

COOL MUSEUM EXPERIENCE IN THE RELATIONSHIP WITH VISITORS

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ABSTRACT

Several researchers have studied the impact of atmospheric cues (Loureiro, 2019), of perceived authenticity (Carù *et al.*, 2017; Loureiro, 2019) and of satisfactory museum experiences (Antón *et al.*, 2018) in the willingness of museum visitors to revisit a museum and/or recommend it to others. However, no study has yet assessed the effect of visitors' perceived museum coolness and the authentic pride they feel after a visit in those revisit and recommendation intentions.

By applying the concept of Brand Coolness to the museum context for the very first time, and using the Authentic Pride construct in an innovative way, the present study aims to answer the following research questions: how can the museum experience enhance visitors' perception of coolness and feeling of authentic pride? Can perceived coolness and authentic pride influence visitors' intention to revisit and recommend the museum?

The aim of the current study is to investigate the effect of museum experiences on visitors' willingness to recommend a museum and desire to return, based on the influence of the perception of coolness and the feeling of authentic pride. A sample of 308 usable questionnaires retrieved from four Lisbon museums provide a good understanding of the drivers of revisit and recommend intentions.

Museum Atmospheric Cues contribute to the perception of Museum Coolness and the feeling of Authentic Pride, which, in turn, influence the intentions to Recommend and Revisit a museum. The perception of Museum Coolness has a stronger influence on both intentions to Revisit and Recommend.

Regarding managerial Implications, it was uncovered in this study that museum managers must focus on keeping the décor and display of exhibitions up-to-date and try to renovate, when possible, the display of the permanent exhibition. Furthermore, the museum experience should be enhanced with the use of games and quizzes throughout the visit, as well as on an online platform. Managers would, therefore, respond to the visitors' necessity learning, while building a relationship with them. Moreover, there should be online workshops, Q&A and tours to engage with visitors while they are quarantined or simply cannot go to the museum.

Keywords: museum experiences, atmospheric cues, museum brand coolness, authentic pride, revisit, recommend

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