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THE QUALIA EXPERIENCE OF MUSEUM VISITORS---A CASE STUDY OF NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HISTORY, TAIWAN

Abstract:

Along with the trend of experience economy, visitors' affective experiences have been greatly emphasized. The deepest affective experience is 'qualia', which is defined as a profoundly touching feeling with happiness and durable memory. Qualia experience, which add extra values to products and brands, have been a heated issue in many areas, especially in cultural and creative industry as well as in tourism industry. Although affective inspiration is the most essential value of museums, qualia experience is the concept rarely applied to the field of museum visitor study. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the museum visitors' qualia experience, concerning how do visitors feel, rather than what do they think or have learned.

The study adopts National Museum of History, Taiwan, as a case study, in order to fully investigate visitors' qualia experience in the context of the museum. National Museum of History has the history of more than sixty years and is one of the most popular museums in Taiwan. 10 museum visitors and 11 museum volunteers have been interviewed along with the data collection of field observation, photos and the museum documents. The results of the study reveal six heartfelt dimensions including 12 touching factors of triggering visitors' feelings. Suggestions are also made regarding how to improve museum visitors' affective experience.

The contributions of this study are twofold. In theory, this study proposes the ideas of qualia experience may shed new light on the discussion of museum visitors study. In practice, the results of the paper suggest museums how to enrich and enhance visitors' qualia experience in the future