 1997. Casual leisure: A conceptual statement. *Leisure studies,* 16**,** 17-25.

STYLIANOU-LAMBERT, T. 2007. *Perceiving the art museum: investigating visitation and non-visitation in Cyprus and abroad.* Dissertation/Thesis, University of Leicester.

SUCHY, S. Museum management: emotional value and community engagement. New Roles and Missions of Museums. International Committee for Museum Management 2006 Symposium. Chinese Association of Museums. International Council of Museums. THURSDAY, 2006.

SWEET, J. 2007. Museum architecture and visitor experience. *Museum Marketing: Competing in the Global Marketplace.* Amsterdam: Elsevier.

TERBLANCHE 1999. The percived benefits derived from visits to a super regional shopping centre: an exploratory study. *South Africa Journal of Business Managment* 30**,** 141-6.

TREVELYAN, V. 1991. *"Dingy Places with Different Kinds of Bits": An Attitudes Survey of London Museums Amongst Non Visitors,* London, London Museums Service London.

TROFANENKO, B. 2006. The Public Museum and Identity: Or, the Question of Belonging. *Counterpoints,* 272**,** 95-109.

TUCKER, P. & GILLILAND, J. 2007. The effect of season and weather on physical activity: A systematic review. *Public health,* 121**,** 909-922.

UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR STATISTICS. 2013. Adult and Youth Literacy: National, regional and global trends, 1985-2015. Available: http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/literacy-statistics-trends-1985-2015.pdf.

UPRIGHT, C. B. 2004. Social capital and cultural participation: spousal influences on attendance at arts events. *Poetics,* 32**,** 129-143.

VAN DIJK, E., LINGNAU, A. & KOCKELKORN, H. Measuring enjoyment of an interactive museum experience. 2012 2012. ACM, 249-256.

VAN EIJCK, K. 1999. Socialization, education, and lifestyle: How social mobility increases the cultural heterogeneity of status groups. *Poetics,* 26**,** 309-328.

VEL, K. P., CAPTAIN, A., AL-ABBAS, R. & AL HASHEMI, B. 2011. Luxury buying in the United Arab Emirates. *Journal of Business and Behavioural Sciences,* 23**,** 145-160.

VERGO, P. 1989. *The new museology,* London, Reaktion books.

WAKEFIELD, K. L. & BAKER, J. 1998. Excitement at the mall: determinants and effects on shopping response. *Journal of retailing,* 74**,** 515-539.

WALMSLEY, B. 2011. Why people go to the theatre: a qualitative study of audience motivation. *Journal of Customer Behaviour,* 10**,** 335-351.

WARDE, A. 2014. After taste: Culture, consumption and theories of practice. *Journal of Consumer Culture,* 14**,** 279-303.

WATSON, S. 2007. *Museums and their Communities,* New York, Routledge.

WEIL, S. E. 1997. The museum and the public. *Museum Management and Curatorship,* 16**,** 257-271.

WEIL, S. E. 1999. From being about something to being for somebody: The ongoing transformation of the American museum. *Daedalus,* 128**,** 229-258.

YUCELT, U. 2001. Marketing museums: An empirical investigation among museum visitors. *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing,* 8**,** 3-13.

ZACHARIAS, A. 2014. The collecter works: Sharjah's vision of the modern museum. *The National* [Online]. Available: http://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/art/the-collected-works-sharjahx2019s-vision-of-the-modern-museum.

ZAHARNA, R. S. 1995. Understanding cultural preferences of Arab communication patterns. *Public Relations Review,* 21**,** 241-255.

ZILLMANN, D. & VORDERER, P. 2000. *Media entertainment: The psychology of its appeal,* New York, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates