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Expressing Culture Digitally

The Rise of Perceived Online Cultural Value

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INTRODUCTION

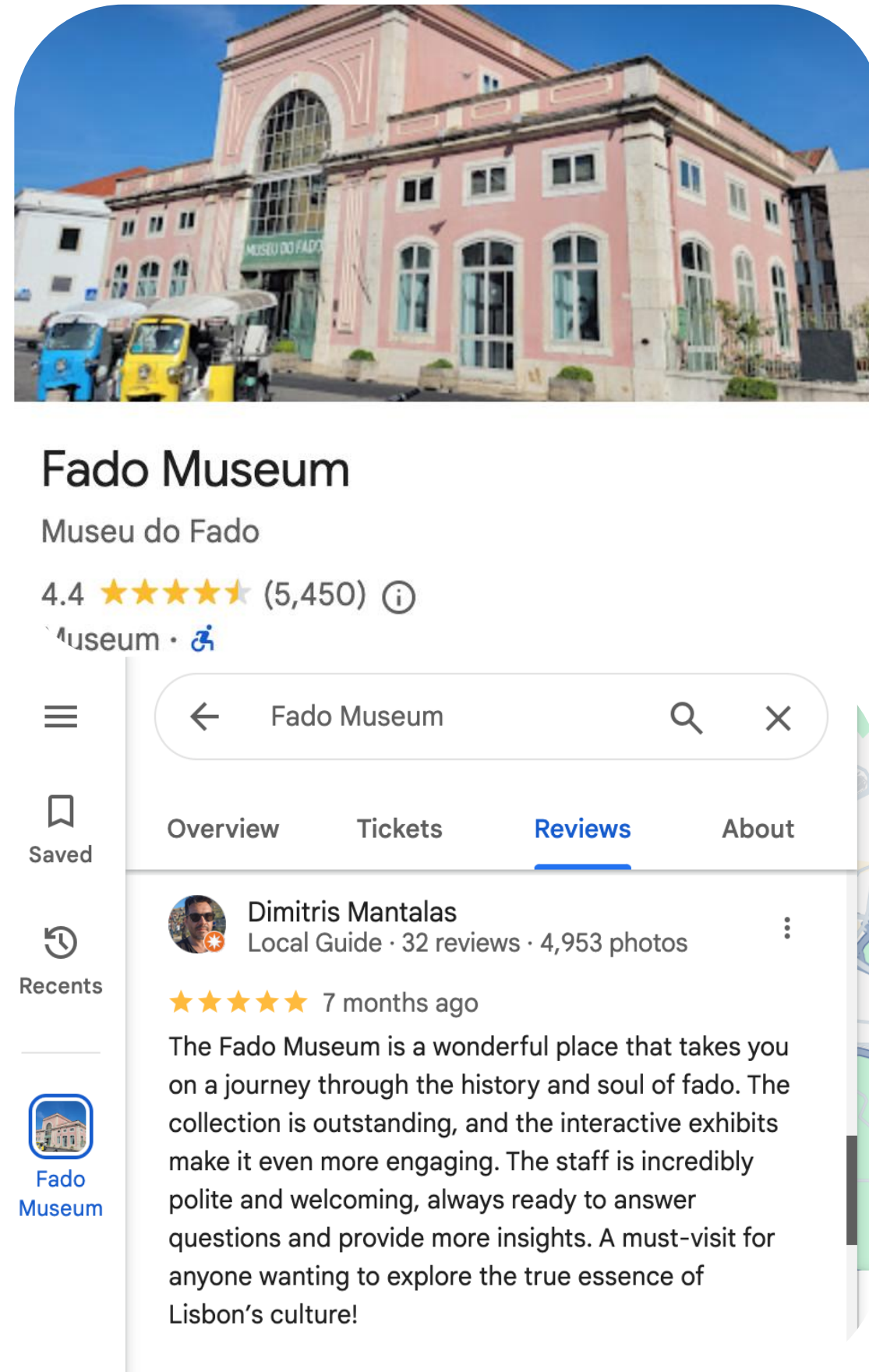
Despite growing calls for more practical assessments of cultural value, many institutions continue to rely on narrow KPIs, such as economic impact and visitor counts, to demonstrate their public worth (Klamer, 2020).

At the same time, audiences are articulating rich, emotionally charged perceptions of value online, offering **unsolicited** reflections on their experiences at **scale**.

Yet current valuation models largely overlook this form of expression, underutilizing user-generated content as a meaningful source of cultural insight.

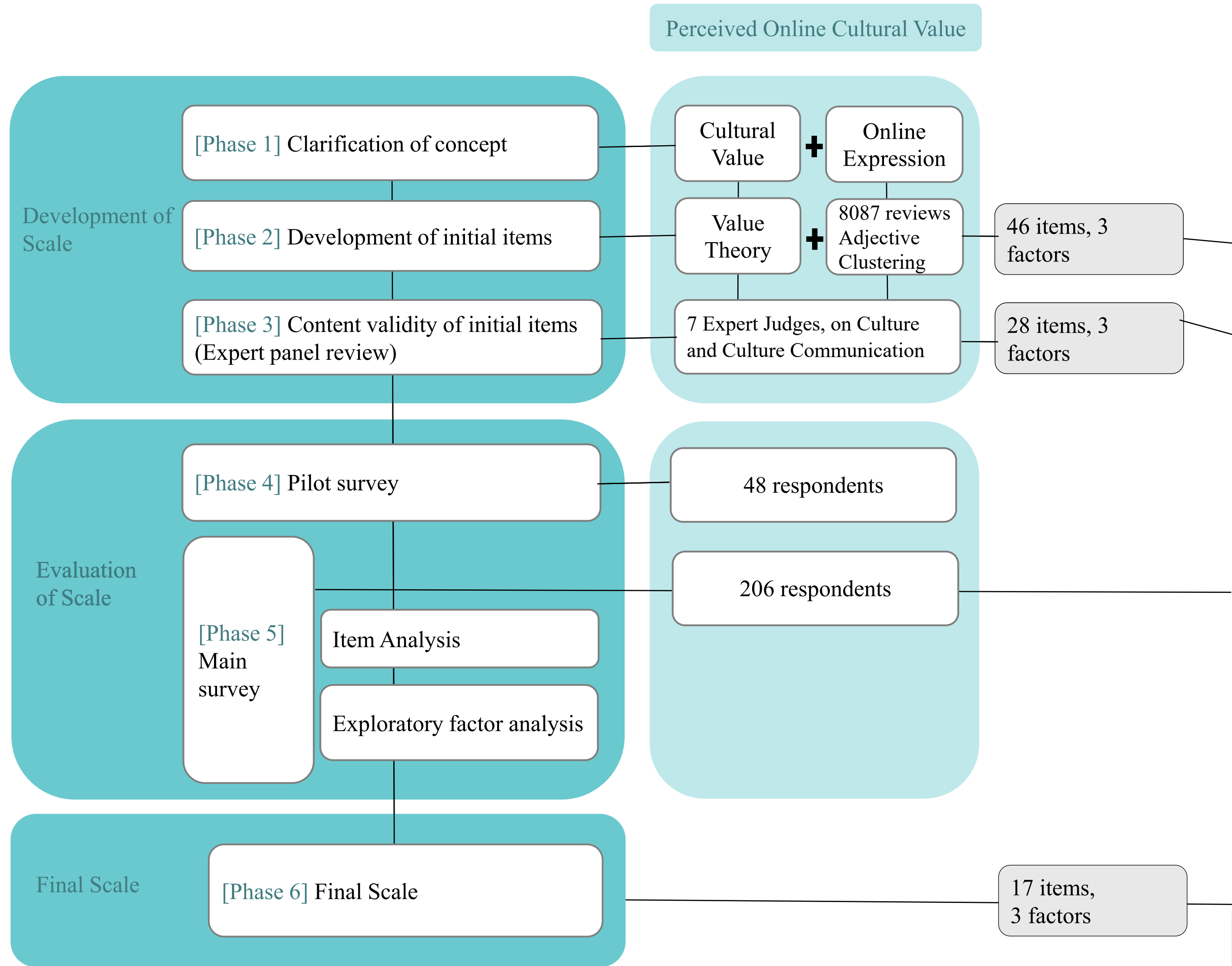
To address this gap,

We introduce **Perceived Online Cultural Value (POCV)**: a novel construct that captures the multidimensional value individuals assign to cultural spaces through public digital expression. POCV offers a theory-informed, structured approach to interpreting how cultural worth is performed, shared, and made visible in the digital sphere.



METHODS AND MATERIALS

RESULTS & DISCUSSION



Adjective Clustering

A corpus of Google Reviews from 22 **Lisboa Cultura** spaces was collected and used as the natural language foundation for scale development. Adjectives, selected for their evaluative nature, were extracted using SpaCy NLP tools, vectorized with Word2Vec, and clustered semantically into 3 factors via KMeans.

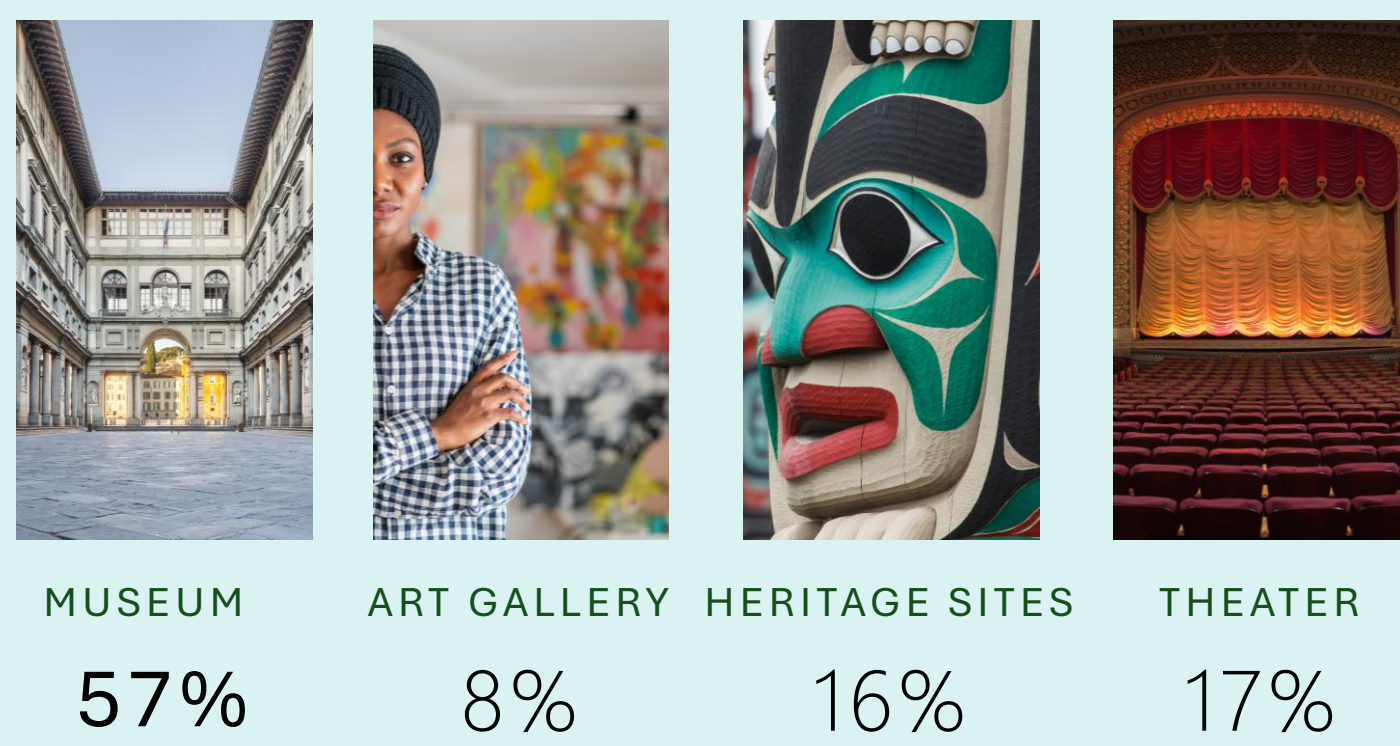
Value Theory

The factors were interpreted through theory-informed coding, allowing the inductive identification of value dimensions aligned with established cultural value frameworks. Arising: **Aesthetics** (Throsby, 2001), **Educational** (Armbrrecht, 2014), and **Access** (Fennell & Garrod, 2021).

From the factors themes, 46 initial items were generated. Experts perceived 24 items as relevant based on the Item-level Content Validity Index >0.83 and proposed 4 items.

On the main survey, respondents (ages 18–81, M = 39.5), were asked to recall a cultural space and evaluate it based on the proposed scale, museums were the most prevalent typology.

The survey results validated the 3 factor split and several items were excluded:
7 due to Multi Factor Presence
2 due to Item Reliability (<0.5)
2 due to Low Item Total Correlation



Revised scale development framework by DeVellis (2017) adapted from Yoon (2021)

CONCLUSION

The study developed and validated a new construct Perceived Online Cultural Value with three core dimensions: Aesthetic (AE), Educational (ED), and Access Value (AC), emerging inductively from visitor online expressions and aligned with existing cultural value theory.

Future research could apply structural equation modeling to test the predictive validity of POCV dimensions on engagement, satisfaction, or cultural loyalty outcomes.

Theoretical Contribution

- It advances cultural value theory by **conceptualizing value** as a publicly performed and digitally expressed construct.
- It introduces a **novel method** that uses natural language processing to transform real visitor language into measurable dimensions.

Practical Contribution

- It **equips cultural institutions** with a validated tool to interpret public expressions of value,
- It offers **actionable insights** into what audiences praise, share, and expect.

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ONLINE
VERSION

