

## Marketing Museums as a tool to enhance the Cultural City Image through Virtual Tourism in light of the Corona Virus Crisis - A case study of some cities around the world -

تسويق المتاحف كأداة لتعزيز صورة المدينة الثقافية من خلال السياحة الافتراضية في ظل أزمة فيروس كورونا -دراسة حالة بعض المدن حول العالم-

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### Abstract:

The worldwide wellbeing emergency of Coronavirus (Covid-19) has seriously influenced the travel industry area in the entirety of its angles. Numerous museums and exhibition halls all throughout the planet, large and small, public and private, have been compelled to briefly close, and away from quick measures to help the travel industry area, regional authorities and museum departments have ended up compelled to foster recuperation measures and attempt to adjust to the current circumstance, by depending virtual reality techniques and adopting a virtual tourism approach it marketing, to upgrade the city's cultural image and attract new visitors later on. This is what this paper aims to achieve by highlighting the experiences of a group of museums in different cities around the world and concocting proposals for Algerian museum.

**Keywords:** Virtual tourism; Museum marketing; City image; Coronavirus pandemic.

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## الملخص:

أثرت حالة الطوارئ العالمية لفيروس كورونا (كوفيد-19) بشكل خطير على مجال صناعة السفر في مجمل زواياه. تم إجبار العديد من المتاحف وقاعات العرض في جميع أنحاء العالم، الكبيرة والصغيرة، العامة والخاصة، على الإغلاق. وبعيداً عن التدابير السريعة لمحاولة إنعاش مجال صناعة السياحة خاصة الثقافية، استدعى الأمر بالسلطات الإقليمية وإدارات المتاحف إلى تعزيز التدابير ومحاولة التكيف مع الظروف الحالية، من خلال الاعتماد على تقنيات الواقع الافتراضي واعتماد نهج السياحة الافتراضية والتسويق لها، ما يؤدي لتعزيز الصورة الثقافية للمدينة وجذب زوار جدد لاحقاً. وهذا ما تهدف هذه الورقة إلى تحقيقه من خلال تسليط الضوء على تجارب مجموعة من المتاحف في مدن مختلفة حول العالم وإعداد مقترحات للمتحف الجزائري.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السياحة الافتراضية؛ تسويق المتاحف؛ صورة المدينة؛ جائحة كورونا.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism cities worldwide are seeking to get out of the reality imposed by the Coronavirus pandemic on the tourism sector and its accompanying services, after the disruption of tourism and travel traffic almost throughout the year, forcing millions of people to stay at home, by using virtual reality technologies to provide virtual tourism and entertainment experiences that meet the visitor's desires and introduce them to tourist attractions to visit later and, most importantly to remind and enhance their cultural image and identity.

Although virtual tours of tourist attractions in general and museums in particular are not new in themselves, the Coronavirus has made them more well known and required under the home stone. These tours are facilitated by the possession of virtual reality and information technology tools by city bodies and governments.

We will try to show the experiences of some museums in different cities in the world in order to answer the following

question: *How is the city's cultural image enhanced by the use of virtual reality to market museums in a crisis?*

## 2. Theoretical framework:

### 2.1 Virtual tourism

Virtual tourism is a new type of unconventional tourism whose slogan is no tickets, no bags and no hassles. It relies on information technology technologies to provide its services.

Virtual tourism is it navigation on the streets and areas of virtual reality environments with the aim of physically moving to physical places and a moment of time without traveling there in its traditional form<sup>(1)</sup>. Or is defined as an activity to visit sites of interest online without personally traveling to these places. A virtual tour is a simulation of an existing location, usually consisting of a series of video images. Other multimedia elements such as sound effects, music, storytelling and written texts can also be used.

### 2.2 Marketing Museums

The adoption and application of marketing theory and practices in museums has been the subject of intense and enthusiastic debate among professionals since the early 1980s<sup>(2)</sup>. While some have argued that marketing plays an important role by viewing it as a powerful means by which museums can fulfill their mission, others viewed it with suspicion and remained skeptical of its appropriateness or fear of its impact. Although this polarized thinking has waned in recent years as museum marketing has become increasingly pervasive and more sophisticated in its application, the extent of its embrace remains uneven, and major confusion and misunderstanding still surrounds the purpose and its potential.

(1) رافدة مجبل عبد الله، تجارة الخدمات السياحية إلكترونيا في البلدان النامية مع التركيز على الصين والهند، رسالة ماجستير، كلية الإدارة والاقتصاد، جامعة المستنصرية، بغداد، العراق، 2011، ص123.

(2) Sandell, R., & Janes, R. R. Museum Management and Marketing. New York and London: Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, 2007, p291.

### 2.3 The nature of the city marketing

The city's marketing role has been strengthened globally through, inter alia global competition between cities, tourism and urban management. For the exchange with the place marketing<sup>(1)</sup>, defined the marketing of the city as: the adaptation of the traditional model of Marketing's 4p's (product, price, place and promotion) and its performance in the procedure of city marketing. But many concepts cannot be easily transferred from products and services, and in addition, advocates are still assessing their suitability. Therefore, the city's marketing is still in an experimental stage and the process has evolved gradually. The purpose of marketing a city is to create strategies to promote an area or the entire city for certain activities and in some cases to 'sell' parts of the city for living, consuming and productive activities<sup>(2)</sup>.

### 2.4 City Image

When talking about the city image from the city's brand perspective, it is worth noting first that many cities that nowadays are trying to promote themselves by through the aid of iconic buildings or landmarks. From a general point of view, the city branding relies primarily on three key features, namely image, uniqueness and originality/authenticity<sup>(3)</sup>. The image of the city is a originated from the natural process of formation, structuring and perceiving the urban landscape, as a tangible manifestation of its formal and structural

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(1) Deffner, A., & Metaxas, Is City Marketing Opposed to Urban Planning? The Elaboration of a Pilot City Marketing Plan for the Case of Nea Ionia, Magnesia, Greece, 46th Congress of the European Regional Science Association: "Enlargement, Southern Europe and the Mediterranean", August 30th - September 3rd, 2006, Volos, Greece,p03.

(2) Hedley, S, Marketing the city : the flagship developments in yrban regeneration, E&FN SPON , 2005, p02.

(3) Riza, Müge & Naciye Doratli & Mukaddes Fasli, City branding and identity , Asia Pacific International Conference on Environment-Behaviour Studies, Famagusta Eastern Mediterrianean University, 2011, Turkey,p294.

elements, buildings, landmarks, activities, festivals and carnivals, events, heritage and architecture<sup>(1)</sup>. A clear city image in terms of cultural activity involves design that is related to creating a visual identity of cities. Major elements include visual images and text referring to messages by various stakeholders<sup>(2)</sup>.

## 2.5 City Identity

Lynch defines identity as ‘the extent to which a person can recognize or recall a city as being distinct from other cities’<sup>(3)</sup>. The identity is the core concept of the product clearly and distinctively expressed<sup>(4)</sup>. So, the identity is regularly understood as the real characteristics of a city.

## 3. Case study

Many museums and cultural institutions have quickly adapted to the fallout from the crisis by creating virtual access to their exhibitions and staying in touch with their audiences. New content has also been produced, ranging from virtual tours to podcasts, and various cultural institutions have seized the opportunity to share more content and reach a wider audience online or through social media. Through this part, we will try to shed light on the way in which international, Arab and Algerian museums use virtual reality to market themselves and enhance the cultural city image and identity.

### 3.1 Paris city

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(1) Helmy Mona, Urban branding strategies and the emerging Arab cityscape : The image of the Gulf City, 15S tuttgart City building Intitute University of Stuttgart, Germany, 2008, 15.

(2) SY Kim, Design as a strategic asset in visual city branding, Doctoral thesis, 48London Lancaster institute for the contemporary arts, Lancaster University, UK, 2017, p48.

(3) Kevin Lynch, The image of city, The MIT press, Massachusetts, England, 1960,p 09.

(4) Simon Anholt, Competitive identity :The new brand management for nations, cities and regions. United State: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p05.

Paris has many cultural aspects that attract intellectuals and thinkers, and among the most important of these are the museums there are about 60, in which the city is rich and which highlights its cultural identity. We will try to shed light on how the city marketed its most prominent museums during the period of quarantine.

- **The Louvre Museum:** Who among us does not know this museum? The largest art museum and one of the most famous in the world, which is a luxurious palace dating back to the 12th century AD. It was built by (Philip II August) as a fortress, then it was rebuilt in the 16th century in the style of the Renaissance, and the spacious Louvre Museum square is decorated with a glass pyramid that is considered a sign A distinctive feature of the museum, and it embraces tens of thousands of artworks of multiple origins and different times, including monuments that originate in the countries between the two rivers, the Egyptian civilization, and the Greek civilization, including works of art by the most important artists in history, such as: Leonardo Da Vinci, and his famous painting ( Mona Lisa), as well as the artwork by Michelangelo, Rembrandt, and others<sup>(1)</sup>.

The Museum of Mythological Art in Paris tops the list of the most searched virtual tours in the world. Virtual visitors can delve into the museum's archives with detailed virtual tours on the Louvre website. A virtual tour of the Louvre also allows visitors to set up close-up exhibits, with an additional museum on individual pieces (in French), providing free and unprecedented access to the museum's many treasures<sup>(2)</sup>.

The Coming of the Artist, an exhibition at the Petite Galerie at the Louvre Museum dedicated to artistic and cultural education, first

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(1) Site officiel du musée Luvre, Online tours, sur Luvre: <https://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne> , Consulté le Juillet 2020.

(2) Kalra V, Take a tour of museums in Europe from the comfort of your home, from The Indian Express: <https://bit.ly/2XU4A7A> , Retrieved July 15, 2020.

appeared with great fanfare in September last year and is now open to the public via a virtual tour.

Organized to coincide with a cycle of Louvre exhibitions celebrating Renaissance artists such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Donatello, and Michelangelo, "The Coming of the Artist" features around 40 artworks by the likes of Dürer and Rembrandt along with literature from that time to trace the emergence and recognition of the artist's concept. In the week before Easter alone, additional content was posted online relating to the history of art, the Louvre collections, and the creation of the most visited museum in the world. By March 19, the number of visitors to the Louvre website had increased more than tenfold from around 40,000 per day to more than 400,000 visitor<sup>(1)</sup>.

### 3.2 New York

New York City is the most famous and most visited American tourist destination, this city has the most wonderful elements of tourist attractions so that New York hosts some of the finest museums in the world, which offers its visitors a wide range of options that suit everyone, including museums of arts, culture and natural history. Despite the Corona pandemic and the prevention of many people from visiting the city, especially those interested in history and art, many of the city's museums have tended to exploit their virtual reality in order to offer their services, we mention:

- **The Metropolitan Museum of Art or "The Met":** As it is popularly known, this year is celebrating its 150th anniversary. Google Arts and Culture is said to have teamed up with 2,500 museums and galleries around the world to bring virtual tours of these museums straight home, and the Met, the largest art museum in the United States, being one of them. The Met's "Digital Digest" sponsors a selection of videos, articles and information on painters

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(1) Puente M, Take a virtual tour of these 12 amazing museums closed because of coronavirus from USA TODAY: <https://bit.ly/3alAX4j> , Retrieved July 17, 2020.

and artistic practices, and offers family activities and downloadable catalogs as well as virtual reality tours for groups. As the largest and richest private American museum in the largest and richest American city, it has 26 online galleries, many of which focus on fashion history and Vermeer. One way to explore this wide online collection is to click the button to take a tour of the museum by room and item, which gives you an idea of how to present artwork and a way to manipulate images to get different views and all this for free and anyone in the world, can access its official website.

This museum also recently launched the #MetAnywhere initiative, which highlights digital content from the depths of its reserves. It also launched the hashtag #MetTwinning in the months leading up to the pandemic, which is now really starting, with people recreating some of the museum's most iconic artworks, right down to the clothes. (The making of a poodle in a hat, for example, is a hilarious new take on "The Unicorn in Captivity" by the Met Cloisters, dating back to the late Middle Ages)<sup>(1)</sup>.

### 3.3 Amsterdam City

The Dutch capital attracts many tourists annually due to the fact that it contains many different tourist attractions as well as it is characterized by its beautiful houses that catch the eye, and there are many things that you can do while you are inside the city as you can visit many different parks, churches and theaters, and this city is famous. With a large number of museums, as it includes at least 400 museums, and many different exhibitions are held in them, so this city is a wonderful choice for art lovers, and among the most visited museums through virtual reality during the period of the confinement:

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(1) Blumenthal B, The World's Top Museums Are Finding New Ways to Share Art During Coronavirus, from Condé Nas TRAVELER: <https://bit.ly/2PRiPLa>, Retrieved July 18, 2020.



▪ **The Van Gogh Museum:** The Van Gogh Museum has benefited from the quality of virtual reality owned by the Dutch city of Amsterdam during the coronavirus lockdown. This museum is home to the largest collection of Vincent Van Gogh's paintings. Most of the works can be viewed around 600 works of art and 700 letters, including his Self Portrait (1888) and Sunflowers (1889). Fans of this post-impressionist painter can also see his most famous works without pretense. People such as "Almond Flower", "Wheat Field with Crows" and "Sunflowers", (The official website of Google Arts & Culture, 2020) all go through a virtual guided tour of the internet and each work is accompanied by a detailed description. Aside from The Dutch Master, the show also includes works by some of his contemporaries and artist friends such as Paul Gauguin and Emile Bernard. The museum's website also shares the artist's letters and school lessons based on his work.

A spokesman for the Van Gogh Museum told a local media outlet, "The traffic to our social media channels is greater than ever... The constant height is unprecedented, as visitors can enjoy 4K tour videos on YouTube from the permanent collection, and a wealth of in-depth website pages containing stories about Van Gogh's life"<sup>(1)</sup>.

▪ **Rijks Museum :** The Rijksmuseum is one of the most famous museums in the Netherlands and one of the most popular attractions in Amsterdam. His world-famous artwork from the Dutch Golden Age includes Milkmaid by Vermeer and Rembrandt's Night Watch. The Rijksmuseum itself is a masterpiece. The collection is presented in a stunning building with a stunning interior design. In 80 galleries, 8,000 objects tell the story of 800 years of Dutch art and history, from the Middle Ages to Mondrian. Each year, more than 2.5 million visitors travel through the ages and experience a sense of beauty and a sense of time<sup>(2)</sup>.

It also features famous works like The Milkmaid by Vermeer and Rembrandt's The Night Watch. Google Arts and Culture includes

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(1) Kalra V, op cit.

(2) Official Website of the Rijks Museum, Rijks studio: dive into the collection, from Rijksmuseum Museum: <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en>, Retrieved July 22, 2020.

different views of the museum interiors across three floors. He launched a new interactive experience "Rijksmuseum From Home", which allows visitors to virtually visit Rembrandt's *The Nightwatch* and Vermeer's *The Milkmaid*. In cooperation with Google, there is also an opportunity to explore 11 exhibits, as those interested can interact with various virtual tours and ask their questions to be answered later.

### 3.4 Cairo city

Egyptian cities have been severely affected by the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), as the tourism industry has suffered a huge blow due to the lockdown measures that have been imposed around the world. To combat isolation, the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiques has launched several virtual tours online to its world-famous historical and archaeological sites, where users can scroll through these historical sites and various museums at their leisure.

Certainly, the city of Cairo was part of the initiative undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, as this city alone has more than 40 museums.

Where Thursday, Friday and Saturday were dedicated to publishing a number of guided tours of **the Egyptian Museum** which is famous worldwide on Tahrir Street through the official page on the Internet and the social networking sites of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and these tours include an explanation of twenty distinct artifacts inside the Egyptian Museum through the Egyptian tour guides who They volunteered to make these tours as a contribution from them to familiarize Egyptian and foreign citizens with the ancient Egyptian civilization and Egyptian sites and museums while they were in their homes as part of preventive measures from the repercussions of the new Corona virus.

Perhaps the most prominent tour inside this museum that met with great interaction is the third guided tour, in which the golden necklace of King Psusnis the First was presented and explained, which was discovered around the neck of the mummy of King Psusnes I (about 1039--991 BC), one of the kings of the 21st Dynasty, and it is one It consists of three king necklaces made of pure gold and consists of 14 branched gold chains ending in lotus flowers ending in two of these chains, which in turn divide into two other chains, and they relate to five rows of thin golden discs grouped side by side linked by a central clasp bearing two of the king's names<sup>(1)</sup>.

### 3.5 Dubai City

The Dubai Culture and Arts Authority has showcased Dubai's six most famous museums on the online platform Dubai 360, a private initiative that brings major landmarks and destinations to the city online. Where the visitor can take a virtual reality tour through the corridors of the different museums, by clicking on the virtual museum, you can rotate and zoom it in / out, and there is also a "information" button in the toolbar for details about the various exhibits.

The Dubai Government Media Office announced, through its official account on the "Twitter" site, the launch of full interactive 360-degree tours on the Internet, allowing you to remotely explore heritage and cultural sites within the city. The initiative to review some heritage and cultural sites launched by the Culture and Arts Authority in Dubai in partnership with the "Dubai 360" site, in order to provide innovative tours "to serve as an interactive channel that allows visitors from different parts of the world. The world should see these sites," according to a statement issued For the Dubai Government Media Office. The Dubai 360 site provides virtual tours

(1) حكومة مصر، جولات افتراضية حول المواقع الاثرية، من الهيئة العامة للاستعلامات لمصر: <https://bit.ly/2PVijGX>، تاريخ الاسترداد 11 أوت 2020.

with unique angles. The site allows you to see panoramic views from the top of the charming heritage and historical collections, through a large group of panoramic images, full angles and interactive videos.

When accessing the Dubai 360 online platform, the visitor can take a virtual reality tour through the corridors of one of the six museums. Once you click on the virtual museum, it can be rotated and zoomed in / zoomed out, and there is also an "information" button in the toolbar to get details about the various exhibits. Also, each museum differs in its content and nature from the other, for example:

- **Dubai Museum:** The Dubai Museum, also known as "Al Fahidi Fort," displays the history of the Emirate of Dubai and the details of its unique and special civilization process.

- **Etihad Museum:** The Etihad Museum in Jumeirah focuses on introducing visitors to the story of the founding of the UAE, and celebrates the path of its founders.

- **Coins Museum:** The Coins Museum is located in Al Fahidi District, and it displays coins dating back to different historical eras. Learn about the coins that were circulating in Dubai and the Middle East region on a virtual tour inside the Coins Museum through the Dubai 360 website.

- **Nayef Museum:** The Nayef Museum is located in the Deira area of Naif Fort. It displays the history of the police and security services in the Emirate of Dubai, various models of police uniforms and weapons that were used.

- **Majlis Umm Al Sheif Chamber:** displays the traditional furniture, tools and utensils of the Emirati traditional council, and it is considered a special historical and heritage monument, as it was established in 1955 as a summer resort for Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum in the Jumeirah area.

### 3.6 Setif City

Due to the repercussions of the Coronavirus pandemic, Minister of Tourism and Traditional Industry Hassan Marmori at the beginning of April, gave guidance to all institutions under guardianship urging them to promote virtual tourism in order to promote Algerian destinations from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to the ministry as well as the Algerian e-tourism portal "visitalgeria".

The Office for the Management and Exploitation of Cultural Property in Algeria also proposed the beginning of the country's quarantine daily virtual visits with a guide to Algerian museums and archaeological sites on its official website and social media pages, where the various museums of the country were displayed in a daily program through videos under the supervision of guides, archaeologists and museum governors. Among the museums on display, the Sitif Museum was included in the programme, known as the **"Setif National Museum"** The museum's management also adapted to this decision, taking advantage of its Facebook page and publishing its cultural program, which was divided the days of the show according to the historical periods of the city of Setif: the Roman period, Islamic, Hammadi, Fatimid and others, in addition to a range of pedagogical activities and competitions, as well as the first issue of its electronic magazine. The museum's management efforts were well received by residents of the city and other cities and the publications were interacted with.

#### **4. Conclusion:**

Through what has been presented in this research paper, we believe that the trend towards virtual tourism is now the best way to show the city cultural identity and consolidate its image, in front of many individuals who want to see the tourist, archaeological and cultural monuments of the city, especially museums, via the Internet and augmented reality technologies and using applications and modern technology, in light of the repercussions of the crisis and even after its end.

In order to explore the future, we propose adopting a virtual tourism approach, which is a golden opportunity to promote the tourism sector, and to market Algerian museums, and to highlight the cultural identity of each city in order of obtaining a desirable mental image that supports the nation's cultural image:

- The cost of virtual tourism is lower compared to traditional real tourism, considering that it is a small budget allocated to the sector by the state.

- Identify new tourist destinations without leaving the home, as well as the ease of using virtual reality techniques and roaming online almost free of charge, creating an individual's curiosity makes him a potential tourist;

- Using virtual tourism to attract more visitors in the future after the end of the Corona crisis,

- Virtual tourism provides an opportunity to analyze visitor data, find out what they are interested in and identify elements of tourist attraction to focus on when promoting the country as a tourist;

- Museums in various Algerian cities should exploit virtual reality techniques as much as possible and promote them not only locally but also globally through:

- Design an attractive website that contains images of exhibits and art pieces using 360° technology, supported by a descriptive explanation of them in several languages.

- Collaborate with Google Arts and Culture, which displays hundreds of virtual tours, VR visits and 360° views of the world's greatest art pieces, buildings, museums and music venues. In addition to Google Street view Technique;

- Design an app for the museum that allows visitors to select a piece of artwork by scanning it. The app provides information about the widget through text, audio and video that can be free or paid;

- Taking full advantage of social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube...) which is the easiest and most popular form of technology, which can be used by museums to stay in touch with their visitors and attract new visitors by displaying good content, high quality and attractive images and videos, live shows and digital broadcasts;

- Participating in national and foreign cultural events online.

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