



# THE RETAIL EXPERIENCE IN MUSUEMS

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## Introduction

The visualization of the museum experience and its impact on the retail experience, manifested as gift shops, was observed during the scanning and creation of a database for over 30,000 historical slides.

Portraying the museum gift shop as an extension of the exhibitions allows engagement with the museum to continue in the eyes of the visitor (McIntyre 2010).

Analyzing differences within the museum displays found in a sample of slides selected from the FSU Visual Merchandising collection showed the varying approaches to digital gift shops.

Curating the retail environment to visitors creates a source of subtle, but direct, representation for them (McLean 1998).

Because of this, this project argues that when products at a museum gift shop align with the leading identity of its visitors, the museum will experience an increase in engagement, defined by attendance.

## Methods

The research began with the scanning of historical slides from the Art Binder in the slide collection.

Slides depicting paintings by Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso, and Vincent Van Gogh were selected because of the existence of independent museums dedicated to their careers.

Upon reaching a sample of three major artists, research focused on determining the location of the paintings began.

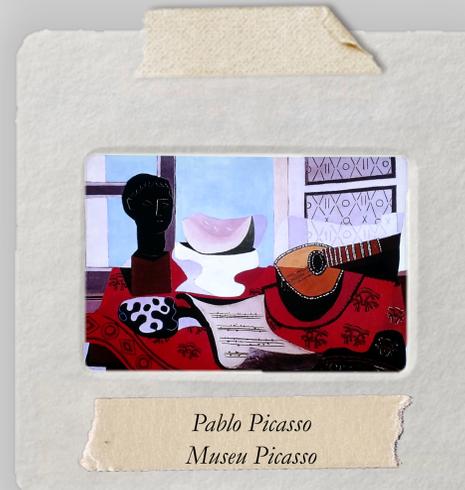
It was found that the Musée Marmottan Monet, the Museu Picasso, and the Van Gogh Museum housed the selection of paintings.

The digital gift shop merchandise was then separated based on the characteristics identified by researchers Volker Kirchberg and Martin Tröndle.

An increase in engagement was measured through the examination of pre-existing attendance records.



Claude Monet  
Musée Marmottan Monet



Pablo Picasso  
Museu Picasso



Vincent Van Gogh  
Van Gogh Museum

## Results

In appearance alone, the difference between the digital retail experience between the three museums was readily apparent.

The consumer's experience in the Van Gogh Museum's digital gift shop is much more accessible as a broad selection of products are listed and ready for purchase through the website alone.

In contrast, the Musée Marmottan Monet and the Museu Picasso only offered a short listing of the type of products available. The websites lacked product photos, descriptions, or pricing options.

## Discussion

A relationship seems to exist between experience and product selection in the retail sector of museums.

However, the results are limited by the nature of the methodological design.

Further research could include local museums as well.

This project was limited by the slides available in the collection at FSU.

Because the research was conducted digitally, the results are based on pre-existing data values.

Future researchers could interview local museum visitors face-to-face to create a better understanding of consumers' expectations in museum gift shops versus actual product selection.

Data results on the satisfaction of visitors after their experience in the museum gift shop specifically were inconclusive.

Understanding the significance of museum gift shops on the overall museum experience is essential for the survival of these organizations.

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## Acknowledgements

Thank you to Professor Christie Hand and the Jim Moran College of Entrepreneurship for allowing me to participate in the archiving of 30,000 slides and the development of a database.