

A longitudinal study of visitor memories evolution

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Abstract

This study examines how visitors' memories evolve after a cultural experience. Using a qualitative longitudinal design, participants were interviewed immediately after their visit, one week later, and four weeks later to trace how impressions evolve. In total, 99 interviews were analyzed, based on three waves with 33 participants. The findings reveal three trajectories: faded, stabilized, and transformed, each shaped by emotional arousal, cognitive processing, identity relevance, and post-visit cues. The study reveals that memorability is not a fixed outcome, but a dynamic process in which impressions decay, persist, or acquire new meaning over time. These insights clarify how experiential memories develop and offer guidance for designing experiences that leave a lasting impact.

Track: Tourism Marketing