Strategy of Local Cultural and Creative Products Based on Customer Perceived Value

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Abstract: This study investigates the factors influencing contemporary college students' purchase intentions toward local cultural and creative products by examining customer perceived value. Based on the theoretical framework established by Sweeney and Soutar and contemporary research results, customer perceived value was categorized into five dimensions: perceived functional value, perceived aesthetic value, perceived emotional value, perceived cultural value, and perceived social value. Through structural equation modeling (SEM), the empirical analysis of 459 valid questionnaires revealed that perceived cultural, functional, and social values significantly and positively impact purchase intentions, with perceived cultural value having the strongest influence. This result suggests that younger consumers are more concerned with practicality, cultural significance, and social attributes when purchasing such products, rather than relying solely on visual appeal or enjoyment. Additionally, the findings highlight the respondents' price sensitivity, indicating preferences for lower-priced products typically associated with travel experiences and impulse buying behaviors. Strategic recommendations include emphasizing unique cultural attributes, enhancing practical functionality, leveraging social attributes, adopting diversified pricing strategies, and expanding marketing channels to effectively target the college student market. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of younger consumer's perceived value in cultural and creative product consumption and provides valuable insights for product development and marketing strategies.

Keywords: Consumer perceived value, local study, cultural and creative products, consumption demand

1. Introduction

With the support of policies in recent years, the deep integration of culture and tourism and the rise of the China-chic, the proportion of Chinese cultrual and creative products in the China Stationery Fair (CSF) 2024 has reached 14% according to statistics.[1] The industry is expanding further in scale and many products are becoming part of people's lives. As works relying on cultural resources, the development of cultural and creative products has shown a generational trend from the protection of traditional culture to commercialisation, artify and then digitalisation, intuitively reflecting the trends and needs of socio-economic and technological development. China's cultural and creative products industry has upgraded its mode of operation, and its development trend is steadily rising, with huge market potential. Despite the flourishing momentum, domestic cultural

products, especially local cultural products, still show serious product homogenisation and insufficient excavation of cultural connotation.[2] The root of the problem is the lack of rational, objective and effective research and analysis of consumers' implicit needs.[3] In this context, how to design high-value products to meet the diversified consumption needs of consumers is an urgent problem to be solved.

In view of this, this paper analyses the value perception mechanism and consumption demand of consumers for museum cultural and creative products from the perspective of consumers' perceived value. This study takes college students as the main research object, intends to discover the main factors affecting consumers' purchase intention, and on this basis, puts forward strategic suggestions for the development and marketing of cultural and creative products with local characteristics in Huzhou City. The results of the study help cultural and creative institutions and designers to better grasp the shopping needs, consumption preferences and behavioural motives of tourists, and provide a reliable idea for the design and development of local cultural and creative products.

2. Literature review

2.1. Customer perceived value

The definition of perceived value was formalised by Zeithaml in 1988. He defined perceived value as "...... the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given",[4]which is one of the important considerations for consumers in the purchase decision process.[5] Customer perceived value has been receiving great attention in the field of marketing.[6] Especially in a competitive market, customer perceived value is seen as the main key to the sustainable development of a company. This is due to the significant potential in predicting buying behaviour,[7] Managing customer relationships [8] and enriching brand equity.[9]

With ongoing research on customer perceived value, the conceptual understanding and dimensional categorization of this construct have been continuously refined. Woodruff [10] conceptualized customer perceived value as consumers' evaluative preference toward products, shaped primarily by their purchase intentions and objectives. Holbrook and Hirschman [11] expanded this understanding through a pragmatic-hedonistic model, emphasizing that consumer value encompasses not only practical utility but also emotional and experiential dimensions. Sheth et al. [12] further delineated consumer perceived value into five distinct dimensions—functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional values—which collectively influence consumer purchasing decisions. Later Holbrook [13] developed an eight-dimensional typology of consumer value, introducing complexity through three interactive dimensions: internal versus external, self-directed versus other-directed, and active versus passive orientations. Currently, Sweeney and Soutar's [14] four-dimension scale which emphasizes emotional value, social value, performance/quality, and price perception, has become widely accepted and applied in research related to consumer decision-making within the cultural and creative industries.

2.2. Study on purchase intention of cultural and creative products

Research exploring the relationship between consumer perceived value and consumption behavior has been conducted extensively, with scholars approaching this topic from various perspectives. Some researchers have treated perceived value as a singular dimension, examining its interaction with other variables and its influence on consumer purchase intentions. [15,16] Others have proposed multidimensional constructs of perceived value, investigating how specific sub-dimensions affect consumer purchase intentions. For instance, Guo [17] and Chen [18] incorporated perceived cultural value into Sweeney and Soutar's model, emphasizing its critical

role in shaping consumer demand. Drawing from studies within tourism consumption, Guo [19] examined the impact of symbolic and aesthetic values on purchase intention. Recent research on consumer intentions toward cultural and creative products has resulted in inconsistent conclusions regarding perceived value dimensions. For example, Tang et al. [20] identified cultural and emotional values as significant determinants, whereas Wang et al. [21] argued that emotional, social, and functional values exert a more pronounced impact. Such inconsistency may be related to different survey objectives, the target population and methodologies for categorizing perceived value dimensions. Additionally, some scholars have explored perceived value as a mediating variable in the relationship between various factors and consumer intentions [22-24].

In summary, extensive domestic and international research has been conducted on consumer perceived value, purchase intention and their interrelationships, providing a solid theoretical foundation for this study. According to China Daily 2024, data from travel platforms such as Mafengwo indicate that young consumers born in the 1990s and 2000s significantly drive demand for cultural and creative products. Similarly, a market research report by MobTech[1] highlights Generation Z (1995–2009) as the primary consumer group in the cultural and creative product market, who showed a heightened emotional needs, [25] social requirements, and cultural identity.[26] College students accounted for approximately 35% of respondents in a 2024 survey on cultural and creative product consumption, unveiled the necessity of understanding their consumption behaviors. Consequently, comprehending the consumption logic of contemporary college students is essential for effectively supporting the growth and development of the cultural and creative industry and its products.

3. Research model and hypotheses

3.1. Research model

Based on previous research and Sweeney and Soutar's model of customer perceived value, this study integrates the distinctive cultural, aesthetic, and emotional experiential attributes of museums' cultural and creative products [27,28]. Consequently, customer perceived value in this case is classified into five dimensions: perceived functional value, perceived aesthetic value, perceived emotional value, perceived cultural value, and perceived social value. This framework was established to guide the following research aimed at identifying key factors influencing tourists' purchase intentions.
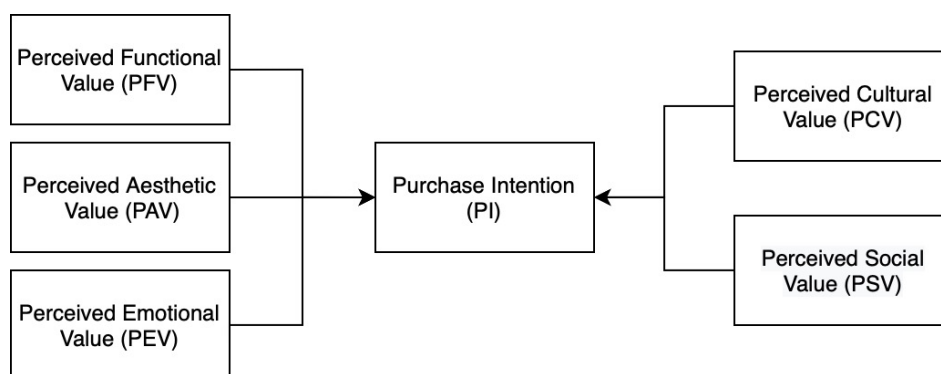

Figure 1: Hypothetical model of purchase intention of local cultural and creative products

3.2. Hypotheses

Drawing on Yang and Yue,[29] Chen and Lei,[30]Guo and Li,[19] Sun and Du[30] and other scholars, this study defines the five dimensions of perceived customer value as follows: perceived functional value refers to the practical use, functionality, and quality embodied by cultural and creative products; perceived aesthetic value represents the artistic appeal conveyed through external aesthetic elements such as color, shape, materials, modeling, and design concepts; perceived emotional value denotes the pleasure, satisfaction, and emotional resonance tourists experience from consuming the products; perceived cultural value captures the cultural significance, popularity, and ethnic characteristics embedded within the products; and perceived social value pertains to the utility gained by individuals in enhancing their self-concept within social contexts, such as optimizing social relationships, shaping social image, gaining group recognition, and fostering a sense of belonging. Based on these definitions, the following hypotheses are proposed in this paper:

H1: Perceived values can positively affect customer purchase intentions.
H2: Perceived functional value can positively affect customer purchase intentions.
H3: Perceived aesthetic value can positively affect customer purchase intentions.
H4: Perceived emotional value can positively affect customer purchase intentions.
H5: Perceived cultural value can positively affect customer purchase intentions.
H6: Perceived social value can positively affect customer purchase intentions.

4. Data and methodology

4.1. questionnaire design and data collection

To ensure the reliability and validity of the collected data, this study employed a questionnaire survey targeting university students who have actual travel experience and have interacted with cultural and creative products during their travels. The questionnaire comprises three main sections: The first section gathers the demographic characteristics of the samples, including personal monthly living expenses and the frequency of purchasing cultural and creative products. In the second section, 18 questions were set for five variables in the model to assesses the relationship between customer perceived values and their purchase intentions. All measurement items were adapted from established scales and literature, ensuring the representativeness and rationality of the designed questions. In order for questions to be better understood, each dimension is clearly defined before the related questions, and the context of the specific research scenario is described accordingly. The third section includes open-ended questions designed to identify the samples' acceptable price ranges, purchasing channels and their suggestions on the development of cultural and creative products in Huzhou.

A 5-point Likert scale was adopted to measure agreement levels, ranging from "1=strongly disagree" to "5=strongly agree", providing clear gradations to accurately capture respondents' attitudes and perspectives. Before the official issuing, a pilot survey was conducted and revisions were made based on the feedback received, resulting in the finalized questionnaire. The survey targeted first- to third-year students in Huzhou Vocational and Technical College. The questionnaires were distributed online via the Wenjuanxing mini-program on March 3, 2025, with data collection concluding on March 8, 2025. A total of 468 questionnaires were collected. After excluding invalid responses completed in less than 30 seconds, 459 valid questionnaires were obtained with an effective response rate of 98.08%. This screening process ensured data quality by minimizing the impact of casual responses, thereby allowing subsequent statistical analyses to accurately reflect the real opinion of the respondents. The demographic characteristics of respondents are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic information of respondents

Sample	Category	Number	Percentage(%)
1. Gender	Male	243	52.94
	Female	216	47.06
2. Personal monthly living expenses	0-1000RMB	32	6.97
	1001~2000RMB	348	75.82
	2001~3000RMB	68	14.81
	3001~5000RMB	8	1.74
	above 5000RMB	3	0.65
3. Purchase frequency of cultural and creative products	Never	142	30.94
	Occasionally	302	65.8
	Always	15	3.27
Total		459	100

The gender distribution among respondents in this survey was relatively balanced, with males accounting for 52.94% and females 47.06%. Regarding monthly living expenses, the majority of respondents reported expenditures between 1001 to 2000 RMB, representing 75.82% of the total; those with expenditures ranging from 2001 to 3000 RMB accounted for 14.81%, while other expense categories account for a small proportion. Concerning the purchase frequency of local cultural and creative products, the data indicated that 65.8% of respondents made occasional purchases, 30.94% had never purchased such products, and only 3.27% frequently engaged in purchasing behavior. These findings suggest that although many consumers show interest in local cultural and creative products, there remains significant potential for increasing actual consumption behavior.

4.2. Analysis of reliability and validity

SPSS 26.0 software was employed to analyse the reliability of the data collected. Reliability of the questionnaire was measured by Cronbach's alpha, as presented in Table 2. The results for each construct ranged from 0.734 to 0.926, which is above the threshold of 0.7, indicating that the sample exhibited good reliability.

Table 2: Analysis of reliability

Construct	Items	Cronbach's α
PFV	3	0.734
PAV	3	0.922
PEV	3	0.864
PCV	3	0.906
PSV	3	0.865
PI	3	0.926
Tot.	18	0.886

For the validity test, the KMO value was 0.842 (>0.5) that shows the data were suitable for factor analysis. The chi-square value of the Bartlett's spherical test was 5298.278, with a significance probability of 0.000 (<0.1), indicating that there was a significant correlation between

the variables, which made it suitable for structured analysis. The results verified the high validity of the scale used in the study and provided a solid foundation for subsequent factor analysis.

Table 3: Analysis of validity

KMO measure of sampling adequacy		.842
Bartlett's spherical test	approximate χ^2	5298.278
	df	153
	p-value	.000

Additionally, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using AMOS 23.0 software. According to the results of factor loading analysis, all standardized factor loadings exceeded 0.6. Some specific items, such as "The visual design (color, shape) of local cultural and creative products is appealing" and "I believe purchasing local cultural and creative products enhances my knowledge and understanding of history and culture," exhibited particularly high loadings exceeding 0.9, indicating these items strongly represent latent variables such as perceived aesthetic value and perceived cultural value. To further assess the convergent validity of the scale, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) were calculated. As shown in Figure 3, all dimensions in this study achieved CR values greater than 0.7 and AVE values exceeding 0.5. This confirms that the measurement items effectively explain their respective latent variables and demonstrates strong consistency and stability among items within each dimension. As shown in Table 5, the results of the discriminant validity analysis show that the AVE square root values of the dimensions are greater than their correlation coefficients with the other variables, indicating that the dimensions were conceptually well differentiated and effective in measuring different latent variables.

Table 4: Convergent validity

Construct	Item	Factor Loadings	AVE	CR
PFV	PFV1	0.599	0.504	0.75
	PFV2	0.693		
	PFV3	0.821		
PAV	PAV1	0.892	0.797	0.922
	PAV2	0.897		
	PAV3	0.89		
PEV	PEV1	0.873	0.685	0.867
	PEV2	0.858		
	PEV3	0.747		
PCV	PCV1	0.837	0.767	0.908
	PCV2	0.927		
	PCV3	0.861		
PSV	PSV1	0.812	0.68	0.865
	PSV2	0.826		
	PSV3	0.836		
PI	PI1	0.918	0.812	0.928
	PI2	0.834		
	PI3	0.946		

Table 5: Correlation matrix and AVE

	PFV	PAV	PEV	PCV	PSV	PI
PFV	**0.71**					
PAV	0.362	**0.893**				
PEV	0.408	0.387	**0.828**			
PCV	0.252	0.374	0.36	**0.876**		
PSV	0.315	0.272	0.271	0.331	**0.825**	
PI	0.288	0.231	0.237	0.325	0.279	**0.901**

Note: The items on the diagonal on bold represent the square roots of the AVE.

4.3. Model and hypotheses testing

As shown in Table 6. (using AMOS 23.0 to test), the model fit test indicates a good fit for the structural equation model. The chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) was 1.803, substantially below the recommended threshold of 3, Suggesting a good simplicity of the model. Additionally, indices such as GFI, CFI, NFI, NNFI, and TLI exceeded the recommended standard of 0.9, further confirming the strong model fit and its ability to reasonably explain relationships among variables. Moreover, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) were 0.042 and 0.046 respectively, both below the acceptable threshold of 0.05, indicating minimal residuals and well-controlled model errors. Consequently, these results suggest that the structural equation model aligns well with the data distribution characteristics and effectively captures consumers' cognitive structures regarding local cultural and creative products.

Table 6: Main test indicators for model fitting

Common Indices	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	GFI	RMSEA	RMR	CFI	NFI	NNFI	TLI
Judgment criteria	-	-	<3	>0.9	<0.10	<0.05	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9	>0.9
Value	216.416	120	1.803	0.948	0.042	0.046	0.982	0.96	0.977	0.977

The results of the structural equation modeling and path coefficients are presented in Figure 2, while significance tests and hypothesis evaluations are shown in Table 7. Typically, a p-value less than 0.05 indicates significant results. Consequently, perceived aesthetic value and perceived emotional value did not significantly affect purchase intention; hypotheses H2 and H3 were not supported. Meanwhile, perceived functional value, perceived cultural value and perceived social value demonstrated significant positive impacts on purchase intention, supporting hypotheses H1, H4 and H5. Among these, perceived cultural value exerted the greatest influence (0.35), followed by perceived functional value (0.33) and perceived social value (0.31).
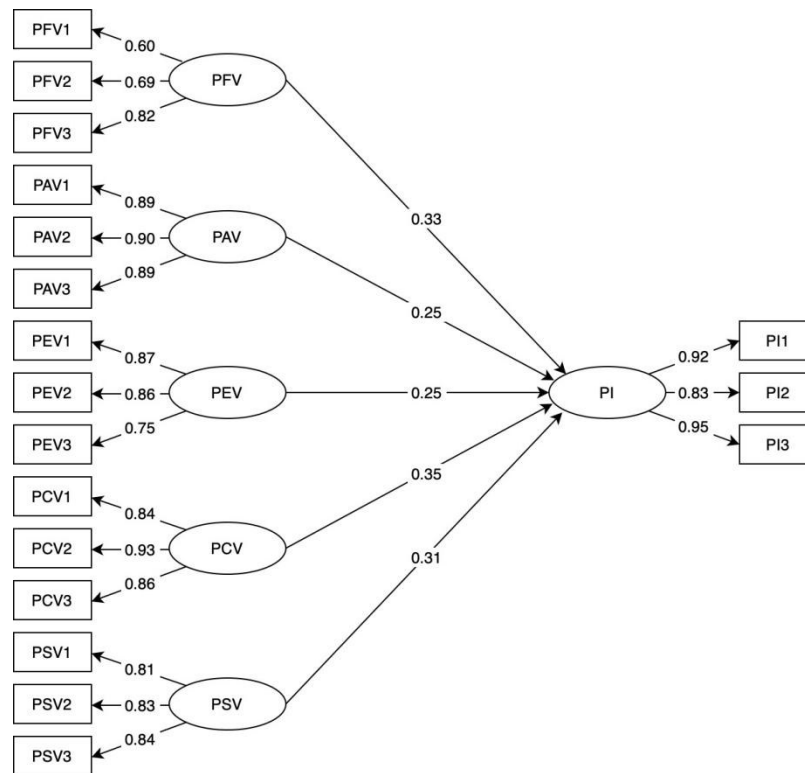
Figure 2: Structural equation model

Table 7: Significance test and hypothesis test results

X	→	Y	Unstd.	S.E.	z (CR)	p-value	Std.	Result
PDV	→	PI	0.306	0.104	2.94	0.003	0.19	significant
PAC	→	PI	0.041	0.062	0.66	0.509	0.037	insignificant
PEV	→	PI	0.02	0.062	0.333	0.739	0.02	insignificant
PCV	→	PI	0.24	0.06	3.978	<0.001	0.221	significant
PSV	→	PI	0.156	0.063	2.465	0.014	0.137	significant

4.4. Statistical data on other issues

In the third section of the questionnaire, respondents provided data regarding their acceptable price ranges and preferred channels for acquiring information and purchasing cultural and creative products. Additionally, respondents offered suggestions for local cultural and creative product development through an open-ended question.

As presented in Figure 3, the majority (51.4%) of university student respondents indicated an acceptable price range of under 50 RMB for cultural and creative products, followed by 51–100 RMB and 101–500 RMB, accounting for 36.2% and 10.5% respectively. Only a tiny proportion of respondents were willing to purchase products priced above 500 RMB.
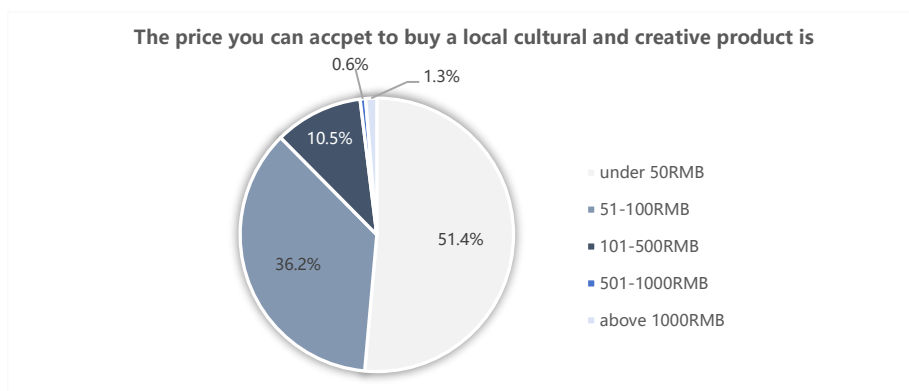
Figure 3: Respondents' acceptable price ranges for local cultural and creative products

According to Figure 4, regarding the channels for obtaining information and purchasing cultural and creative products, 86.93% of respondents preferred purchasing at tourist attractions, while 71.46% chose cultural and creative districts or boutique shops. Other channels such as commercial streets and museums were also popular, whereas online purchasing was the least favored option, accounting for approximately 51.63%. These results suggest a lack of diverse channels for consumers to learn about cultural and creative products. The consumption behavior is predominantly linked to tourism activities, indicating a tendency toward impulse purchases.
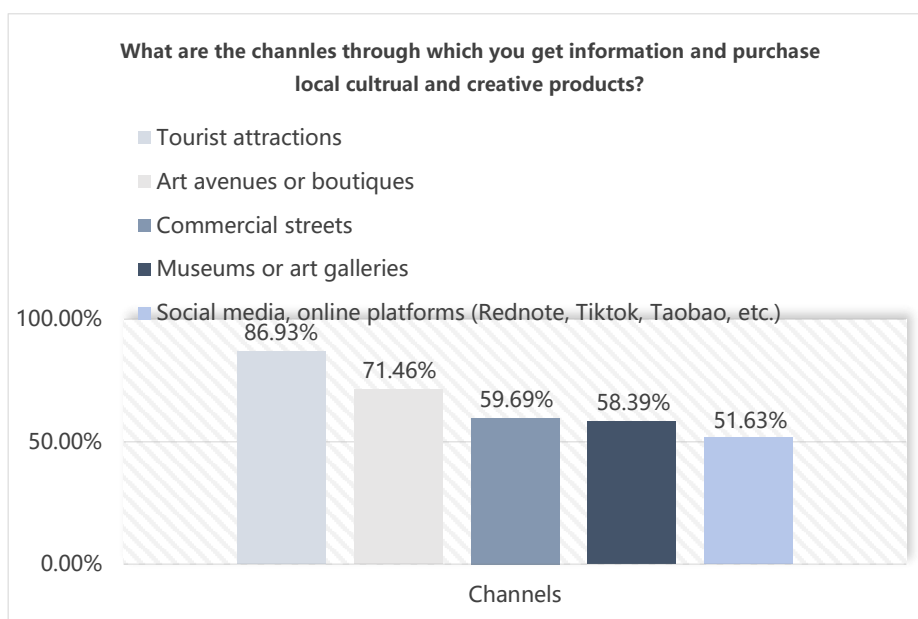

Figure 4: Main channels for obtaining information and purchasing local cultural and creative products

Finally, an optional open-ended question was included to gather respondents' suggestions for the development of local cultural and creative products in Huzhou. As shown in Figure 5, the keyword-based word cloud analysis revealed that the majority of suggestions highlighted the importance of regional uniqueness and cultural significance in product design, followed closely by considerations of price, quality, and practicality. Additional suggestions included enhancing innovation, experiential elements, diversifying product categories, leveraging social media influencers, and engaging in IP collaborations. These findings align with the questionnaire's

statistical results, which indicated significant positive effects of perceived functionality, perceived cultural value ans perceived social value on purchase intention.

Figure 5: Word cloud of suggestions for local cultural and creative improvements

5.   Results and discussion

This study employed structural equation modeling (SEM) to explore the impact of various dimensions of young consumers' perceived value on their purchase intentions in regard of local cultural and creative products. The results indicated that perceived functional value, perceived cultural value and perceived social value had significant positive effects on purchase intentions of the young generation. Among these, perceived cultural value exhibited the strongest influence, demonstrating that young consumers particularly value the cultural significance and uniqueness of the products. These findings highlight the importance of embedding regional characteristics and cultural identity into product design to enhance consumer attraction. Secondly, young consumers exhibit significant concern regarding the perceived functional quality of local cultural and creative products. Factors such as product quality, practicality, and specific symbolic meanings considerably influence their purchasing decisions. Additionally, perceived social value significantly impacts purchase intentions and sharing behaviors by influencing their consumption motivations. The social attributes of cultural and creative products are reflected not only in their role as gifts to maintain interpersonal relationships but also in their ability to express social identities, support group cultures and facilitate the construction of distinctive socio-cultural spaces among young people.

However, perceived aesthetic value and perceived emotional value did not exhibit significant influences on purchase intentions. Although this outcome might initially appear unexpected, it can be explained logically. External aesthetic factors such as design and innovation are inherently subjective and challenging to standardize; additionally, original designer products are possible to encounter consumer resistance due to higher pricing. Perceived emotional value, on the other hand, is closely related to consumer involvement.[19] College student consumers usually have limited understanding with the local customs and distinctive cultural characteristics of tourism destinations, making it difficult for them to derive consistent emotional value and achieve emotional resonance with these products.

Further insights from open-ended questions emphasized the necessity for distinct regional identity and cultural connotations, suggesting that product differentiation through cultural uniqueness is essential. Moreover, the respondents exhibited strong preferences for moderate pricing which is below 100 RMB and indicated that purchases predominantly occur in tourism-related locations, reflecting impulsive buying tendencies linked to tourism activities. These

insights suggest that creating channels for better consumer education and product awareness could foster deeper consumer engagement and stimulate more consistent purchasing behaviors.

6. Conclusions and suggestions

Based on the research findings, this study concludes that contemporary college students' purchase intentions toward cultural and creative products are significantly influenced by perceived cultural value, perceived functional value, and perceived social value. Additionally, college students exhibit high price sensitivity regarding these products, generally possessing a lower expected price range, and their purchasing behaviors are commonly associated with travel activities. To effectively enhance market performance and consumer satisfaction, the following strategic recommendations are proposed:

6.1. Cultural exploration and identity-based consumption needs

Research findings indicate that the younger generation demonstrates strong consumer demand for cultural exploration and the acquisition of cultural knowledge, which have become significant motivations for cultural consumption. Additionally, integrating cultural uniqueness and differentiation with contemporary aesthetics and emotional resonance emerges as a promising area for research and market development. Taking Huzhou as an example, product development should prioritize distinctive Jiangnan cultural attributes, utilizing local heritage symbols (e.g., Feiying Tower, Nanxun Ancient Town) and traditional cultural elements (such as tea culture, silk production, and Lake Brush culture) to create meaningful connections with consumers.

6.2. Functional value expectations driven by technological innovation in new cultural and creative products

Within perceived functional value, not only are product craftsmanship and quality repeatedly emphasized by younger consumers, but practical utility has also been of increasing concern. The younger generation expects cultural and creative products to integrate traditional culture seamlessly into modern lifestyles and to be able to used in daily life. According to the report from iiMedia Research 2024, consumer preferences in China for cultural and creative products have shifted from decorative crafts toward categories such as food and beverages, apparel, home&office products. Moreover, advancements in technologies such as digital twins, laser scanning, and 3D printing provide greater opportunities for diversification in cultural and creative product development.

6.3. Social attributes driven by personal identity and community influence

Expressing individuality, asserting self-value and engaging in social interactions significantly contribute to perceived social value, directly influencing purchasing and sharing behaviors. Enhancing the social attributes of cultural and creative products as ideal gifts through precise brand positioning and targeted marketing strategies can highlight community-specific cultural characteristics. Cultural and creative brands can actively leverage social media platforms, influencer collaborations and community events to foster social value, encouraging consumer interaction, community-building and improved brand visibility.

6.4. Meeting price expectations and diversifying marketing channels

Distinct price expectations emerge across consumer segments, influenced by product categories and perceived value priorities, thus forming so-called "mental accounting" scenarios.[31] To address the diverse consumption needs across age groups, cultural and creative products should offer clearly

defined and strategically diverse price ranges and product categories tailored to varying consumer affordability and preferences. For example, providing a sense of interactive and immersial experience, (DIY products, blind boxes) can reduce younger consumers' price sensitivity by adding additional emotional values. Simultaneously, cultural and creative brands should broaden traditional purchasing channels by integrating online promotions with offline experiential marketing, thus reducing the barriers for consumers to access product information, enhancing consumer engagement, and stimulating purchase intentions.

Although this study has generated some valuable insights, several limitations still remain. Firstly, the empirical analysis primarily involved participants from a single institution, potentially limiting the representativeness and generalizability of the findings. Future studies could benefit from expanding the demographic scope and age diversity of respondents to build a more universally applicable model of perceived value and its influence on consumer purchase intentions. Secondly, perceived customer value is inherently complex and multidimensional. Incorporating additional measurement indicators, such as levels personal involvement, could further enrich the theoretical framework by explaining huge differences in perceived value among consumers. Lastly, this study did not comprehensively explore the potential impact of different product types and consumption contexts due to scope constraints. Subsequent research is encouraged to undertake comparative analyses across diverse scenarios to further refine theoretical and practical understandings of consumer demand for local cultural and creative products.

Acknowledgement

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