

A survey on the influence of titles on the visitor's interpretation and learning in art galleries: an Iranian context

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As previous studies suggest, titles of works of art have generally proven to be influential elements in reading and interpretation of the artworks. In the exhibition context, titles can be considered as a physical component of the museum or art gallery's space. According to the relatively new approaches, learning, being a subcategory of interpretation, occurs as a result of the dialogue between the personal background of the visitor and the context of museums. The present study takes shape on the ground of general studies on titles to account for titling role in the interpretation, hence the learning process of visitors. It also attempts to show whether the artistic background of visitors would influence the role they assign to titles in the process of interpretation. The results of this study can inform art galleries of how visitors regard titles and how titling can be a potential learning element. It may also suggest designing titling manuals to inform the

artists of how titles can act as a medium between the artwork and audience. By following a survey method, 243 questionnaires were obtained from visitors of five painting exhibitions in the art galleries of Tehran. The data was analysed using SSPS software. The results suggested that interaction of visitors with titles can be categorised by two indicators of importance and functionality, both of which received high value by visitors to art galleries in Tehran. The most significant function of title for visitors was communicative function. Also, there was a significant, inverted relationship between the amount of artistic background and considering function and importance for titles.

Keywords: *titles of artworks, art gallery, exhibitions, visitors' learning, Tehran, Iran*

Introduction and research framework

A visitor who enters a museum or art gallery requires different levels of interpretation to make sense of the exhibited items and the space of that museum or gallery in general. The notion of interpretation has been more commonly used to “discuss matters of design and display, with the emphasis being on the work of museum personnel, who decide on the interpretive approaches”. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999: 1&2)

Nevertheless, visitors can also use “interpretive strategies” and the exhibition techniques to form and enrich their interpretation. This latter sense of interpretation is linked to the process of visitors’ “learning.” In other words, learning can be considered as a subcategory of visitor interpretation. Such an idea stems from the more recent notion of *Constructivist learning* developed and endorsed by a number of renowned museum learning scholars, including Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, George A. Hein, John Falk and Lynn Dierking. In the constructivist approach, learning is the process of *constructing* knowledge in the mind of the individual, which results from experiencing and interacting with the environment. (See for example, Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 2004)

Accordingly, learning “[...] can occur in many different kinds of locations, is understood as multi-dimensional, involves the use of what

we already know, or half-know, in new combinations or relationships or in new situations" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2004:156-157). Based on the constructive model, learning is a contextual process. It occurs when there is an interaction or a "dialogue" between the following contexts: whatever the visitor brings with himself/herself to the environment of museum or gallery, including his/her "[...] prior knowledge, experience, interests, and motivations," all of which comprise a personal context, the socio-cultural context of the visitor and museum (Falk and Dierking & Adams, 2006: 325), and finally, whatever the visitor encounters in the museum or gallery space, i.e. the "physical context" which includes "[...] architectural and design factors, including lighting, crowding, presentation, context, and the quantity and quality of the information presented..." (Ibid:327). According to Geroge E. Hein (1998) and Falk & Dierking (2000), the strategies set to introduce an artwork to the audience are the components of this physical context; hence they foster the process of learning. Labels in the museums or titles of artworks in art galleries are among these components.

The present study aims at investigating the general role of titles in the process of interpretation, hence learning, of Iranian gallery-goers. It also seeks to examine the relationship between the prior art knowledge and artistic background of visitors, and the assigned role of titles in the process of interpretation and learning.

With an exclusive focus on titles (not labels or other kinds of texts) the authors pursued the following questions:

1. How can titles influence the interpretation process of visitors in an art gallery setting?
2. Is there any significant relationship between visitors' artistic background (including artistic education, having an art-related job, having artistic experience, etc.) and the importance of titles in the interpretation process?
3. Is there any relationship between other visitation features (such as time spent and frequency of visit) and the role of titles for visitors?

To answer the research questions, a brief literature review of title

studies is presented to account for the significance of title as a factor in the interpretation of artworks. Next, with regards to visitors' personal context, a number of studies are referred to in which the segregation of visitors is considered an important factor to measure the quality and quantity of learning. By reviewing the relevant literature, a research model is developed to design the research instrument, in the form of a survey questionnaire. Finally, the findings and results are reported with reference to the prior studies to draw the conclusion. The implications of this study will concern art galleries and museums by directing their attention to the amount of importance and credit various visitors assigned to titles and how titles can be a potential learning factor.

Literature of title studies

Titles of artworks are verbal entities employed to name and refer to visual objects such as paintings. They appear to be different from proper names as they, at the very least, have a relation to their objects, while proper names do not necessarily have this relation (Fisher, 1984; Levinson, 1985; Adams, 1987; Peterson, 2006). Titles, presented along with many artworks and placed on the label, can intrude the mental set of viewers and compel them to adapt a completely new mentality toward it. They are in a way the first and the most accessible tool in the encounter with artwork that can help the audience form their interpretation. According to Jerrold Levinson's categorisation of titles in his seminal work named "Titles" (1985), they can acquire various functions in the interpretive mentality of the viewer, from being just a designator to being a strong interpretive tool. Regardless of which kind of titles the artworks have, they affect the aesthetic experience of visitors. The reason is, as Levinson (1985) argues, "the place of title has an aesthetic potential, no matter how they are filled..."

Ernest Gombrich's essay, "Image and Word in 20th Century Art," (1985) can be considered as the starting point for later research. As scrutinising the extraordinary role of titles in modern and post-modern art, he put forward this question; "Would it not be interesting to show it (Turnball's sculpture entitled *Head*) to one set of volunteers with the title and to another labeled *Untitled?*" (Gombrich, 1985:224). At roughly the same time, aestheticians such as Fisher (1984) and Levinson (1985) generalised the idea to all kinds of art, including literature. Such

theorisations about titles became the source of inspiration for a number of subsequent empirical studies.

Although there are many studies which indirectly bear some implications for the role of text and language in comprehending art (see, for example: Koroscik, Osman, & DeSouza, 1988), this review will go through the most direct ones in which title is the main subject of inquiry. A group of experiments, conducted by psychologists, measured titles' effects on viewers' perception, judgment and interpretation. In one of such studies, Franklin, Becklen and Doyle (1993), aimed to explain whether "titles affect the interpretive reading of a painting." To this end, they replaced the titles of two famous paintings (Claude Monet's *Garden at Saint-Adresse* and Arshile Gorky's *Agony*), with fabricated ones. The results revealed that "...the change of titles affected individuals' interpretive readings, as determined by their descriptions of the paintings..." (Franklin, Becklen, & Doyle, 1993:103). Accordingly, the title proved to be more than an identification tag.

To see how titles can influence the aesthetic processes, Cupchik, Shereck, & Spiegel (1994) observed the judgments of participants before and after providing them with textual information, including artist's statement, the mentioned style, titles and other information on the label. Generally speaking, the results showed that participants rated artwork to be of greater value and power after receiving textual information. Another interesting observation by Keith Millis (2001) revealed that "titles increase aesthetic experiences when they suggest an alternative explanation to what can be readily inferred from the explicit artwork". (Millis, 2001). He also suggested that "viewers are likely to use the title of a work to help them determine the artist's intention and, in contrast, random titles led to low understanding because the viewers could not determine the artist's intention." (Ibid: 328 Leder, Carbon, & Rispas, 2006) used a more detailed approach to account for the difference between the kind of titles (descriptive and elaborative) for different styles of painting (abstract and representational). To this end, they also included the variable of time of looking at paintings. The results were in line with the previous studies: titles "[...] support the assignment of content or meaning ..." (Leder, Carbon, & Rispas 2006:192). They added to the literature by suggesting that the assignment of meaning and understanding is more obvious in abstract art with elaborative titles in

medium and long amounts of time but the descriptive title worked better in shorter amounts of time and not when the encounter is longer.

In the above studies the role of titles has been considered and experimented independently. None of these studies seem to indicate the relationship between the artistic background of visitors and their prior art knowledge, and the role of titles in fostering museum or gallery interpretation. While the present study is generally informed by the described trajectory of research, it focuses on titles as a component of museums or art galleries' context and its position for different visitors. In this regard, the volume of research about the interpretation or relationship of different visitors with the museum is of interest to the authors. As an example, Falk divided five museum-specific identities and demonstrated that identity-related motivation can influence visitors' interpretive processes and learning in museums (Falk J. H., 2006). In another study, Falk and Adelman proposed to group visitors according to their entering understanding, attitudes, prior knowledge and experience in order to understand the nature of learning (Falk & Adelman, 2003:163). Again, this study was based on the idea that visitors come from a variety of backgrounds, with different levels and types of knowledge, experience, interest. This diversity influences what and how individuals learn from their experience and perceive/process the messages of exhibitions.

In a study by Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert (2009), she inquired about how people perceive/relate to a museum and how these perceptions "might influence their visiting decision". The results of interviews with visitors identified eight museum perceptual filters (MPF); in other words, eight kinds of visitors based on their perception about museums. These filters include: (1) professional, (2) art-loving, (3) self-exploration, (4) cultural tourism, (5) social visitation, (6) romantic, (7) rejection and (8) indifference filters. The implication of Stylianou-Lambert's study is that the difference in individual and socio-cultural factors of visitors, prior art knowledge being one, can influence the way they make sense of the museum and regard their visit. This understanding will be used in designing our research model.

Predictions

Based on the volume of literature, the authors predict the following to answer the research questions:

Prediction No. 1: Titles have an important role in the process of interpretation and learning for visitors of gallery exhibitions in Tehran. It is likely that they can influence visitors' learning, since they are part of the physical context of the art gallery. This prediction is based on the volume of literature about the role of titles in interpretation. It is also based on the constructivist model of learning in which learning occurs as an interaction of personal, socio-cultural and the physical context of visitor and museum.

Prediction No. 2: The role of titles is likely to fluctuate for various visitors. Existing titles might be more helpful for the visitors with less prior knowledge. According to Lambert, segmentation of visitors and grouping them based on socio-cultural and individual factors is important in examining how they relate to museums, perceive them and learn from them (Stylianou-Lambert, 2009). Also, this prediction is based on the role of prior knowledge in the process of constructivist learning: visitors interpret and learn based on their prior knowledge. Titles could compensate for the gap of prior knowledge in visitors.

Research model

Through reviewing the presented volume of research, the authors extracted two concepts of *importance* and *functionality* to account for the role of titles in visitors' process of interpretation and learning. By Importance, the authors have the ontological aspects of titles in mind. According to Levinson's primary thesis in "Titles", "The title slot for a work of art is never devoid of *aesthetic potential*; how it is filled, or that it is *not* filled, is always esthetically relevant. A work differently titled will invariably be aesthetically different." (Levinson, 1985:29) Accordingly, the presence/absence of titles can influence the aesthetic experience. The indicator of importance is to show how much visitors care about the presence of titles as an entity and whether the absence of titles makes difficulties for reading and reception of the artworks. If visitors believe in the importance of title, it can be counted as a factor in learning since it attracts the visitor's attention to the work and initiates

the learning process. This general indicator was thought to have two aspects: the ontological and social necessity. Apart from these positive indicators, an inverted aspect was included to ascertain the accuracy of visitors' opinions: the expressive redundancy of titles, i.e. the unnecessary existence of titles by artwork in order for it to be expressive. Accordingly, the importance indicator was categorised as:

1. Ontological necessity (Positive); considering a role for title as being the artwork's Identity, being an essential part of artwork, and being complementary to artwork.
2. Social necessity (Positive); considering title to be effective in artwork's sale, considering title to be a necessity in social reception and identification of artwork for critics and the public.
3. Expressive redundancy (Negative); the preference for "untitled" works, and considering titles as redundant in expression of meaning.

The indicator of functionality is concerned with the particular roles of title that helps visitors approach the work, establish a connection with it, and understand it more easily. In other words, it accounts for the ways in which titles affect different levels of interpretation process. This indicator was inspired by the functions and forces, which Levinson counts for titles. Based on his categorisation, titles can function from being merely a tool for ease of identification to a factor which adds new meanings to the artwork (Levinson, 1985). Titles can affect the process of interpretation at different levels and in various ways. Four indicators of functionality are extracted as follows:

- Communicative function: it covers the roles of title in establishing a primary connection with the artwork and artist's intention, and communicating the primary messages of the artwork. A set of questions was designed to measure how titles play a role in primary interactions of visitors with titles.
- Meaning-making function: it means that a title can lead to/from the meaning, change the primary understanding, and interfere in the meaning of artwork. This indicator examines higher level of interaction of titles and visitor interpretation.

- Interpretive-additive function: title can enrich the artistic experience by adding ambiguity and engaging the audience. It expresses a higher level of communication than the previous function. Here titles will offer new insights about the artwork and add challenging meanings. (This indicator corresponds with the third function of title in Levinson's study)
- Exhibitive function: title can function simply as an advertising or presentation tool.

To show how these functions might interact with the interpretation process, it is possible to place them in the stages of *hermeneutic cycle*. This is particularly useful since, according to Hooper-Greenhill, the process of constructivist learning is similar to the stages of hermeneutic cycle. In the first stage of this cycle, the visitor “encounters the artwork and perceives an overall impression.” The indicator of importance in this stage will determine whether titles can be conceived as a part of artwork by the visitor and hence help foster this phase. In the second and third stage “the visitor tries to make a connection with some aspect of artwork that she/he already knows and feels comfort about”. He also “attempts to find a familiar or perceivable thing through similarity”. Communicative function of title can be found in these phases, since titles can help foster the primary connection with the artwork. When this primary connection is established, the process continues in three more stages in which the viewer views all parts and details and attributes meaning based on his prior knowledge and returns to work as a whole again (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999). The meaning-making and interpretive-additive function of titles can be covered in these final stages.

In both hermeneutic cycle and constructivist learning, construction of meaning depends on the prior knowledge, beliefs and values: “how far it (attributing meaning) goes depends on how much is known, and how well we are able to interrogate and use what is known” (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999:46). Hence our next step would be to categorise visitors based on the concept of prior knowledge and artistic background.

Inspired by Stylianou-Lambert's MPFs mentioned in part 1, the visitors were divided into categories of *Artistic* and *Non-artistic*. In that article, filter number one, the professional, were those whose interviews revealed that they were directly involved in art through education,

occupation and expertise. This group had enough background and certain motives when they visit a place like museums and their art knowledge helps them to decode artworks. Based on this result, this filter was used to form Artistic division in our study. The *Artistic group* members have (either) studied an art major (artistic discipline), have an art-related job, are involved in doing art informally (artistic occupation), and/or have had some experience in art (artistic background).

Filter numbers two (art-loving), three (self-exploration) and five (social visitation) in Stylianou-Lambert's article were merged into the group of *Non-artistic* visitors. These visitors lack formal/informal art training, they are not artists and they do not hold an occupation in art spheres. Their motivation for their visit is considered to be personal interest, entertainment and/or a form of socialisation. The categorisation of artistic and non-artistic is merely a terminology to show whether the existence of any prior art knowledge or background might affect the importance and functions of titles in the process of learning in the space of art galleries. Also, the time spent on the particular visitation and frequency of visiting art galleries are subjected to scrutiny to provide an answer for the third question.

Methodology

According to Hill's methodology, the survey method consists of seven phases including: aims, method of data collecting and determining the sample, designing research questions, data gathering, data analysis and reporting the findings. Accordingly, in the initial phase the researchers design a model based on the existing knowledge and literature review. This can help them to test the hypotheses (Hill, 1998). The same procedure was followed in the previous sections. The remaining parts of the survey method are henceforth elaborated.

The indicators mentioned above are used for designing the research tool which is a survey questionnaire. It consists of three parts: demographic section, artistic profile, visitation features such as time spent, and table of scoring visitor's understanding and ideas about titles (seventeen's author-designed sentences). The first version of the questionnaire was subject to subsequent revision and reconsideration after a pilot study. In the next stage, the sample size was determined using the formula of sample size estimation of random sampling.²

The mode of data gathering is simple random sampling without replacement. The random method of this research tries to avoid being exclusionary by including just a special group of visitors (Dawson & Jensen, 2011). At the final stage, the obtained data is analysed by statistical tests in SPSS software.

Setting and Sampling

Art galleries appear to be suitable places to provide immediate feedback on how random visitors with different backgrounds shape their experience of titles. While this study is inspired by previous research conducted in psychology labs, galleries and museums, its specific focus is on painting exhibitions of art galleries in Tehran. It is worth mentioning that there are around 50 active private galleries in Tehran. They are usually dispersed in different parts of the city and have similar standards to global practices. Each gallery holds around 10-15 exhibitions per year. In terms of formal features such as physical space, they usually have modern structures and organise their exhibitions according to common practices. Five art galleries³ in Tehran were used as the setting of this study (Appendix 2). The only criterion for choosing the exhibitions was that each exhibited artwork should have a title designated by the artist himself/herself. It was decided to exclude "random" titles by curators, gallery officials or other persons since, as mentioned, the random titles might result in "low understanding" (Millis, 2001:328). Hence they might manipulate the results.

Our initial observation and understanding of Tehran's Art galleries was that, gallery-goers are mainly adults who visit galleries alone or in friend-groups. After required coordination with the gallery manager, 30-40 questionnaires were allocated for exhibition days (10-19 days). The gallery officials were told that they will get the feedback and be informed of the results for using them in their exhibition logistics. Phone-interviews with gallery managers revealed that none of the chosen galleries had titling obligation; the artists were free to present their artworks with/without any labels or titles. In most cases, the artists were asked to title the whole exhibition for advertising and network purposes.

According to the above-mentioned information, the definitions for statistical terms of this research are as follows:

Target Population: adult visitors of art galleries in Tehran.

Survey population: visitors of Seyhoon, Afrand, Aran, Homa and Elahe art galleries.

Sampling unit: visitor of art gallery.

Sampling scheme: simple random sampling without replacement. To maintain the highest amount of variation of participants and avoid sampling bias, the evaluator approached every four entering visitors. If they declined to participate in the research, the very next visitor was asked for participation (Toit & Dye, 2008:77). Another way that kept the variation high was that the questionnaires were distributed gradually in six shows to include different artworks, styles and visiting status. Although this high amount of heterogeneity and randomness may seem to cause a problem regarding the relatively small sample size, the advantage is the ability to recognise patterns and different groups of visitors (Patton, 2002). The overall design of this survey is Retrospective Panel Design, in which a group of people are being examined during a time unit, i.e. from time A to time B.

Sampling population: The adult visitors of Seyhoon, Afrand, Aran, Homa and Elahe art galleries in spring 2014.

Results and Discussion

Based on the sample size estimation formula, 265 questionnaires were distributed among the same number of participants. Twenty-two questionnaires were returned incomplete. On the whole 243 questionnaires were used as data source. Three statistical tests including Mann-Whitney U, Kendall's tau-b and ANOVA were applied. All statistical tests in the research were computed with 5% error and 95% confidence. The results are presented in two parts: descriptive and analytical. The descriptive results, which are presented in tables 1-5 include demographical information (Table 1), artistic background and profile (Table 2), the score of indicators of importance (Table 3) and the overall score of functionality (Table 4). More detailed descriptive results are included in Tables 5-6, which display the value of various indicators of functions (Table 5) and the values of all indicators for artistic visitors (Table 6). The descriptive results aim to answer question no.1 and assess

prediction no.1. Then, questions no.2 and 3 will be considered with regard to analytical results to account for prediction no.2.

Considering the female dominance (56.4%) and the educational level (on the whole 89.6% hold B.A. and upper university degrees), educated females appeared more active in visiting art galleries in Tehran. The dominant age-group was 20-30 years old (Table 1) and the high percentage of artistic education (67.5%) and artistic job (67%) (Table 2) were reported. Also, the evaluators reported the rare presence of families (less than 10 times) in the galleries; most of the visitors were young people in the form of friend groups or alone. These demographic findings prove our primary understanding of Tehran galleries' range of visitors. On the whole, our findings show the low amount of diversity among visitors of art galleries in Tehran. Due to local peculiarities and a less-researched context, the results cannot be easily compared with previous studies in different contexts. However, interestingly, they are not in line with the assumptions in articles of Mason & McCarthy (2006) and Xanthoudaki (1998), according to which young visitors⁴ of art galleries⁵ are a small group compared to other age groups.

Table 1: Demographic Data of Participants

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Female</i>			<i>Male</i>		
	56.4%			43.6% ^t		
<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Under 20</i>	<i>20 - 30</i>	<i>30 - 40</i>	<i>40 - 50</i>	<i>50 - 60</i>	<i>Upper 60</i>
	5.9%	51.7%	31.5%	6.7%	3.8%	0.4%
<i>University Degree</i>	<i>High School Diploma</i>		<i>Associate Degree</i>	<i>BA</i>	<i>MA</i>	<i>PhD</i>
	4.6%		5.8%	56.7%	27.5%	5.4%
<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Single</i>		<i>Married</i>		<i>Other</i>	
	69.3%		30.7%		0%	

Table 2: Data on Artistic Background of Participants

Artistic Discipline	Yes	No
	67.5%	32.5%
Artistic Job	Yes	No
	67%	33%
Artistic Background	Yes	No
	73.7%	26.3%
Artistic Occupation	Yes	No
	83%	17%
Art Field*	Music	Traditional Arts and Hadicrafts
	17%	10%
	Visual and Fine Arts	Literature Arts
	58%	11%
	Architecture	Dramatic Arts**
	1.5%	13.5%
	Applied Arts'	
	20.5%	

*This division is inspired by septet categorising of arts attributed to Aristotle.

**Some visitors do more than one artistic field; therefore the total percentage is more than 100%.

Table 3: Importance Indicators

Importance	Number of Participants	Mean	Percentage
Social Necessity	235	2.858	57%
Ontological Necessity	235	3.0137	60%
Expressive Redundancy	235	3.0617	61%

Table 4: The Value of Titles' Functionality

Participants' number	Mean	Percentage
243	3.2080	64%

Although visitors mostly believed that titles were a necessary element for an artwork (58.7%), they assumed a self-expressive role for the artworks. As is apparent in Table 3, titles were relatively important for visitors in ascribing social and ontological identity to the artwork. They also believed the work needs to speak for itself (61%) (Table 3). Nevertheless, contrary to the idea of title's redundancy, visitors get a great deal of help from titles, since on the whole they assign a score of 64% to titles functions. Accordingly, visitors believed that titles can have particular roles that help them approach the work, establish a connection with it, and understand it more easily (Table 4). One way to account for this incongruent result is to assume that when titles exist their function is considerable; they help visitors in interacting with artworks (Levinson, 1985; Fisher, 1984; Symes, 1992; Bann, 1985). Regarding functions (Table 4 & 5), communicative function (71%) was the highest-rated in the whole survey population and also artistic and non-artistic divisions (Table 6). Therefore, the considerable function of titles was that they worked as a communicative tool to establish the first stage of interpretation in the hermeneutic cycle. Titles are very likely to help the visitors make a connection with some aspects of the work. They can also help to make the connection with the aspects of the work visitors already know. Their role is highly noticeable in the primary stages of interpretation and learning. This finding also proves the claims, for example in Bann's article, about communication made between artist's message or intention and visitor (Bann, 1985). In Jean-Luc Jucker's words, the accompaniment of titles with paintings facilitates the understanding of artist's intention (Jucker, 2012). Other functions of titles were all rated above 50%. From these results, prediction no. 1 was supported: Two indicators of functionality and importance show the significant role of title in the process of interpretation, hence learning.

Table 5: Function Indicators

Function	Number of Participants	Mean	Percentage
<i>Meaning-making</i>	243	3.3639	67.3%
<i>Communicative</i>	242	3.5496	71%
<i>Interpretive</i>	243	3.1776	63.5%
<i>Exhibitive</i>	235	2.7447	55%

Table 6: Indicators' Values for Artistic Group

Indicators	Number of Participants	Percentage
Value of Functionality	209	66.2%
Meaning-making	209	67.3%
Communication	208	70.5%
Interpretive	209	64.8%
Exhibitive	202	53.4%
Value of Importance	209	58.5%
Social Necessity	209	57.2%
Ontological Necessity	209	59.7%
Expressive Redundancy	209	61.6%

Regarding the second research question, in the division of artistic and non-artistic visitors, Kendall's tau-b correlation test shows a significant and inverse relationship between the amount of artistic background and attributing function and importance for the titles; that is, the less the visitors have been involved in art based on the criteria defined in the research model, the more they assign meaning-making (sig: 0.000) and communicative function (sig: 0.008) to titles. These visitors also believed that the existence of a title is generally important (sig: 0.002), especially in terms of social (sig: 0.030) and ontological necessity (sig: 0.001). Mann-Whitney U test shows a significant and inverse relationship between artistic background of participants and assigning interpretive function (sig: 0.008) and exhibition function (sig: 0.008) for the titles; it means that those visitors who have no artistic background consider the role of titles to be more important for interpretive and exhibition purposes.

The significant relationship between lower amount of artistic background and prior art knowledge and assigning meaning-making and communicative and interpretive-additive function, also ontological necessity, shows that for our non-artistic group the role of titles is more significant in their interpretation and learning. In all these stages of

interpretation (mostly the communicative stage based on the descriptive results), titles may compensate for lack of prior artistic knowledge; hence, they can foster learning at this level. These relationships answer the second question: the less prior knowledge and artistic experience the visitors have, the more they rely on the help of titles in meaning-making and getting the message of artist and artwork. The probable indication is that prior art knowledge and experience causes the visitors to be less dependent on titles and to try to make their own experience independent of titles with the support of their artistic knowledge. This evokes the professional filter of Lambert: The professionals know what they are looking for; they know how to read a work and are probably less dependent on interpretive tools such as title. Ontological necessity is also high for them as a factor of knowing the title to be a part of artwork.

To answer the third inquiry, a number of tests were performed. According to Kendall's tau-b correlation test, the more time the visitors spend visiting an art gallery (duration of visit), the more concerned they are with the ontological necessity (sig: 0.00) of title; so they consider a high positive importance (sig: 0.001) for titles. Also, Kendall's tau-b correlation test shows a significant relationship between the frequency of visiting art galleries and considering function and importance for the titles; it means that those visitors who visit art galleries more frequently than others believe that a title has a function (sig: 0.001) such as meaning-making (sig: 0.007) and communicative function (sig: 0.000) more than other visitors. They also stated that the existence of a title is generally important (sig: 0.000), especially in terms of social (sig: 0.000) and ontological necessity (sig: 0.000).

The information obtained by the results of the third inquiry is not theoretically backed in this study. However, they have the potential to develop in different ways. For example, the significant relationship between longer duration of visit and assigning ontological necessity indicates that those who have longer visits and stayed longer in the art gallery, considered titles to be more important ontologically; that is, they stated that titles are essential parts of artworks more than the visitors whose visits are shorter. Time spent has been under extensive studies and is sometimes considered to have a linkage to learning (Donald, 1991). For example, Hein believes that, "The Constructivist Museum will do all it can to lengthen visitor time in the exhibition." (Hein, 1998: 172).

The positive importance of title and more time spent in the gallery might have some implications for those studies that measure learning and interpretation in relation to exhibition techniques. How the presence of title or textual information might interact with inclination of visitor to stay in the museum can be a subject for further research.

Another significant relationship between being a frequent visitor and assigning meaning-making and communicative function (functionality in general) and also social and ontological necessity might also have some further implications. This relationship supports the previous relationship and indicates that the more time dedicated to visit, not only leads to assigning more importance but also high functionality to titles. This, to some extent, confirms some findings about frequent visitors according to which frequent visitors have more serious attitudes like, as Hood states (1983) "having the opportunity to learn, the challenge of a new experience, and coming away with a sense of doing something worthwhile" (Edwards, Loomis, Fusco, & McDermott, 1990: 21) Also, this is in line with the findings of Edwards et. al. according to which high involvement visitors were more likely to value interpretation aids. As they state, "Perhaps as involvement with art and the museum grows, visitors will be more likely to commit the time and effort it takes to use supplementary interpretive aids." (31) Although they don't mention titles in particular, titles are among the strongest of interpretive aids.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Iranian visitors considered titles to be an important component of art gallery space that affects interpretation and learning process. The fact that non-artistic visitors were more dependent on the importance and functionality of title shows that they receive more help from titles in the process of interpretation. It is very likely that they base their interpretation upon them and compensate for their lack of prior art knowledge with artworks' titles. Nevertheless, more studies are needed, probably with qualitative approach, to account for the reasons of such findings. Also, it is worth mentioning that there has not been a similar study about titles in Iran. It is possible that the results are affected by cultural and contextual differences. Hence, their correlation with similar studies in different cultures should be considered with delicacy and care. However, the spatial and overall conditions of art galleries in Tehran are

in accordance with global standards. This research used the quantitative survey method step by step; therefore the results are applicable to similar contexts and communities.

The main results of this study, along with the subsidiary findings on proportion of visitors, can be used in promotion of art galleries in Tehran. Despite the attempts to keep heterogeneity high, the audiences of art galleries were a specific group. Although galleries in Tehran might not have historical credit and high popularity of museums, it seems they need to go beyond their specificity to a certain group and make more effort to broaden their audiences (Mason & McCarthy, 2006, Xanthoudaki, 1998). Admittedly, the popularity among educated young should be maintained, at the same time galleries should design programs and develop logistics to be more inclusive. Designing titling manuals and guidelines can be one of the ways to implement plans that can be effective in attracting a diverse audience. In doing so, one suggestion is to inform the artists of how titles can act as a medium between the artwork and audience, hence prevent over-interpretation and/or misinterpretation. In doing so, artists have the option of paying more attention to titling task prior to the exhibition.

This research examined the overall role of titles in learning and their relation to the visitor prior art knowledge and artistic background. The next steps would be to conduct qualitative studies and interviews to find patterns of interpretation and learning in the museum and art galleries with reference to titles. Also, the division of Artistic and Non-Artistic can include other factors or exclude more general factors and concentrate on, for instance, just the formal or informal education. The results of this study would be of help in conducting such potential inquiries.

Endnotes:

1. This study concerns three groups of non-visitors, too. However, as they are not relevant to the present study they won't be mentioned.
2. Sample size estimation formula:

$$n = \frac{pqz^2\alpha/2}{d^2}$$

3. Elahe Gallery was referred to twice.

4. However, the exact reference of the word 'young' should be clarified in such studies. In our study young means 20-30 y. In Xanthoudaki's, it is 14-25.
5. In both of the mentioned studies, there is no demarcation of art galleries and museum.

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Appendix: Exhibitions

Exhibition Title	Days on View	Artist(s)	Location	Artistic Media
'Dream of Spring'	7-14 Mar 2014	Group Exhibition	Afrand Art Gallery	Painting
'Sealed Letters to Myself'	4-23 Apr 2014	Reza Afsari	Seyhoun Art Gallery	Painting
Untitled	25 Apr-9 May 2014	Shahriyar Hatami	Aaran Gallery	Painting
'Teratogenese'	9-20 May 2014	Zahra Hossaini	Homa Art Gallery	Painting
'Ophelia'	16-26 May 2014	Maryam Takallo	Elahe Art Gallery	Painting
'Beyond the Fact'	13-23 June 2014	Sima Najafi	Elahe Art Gallery	Painting

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