
Joe Darrell  
*Binghamton University–SUNY*

Abby Hamell  
*Binghamton University–SUNY*

Vanessa Veretelnikov  
*Binghamton University–SUNY*

Eva He  
*Binghamton University–SUNY*

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“A Bug’s-Eye View: Examining the Impact of The Bug Squad Exhibit at a Local Children’s Museum”
Joseph Darrell, Abby Hamell, Eva He, Vanessa Veretelnikov

INTRODUCTION
Our research question: “How do children, ages 2-12, at a local children’s museum interact and engage with the new exhibit, The Bug Squad? How does this influence the parent’s decision to return?

METHODS
The Qualitative Aspect: Observation
- twice: each from 10-11:45 am (busiest hours)
- Took notes on the description of each child, how long kids stayed at each element, which elements were more/less engaging, how kids interacted with each other and their parents, how kids played, etc. (Observational Research)

The Quantitative Aspect: Survey
- 6 questions: 4 multiple choice and 2 open-ended

Scan QR code for survey
- Descriptive coding: Use of short words/phrases to summarize the observation notes and find patterns in the data

RESULTS
Quantitative Data indicated that the Bug Squad is highly enjoyed by both children and parents, but Qualitative Data revealed that children are quick to move between various elements of the exhibit and show indifference towards less engaging elements.

DISCUSSION
Quantitative results from surveys challenge the qualitative results from the observations:

Observation Results Show:
- Elements such as the Pollinator that allowed for use beyond its purpose, observed that children showed extended engagement and used their imagination to create new games.
- Elements that were limited to their purposes, such as the Mantis Camo and Drone Cockpit, were used aimlessly and children showed little to no engagement. Engagement with these elements increased among older children. Playing aimlessly and for less than five seconds was a recurring theme.
- Girls showed more engagement towards the projected butterfly than the boys.
- Parents encouraged their children to engage with elements longer.

Survey Results Show:
- Most of the data showed that parents and children loved the exhibits and would love to come back. This could be biased because customers only fill out surveys when they either really love, or really dislike an aspect of the product.

So...
- Children’s museums should focus on incorporating elements that are instinctual and involve gross motor skills to ensure elongated play and satisfaction among children and their parental guardians.
- Elements that are not familiar to children take longer to grasp one’s attention.

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