

CURIOSITY, COMPASSION, AND COMMUNITY: THE TRAITS OF INCLUSIVE PEOPLE

A 2021 ANNUAL SURVEY OF MUSEUM-GOERS DATA STORY

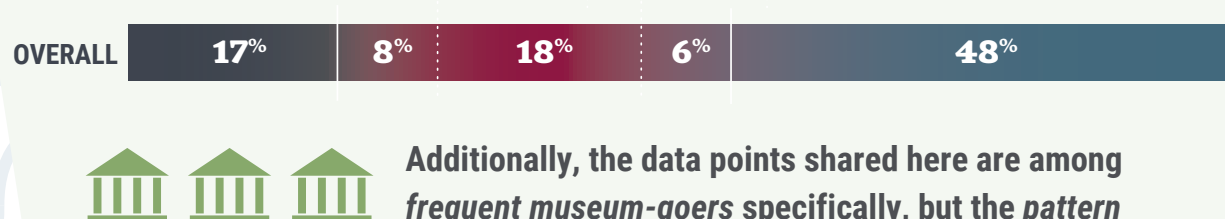


When we talk about inclusive attitudes, we tend to look at it through either a demographic lens or political lens. That is, we tend to ask questions like "are younger people more likely to be inclusive than older people" or "how do inclusive attitudes shift with political identity?"

These are important questions. But if we want to encourage people to be more inclusive in their viewpoints, it is just as important to consider other attributes as well. What other traits and values are more inclusive people more likely to have? And if we cultivate those traits more broadly, will we also increase inclusive attitudes more broadly?

For this Data Story, we compared the traits and values of inclusive people with anti-inclusive people, as that provides the greatest point of difference. But inclusive attitudes fall on a spectrum, and that's largely true of the traits and values we assessed. Generally, people who fall in the middle of the inclusive spectrum fall in the middle of these metrics as well.

2021 MUSEUM-GOERS: INCLUSIVE ATTITUDES BY POLITICAL IDEOLOGY (ESTIMATE)

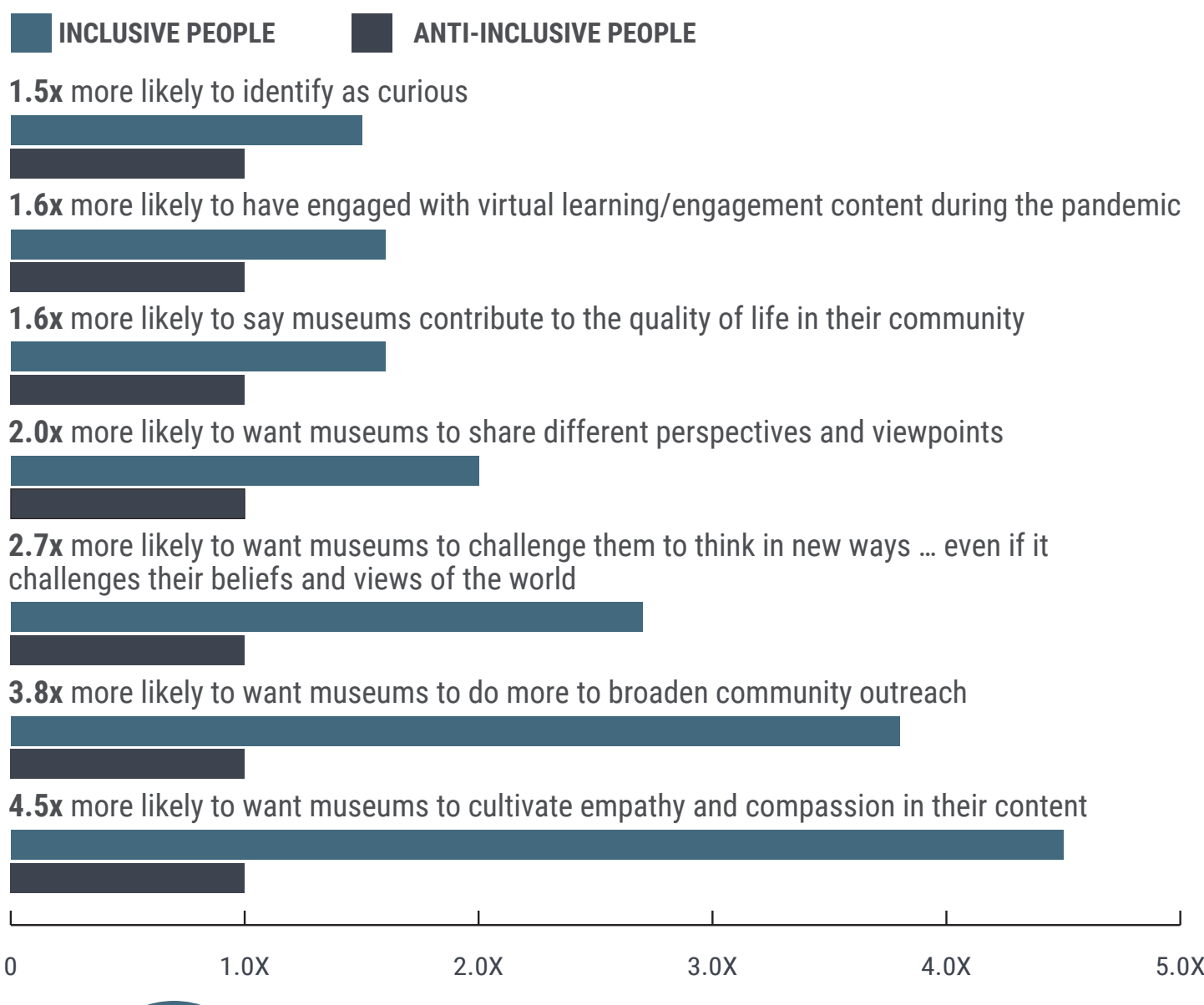


Additionally, the data points shared here are among frequent museum-goers specifically, but the pattern generally holds true when we examine inclusive attitudes among the broader population of all US residents as well.

The spectrum of inclusive attitudes actually matters beyond inclusion to larger societal patterns (of which they are a significant part).

People who have inclusive attitudes tend to be more prosocial: they are more engaged with their community and more likely to express concern about others in general.

INCLUSIVE PEOPLE, WHEN COMPARED TO ANTI-INCLUSIVE PEOPLE, ARE:

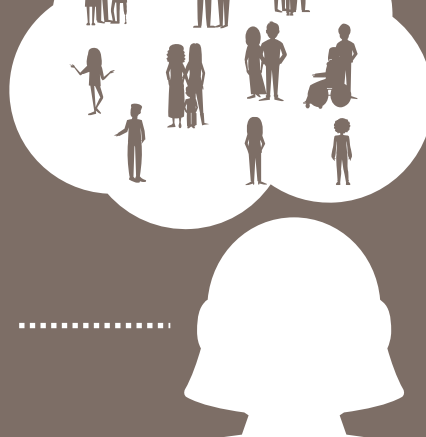


4.5

They also expressed more concerns about their community, averaging 4.5 concerns versus only 3.1 for anti-inclusive people

3.1

This begs an interesting question. Does an individual's openness to inclusion drive these prosocial attitudes, or do these prosocial attitudes promote inclusive attitudes? While it will vary from person to person, the most likely conclusion is that an open, empathetic mindset lends itself to concern about others, including a more inclusive viewpoint.



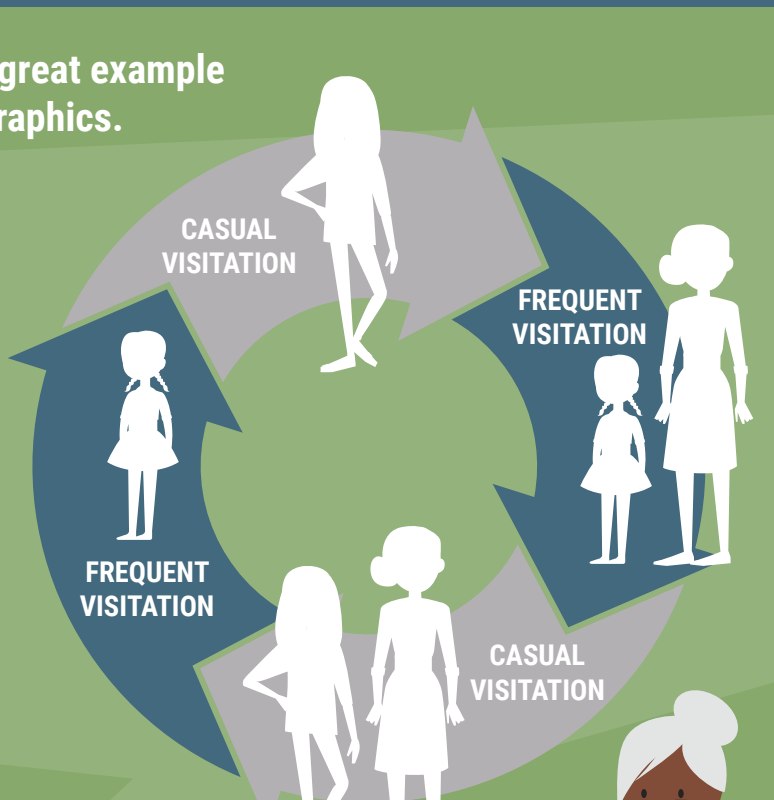
Thus, museums should not underestimate their role in promoting the broadening of minds and sharing of multiple perspectives among their visitors. This is a vitally important part of inclusion work, as long-term it helps expand the number of people who have prosocial, inclusive attitudes.



And these attitudes matter more than demographics. Curiosity and the active pursuit of informal education are far better predictors of an inclusive attitude than any demographic characteristic.

Museum-going parents/guardians are a great example of attitudes mattering more than demographics.

We know that there are some individuals who visit museums/actively pursue informal learning throughout their lives, including when they have children. But most museum-going parents/guardians are much more cyclical in their informal learning and museum-going patterns, participating frequently as children, casually as young adults, returning to frequently when their children are young, and then falling back into casual visitation by the time their children are teenagers.



But these cyclical parents/guardians are significantly less inclusive than other frequent museum-goers, including older museum-goers. They are also less curious, less engaged in their community, and less likely to care about empathy or compassion. Their default setting is a lower level of engagement, and thus their prosocial attitudes are not as strong.



Bottom line, attitudinal patterns are a much more important predictor of prosocial attitudes, including inclusion. But within these attitudinal patterns, then yes, demographic characteristics do come into play. While a curious older adult is more likely to be inclusive than a not-so-curious younger adult, curious younger adults tend to be more inclusive than curious older adults.

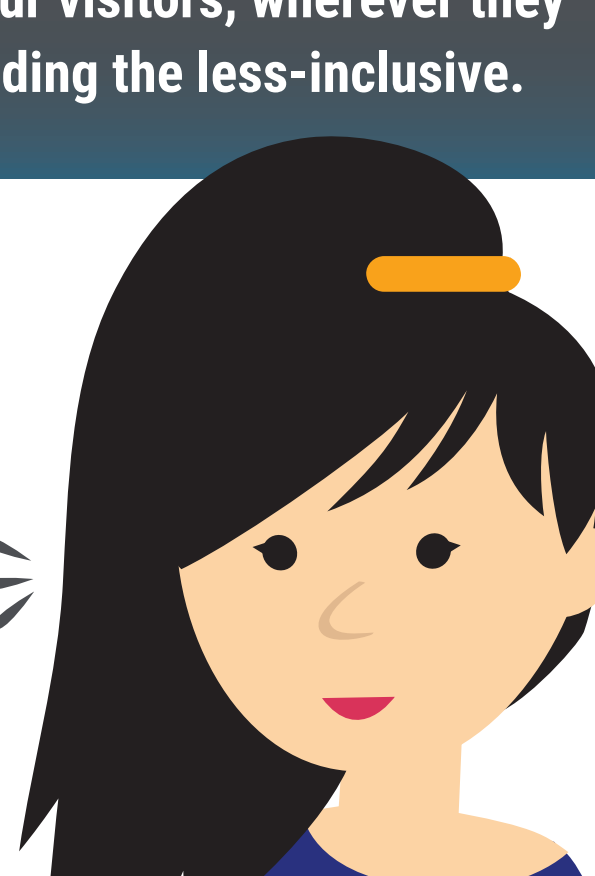


So what does this all mean for museums? There are many ways museums can and should be inclusive. That includes understanding that our work to promote inclusion directly is a critical moral imperative.



But if we are also going to achieve our goal of a more inclusive society, we also need to help more people embrace inclusion in the first place. And museums likely play a vital role in expanding the worldviews and inclusive attitudes of all our visitors, wherever they may fall on the inclusive spectrum ... including the less-inclusive.

"I think museums are a good place for education around race/ethnicity/equity to start ... I think museums have the potential to expose people to other cultures and new ideas/perspectives in a positive way, and to publicly speak out about or facilitate discussions about current issues. I think choices about what art to display, what exhibits to feature, and what educational programs to deliver can have a big impact on the cultural awareness and empathy of the local community."



Annual Survey of Museum-Goers Data Stories are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums.

Sources include:
 * 2021 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers, n = 53,217, 140 museums participating
 * 2021 Broader Population Comparison Sample, n = 1,273
 * 2017 - 2020 Annual Surveys of Museum-Goers and Broader Population Comparison Sampling

*Data Stories share research about both frequent museum-goers (typically visit multiple museums each year) and the broader population (including casual and non-visitors to museums).

Interested in finding out your museum's audience spectrum? If you join the 2022 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers and choose the inclusion questions as your custom questions, we will develop it for your museum.

Go to museumgoers.aam-us.org to learn more.

More Data Stories can be found at wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories.



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