

Effectiveness Evaluation of Public Education Programs in Art Museums from the Perspective of Social Aesthetic Education

Rui Jia*

Dalian Art College, Dalian, 116600, China

*Corresponding author: rui8968@126.com

Abstract: Public education programmes in art museums can be regarded as informal forms of aesthetic education from the perspective of social aesthetic education. There are no evaluations of the implementation conditions or results of these programs, and they are all different. Organise the attributes of the public education programmes in art museums, present the concept of effectiveness evaluation, and study the mechanism of value creation in this paper. Based on the above, the three contents of the evaluation system are: the growth of the public's aesthetic literacy, the spread of social influence, and the actual results of aesthetic education achieved so far. All kinds of ways have been used to observe both the process and the results; an information-integration path based on all sorts of evidence has been established; and a dynamic evaluation mechanism with a feedback loop has been set up. All of the above are the basic elements of the general effectiveness evaluation model for art museums, and they can provide a theoretical foundation for building internal audit systems in art institutions.

Keywords: Social Aesthetic Education, Public Education in Art Museums, Effectiveness Evaluation, Development of Aesthetic Cognition, Evaluation Model

Introduction

For a long time, there has been no theoretical basis for public education programs at art museums that connects works of art with the public in a way in line with the characteristics of such programs in terms of effectiveness evaluation. Most of the traditional evaluation tools have been borrowed from the fields of organisational management or school education and are not suitable for capturing the processual and relational nature of the generation of aesthetic experience. The Construction of the Perspective for Social Aesthetic Education offers a new epistemological basis for re-evaluating the object of evaluation; it is no longer about acquiring knowledge but rather about exploring all levels of aesthetic perception, emotional response and meaning creation. Building an effectiveness evaluation system for public education programs in art museums is now a theoretical need and an urgent problem in this field; it will help address the current lack of definition for evaluation dimensions and model construction, and promote the development of research on art museum education from empirical description to systematic theoretical analysis.

1. Theoretical Basis for the Effectiveness Evaluation of Public Education Programs in Art Museums

1.1 Attributes of Public Education Programs from the Perspective of Social Aesthetic Education

The idea of social aesthetic education is to expand the subjects of aesthetic education from traditional institutions to all parts of society and culture. It means that the beautiful things in life are actually the result of our emotions. Based on the above, the main attributes of public education programmes in art museums are that they are informal, open and low-threshold forms of aesthetic learning. The operating logic of these programmes differs from the curriculum and organised evaluation system in school education. The goal of the programmes is no longer to disseminate knowledge; rather, we hope to evoke emotions in the people, touch their sense of beauty, and leave an impression. Therefore, the attributes will probably be in a state of development and experience.

According to the division of labour, the two purposes of the public education programmes for art museums are aesthetic mediation and cultural inheritance. As an aesthetic carrier, a programme takes works of art from art museums and offers them as aesthetic experiences for all kinds of people. As a carrier of culture, the programme reconstructs the network of meanings for these works in different times and places. The combination of the two above attributes forms a kind of relational existence for the program, and its value lies in how well the works, audiences, places and organisers are connected. From the perspective of social aesthetic education, there is a demand for programs that can be understood by the general public, so they should not be limited to the elite model of art appreciation but also provide avenues for aesthetic participation for all sections of society. Thus, the attributes of the programme will be more inclusive and adaptable.

1.2 Conceptual Evolution and Application Boundaries of Effectiveness Evaluation

The first idea of effectiveness evaluation came from the areas of organisational management and public policy, and its first purpose was to determine whether the goals had been achieved and to what extent those goals had been realised. In the course of applying it to the public education programmes of art museums, the concept has changed, and now both the results and the process of achieving the goals are given equal attention. With the introduction of evaluation theories in education, effectiveness is no longer only about the quantity of output or the satisfaction of the audience; it also includes the depth of aesthetic experience, the possibility of learning transfer, and how well the programs meet the needs of the audience. The development of this idea shows that the focus of evaluation has moved from managerial control to value creation, and the scope of evaluation has expanded from fixed results to the fluctuations in the process of aesthetic experience^[1].

To improve the efficiency evaluation of public education programs in art museums, the scope of application should be clarified, and the evaluation tools need to be reasonable and not too simple. The main results of art museum education programmes are aesthetic experience, cultural literacy and emotional response; they are highly individualised and context-dependent, so it is difficult to develop a single quantitative index for them. Therefore, the corresponding boundary for the evaluation of effectiveness is to distinguish between "what can be evaluated" and "what needs to be described", and standardised evaluation tools should be used for structural indicators, such as participation rate, duration of stay and activity coverage, and for deeper outcomes, such as changes in aesthetic perception and transformation of attitudes, qualitative descriptions and interpretative frameworks are needed. The aim of the effectiveness evaluation should not be to find all the problems in a programme; rather, one needs to pinpoint the main symptoms that can reveal the underlying values of the programme, and knowing this limitation provides a basis for professional assessment.

1.3 The Value Creation Mechanism of Art Museum Education Programs

The value of the art museum education program is not fixed in advance; rather, it will be gradually accumulated over time through the implementation of the program. The origin of value creation is the aesthetic quality of the collections in the art museum, and this quality is transformed into aesthetically pleasing materials that can be enjoyed by the public through programme planning and organisation. The main source of value creation in the implementation stage of the program is the active participation of the audience in the form of watching, listening, discussing and creating; every aesthetic response can also generate new nodes of meaning. After the program is finished, these nodes of meaning will have been absorbed into one's own sense of aesthetics through the accumulation of memory and recollection in daily life. Therefore, the value of a programme is not fixed but changes all the time according to the works themselves, the audience, and the educational environment.

Given that there are many values, the production mode of art museum education programmes has the characteristics of both immediacy and delay, as well as individuality and collectivity. At the most basic level, a programme can give people some aesthetic pleasure and inspire thoughts or emotions for a short time; this immediate effect is considered to be the first level of value creation. At a later time, the aesthetic emotion aroused by the work can be remembered and re-felt through other memories or by comparing it with new works; thus, it will have a lasting impact on people's minds and attitudes. At the group level, when many viewers have had the same impression of beauty after watching a show, communication and interaction can create a shared meaning for the entire group. The way communities create values is what distinguishes social aesthetic education from individual aesthetic education. Before we build the effectiveness evaluation system in the following section, we need to know how the generation mechanism works first^[2].

2. Core Dimensions and Indicator Logic of Effectiveness Evaluation

2.1 Evaluation Dimensions of Audience Aesthetic Cognition Development

The development of audience aesthetic cognition refers to the changes in people's capacity to perceive, understand, appreciate and reflect on works of art after participating in public education programmes organised by art museums. The three levels of the assessment index are the sensitivity of aesthetic perception, the depth of aesthetic knowledge, and the independence of aesthetic judgment. Sensitivity to aesthetics is one's ability to notice the formal qualities (such as colour, composition and texture) and expressive features of works of art; changes in this sensitivity can be expressed in many ways, for example, by how long a person looks at a work or how much descriptive language is used to describe it. A deep appreciation of aesthetics is one's capacity to grasp the cultural and artistic connotations of a work of art, learn about the artist's intent, the history of the work, and its relationship with other works.

Another kind of autonomy in judgment is also included here; that is to say, people can have different, and possibly even conflicting, aesthetic opinions based on various interpretations of the work. There will be changes in how the audience receives the official interpretations; they may start to form their own meanings, and as a result, will be more willing to learn about unfamiliar works instead of ignoring them. In order to carry out all-encompassing studies of the three levels mentioned above, cognitive task analysis should be combined with performance-based assessment, and we will observe the audience's process of aesthetic reasoning in open-viewing and discussion situations. At the same time, one should be able to distinguish between genuine development in aesthetic cognition and mere familiarity with a particular artistic language, and not mistake the accumulation of knowledge for an increase in cognitive ability^[3].

2.2 Social Reach Effectiveness of Public Education Programs

The range of social influence is the extent to which the public education programs for art museums have spread and how many different groups of people have been reached by the service. The main content of this index is to determine how close or how far apart the group of people who will be watched by the programs is from the group of regular visitors to the art museum; that is, we want to know whether groups that rarely visit the museum due to reasons such as distance, money, culture or physical ability can be included in the service scope of the programs. The extent of the reach effect should be measured in both the horizontal direction and the vertical direction. Breadth refers to the number of different social groups that have been included in the programmes and the distribution characteristics of these groups; depth is the degree of continuous connection formed between the programmes and a particular group, as opposed to incidental participation in a single activity.

To find out how far the effect of social reach is felt at the operational level, create a multi-level audience division system based on all reasons other than basic demographic data, such as cultural participation habits, frequency of art exposure, self-confidence, etc. By comparing the difference in the group profile of program participants with the regional population structure or the natural visitor structure of the art museum, it can be determined how much the programmes have increased the audience base. It should be pointed out that high reach efficiency does not mean many people have been reached; rather, it means that the programmes have been able to reach specific groups who are generally excluded from art experience. Therefore, the two types of goals in the evaluation process should be different: "broad coverage" and "deep coverage". The former can be employed to organise community-based popularisation activities, and the latter is more suitable for individualised programmes for particular groups of disadvantaged people or culturally isolated groups^[4].

2.3 Conversion Rate of Art Museum Resources to Aesthetic Education Results

The conversion rate of art museum resources into aesthetic education results shows how far the basic resources of an art museum, such as artworks, buildings, talented teachers and knowledge systems, etc., can be transformed into aesthetic experiences and cultural benefits for the public. It is not just the input-output ratio, but many links in the process of obtaining, organising, using, spreading, etc. The collection of art museums is the starting point of the transformation process, but the original works of art will not automatically achieve the goal of aesthetic education; rather, they need to be broken down into aesthetic units that are understandable to the audience through the planning of educational programs. Space Resources can affect how long people stay at an exhibition and how interested they

are in it by providing space for circulation and rest, etc. The conversion rate of the aesthetic education value in spatial design is determined by whether it can inspire people to learn actively or only have them passively absorb it.

The effectiveness of professional human resources (such as educators, curators and artists) can be judged by how well they present professional knowledge in an understandable way and design activities that are suitable for the cognitive levels of different audiences, without using too much academic language or oversimplifying. To find out how many of the mapping resource inputs are being turned into aesthetic education results, we need to build a map for this purpose; aesthetic education results refer to changes in people's sense of beauty, emotion and desire for self-expression that can be observed. A reasonable way to determine this is to observe how different groups of people react to the same material or guide in various shows and find out which types of shows are more successful in attracting the attention of the audience. In addition, to improve the conversion rate, one does not need to increase the amount of resources; instead, it is necessary to strengthen the recombination and contextual activation of existing resources, as shown in the operational strategies of art museums^[5].

3. The Construction Path of a Complete Effectiveness Evaluation Model

3.1 Combined Framework for Process Evaluation and Outcome Evaluation

Process evaluation studies the working conditions and motives of organisers of public education programmes at art museums, and outcome evaluation observes changes in the audience after the programmes have been organised. The combination of the two forms is the foundation of the method of overall effectiveness assessment. The first purpose of process evaluation is to determine why there have been considerable changes in the program during its implementation; for instance, are the questions put forward by the facilitator open-ended, has cross-construction of meaning been achieved in the discussion among the audience, and is the speed of the activities slow enough for aesthetic contemplation? The process characteristics are non-linear with respect to the final results; that is to say, the optimisation of one link can improve the overall effect through cumulative means, and a deficiency in a single link can be offset by the excellent performance of other links. The two kinds of indicators in the integrated framework should be at the same level of analysis, and cross-validation will be used to determine which process characteristics can better explain a particular result.

Based on the above, a corresponding mapping relationship should be built between processes and outcomes, and these are not to be listed as separate categories of indicators. For example, the process indicators under the outcome dimension of the development of aesthetic cognition can be how often the audience actively poses interpretative questions in the discussion, how many layers of information facilitators provide in response to the audience's questions, and the proportion of blank space and structured guidance in the program design. To spread the news of social activities, we need to increase the variety of how we communicate with the public, make the programmes convenient for people in different areas and at different times, and adjust the content of the programmes according to various languages and cultures. Construction of the integrated framework does not need to be one-to-one with all process and result indicators; instead, hub indicators are set for diagnostability, and these are the key process variables that can predict the performance of many outcomes at the same time. Based on the analysis of many records of programme operation, we have made the following observations.

3.2 Integration of Evaluation Information from Various Sources of Evidence

To determine the effectiveness of the public education programmes in art museums, all kinds of data need to be collected, such as information from the public, organisers of the programmes, records of the programmes, external observers, etc. Audience data refer to the results of the pre- and post-program questionnaires, open-ended comments obtained at different times during the production of the show, and usage statistics of the artworks. Among them, questionnaires can be used to collect information on changes in attitude and self-reported data, and trace data can also show unreflective intuitive aesthetic behaviour, such as how long someone stays, gaze heatmaps and operation sequences of interactive installations. The main sources of evidence from the facilitator are the program execution logs and real-time reflection notes; they can add information that cannot be obtained from the audience side, such as how to deal with unforeseen circumstances during the activity, changes in the mood of the audience group at that time, and how far the actual operation has deviated from the planned course of the activity^[6].

There are conflicts and even contradictions among all the sources of evidence. The purpose of integration is not to eliminate differences and arrive at a single answer; rather, it is to show that all are effective in different ways through cross-examination. Although the audience said they were very satisfied, based on the trace data, their aesthetic experience was relatively low; in such cases, the facilitator's log can provide an explanation for this difference, such as the existence of distracting factors in the program environment or positive evaluations by the audience due to social etiquette. At the top of the hierarchy is the general requirement for the reliability of evidence. Although substantial changes in aesthetic cognition are generally better than small changes in tracing data and open-ended answers, to know how widely a program has been accepted by the public, it is necessary to conduct surveys of audience satisfaction and participation. Finally, all the above sources of evidence have been combined to form a narrative evaluation report, and the quantitative data and qualitative descriptions are used together rather than separately.

3.3 Dynamic Effectiveness Evaluation Based on Feedback Loops

The evaluation of effectiveness should be limited to the review of completed programmes, but it should also continue to be carried out during the implementation period of the programme to build a dynamic, feedback-oriented system of assessment. The first idea of dynamic assessment is that the results of each assessment provide a foundation for the next round of the programme, and so on; thus, its effectiveness will be continuously improved through accumulation. Therefore, the evaluation tools will be current and practical, and the diagnostic reports issued by them can be used by the education team relatively soon after the program ends. The contents of the report should be divided into high-priority adjustment recommendations and exploratory optimisation recommendations; the former should be based on the results of evaluation and have relatively strong evidence, and the latter should present hypothetical relationships that need to be further verified.

To make better use of the feedback loop, we need to set up an obvious channel for the flow of evaluation information and assign responsibilities in the art museum. The results of the evaluation need to be communicated to the three roles: programme planners, activity facilitators and resource managers, and these will take the form of three types of actions: programme adjustments, enhancement of facilitation skills and modification of resource allocation. In order to build a good feedback loop, one should set a reasonable frequency and scope for assessment, avoid having too many evaluations that are too burdensome for the team, and prevent fatigue among the audience. A good way is to use stratified sampling and rotational assessment, make brief observations of high-frequency programmes, and then conduct a detailed analysis of some important but less frequent ones. The aim of dynamic evaluation is to promote a culture of self-assessment in the organisation of the art museum and enable people to learn how to be effective in the process of normal planning and implementation of programs, rather than having it be an external addition inspection.

Conclusion

The three levels of analysis for the direction of social aesthetic education in this paper are the theoretical basis, core qualities and general model; they will be used to assess the effect of public art museum education programmes. Based on the above study, we will use the characteristics of social aesthetic education in programs to assess their effectiveness, and at the same time, we will also learn which indicators are quantifiable and which need to be described in more detail with qualitative data. The three evaluation indicators mentioned are the development of aesthetic cognition, the effectiveness of social outreach and the resource utilisation rate; they correspond to the three types of main value propositions of the programs: individual growth, social inclusion and operational efficiency. Based on the above, and in conjunction with the frameworks of process and outcome, a path has been established to integrate all kinds of evidence, and through a feedback-loop-driven dynamic evaluation mechanism, a system of evaluation methodology that is suitable for the circumstances of art museums and is neither linear nor one-off has been built. The following two directions will be taken for future research: First, all kinds of art museums will be included in the application of the evaluation model, such as contemporary art museums, historical art museums and community art museums, and differences in the weights of the same dimension will be investigated in different institutional environments. Second, some low-cost but effective evaluation tools that can be applied in the daily operation of art museum education programmes will be developed to promote the actual use of effectiveness evaluation.

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