

Exploring Consumers' Purchase Intention toward Intangible Cultural Heritage Creative Products Based on Perceived Value Theory — Taking Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger as an Example

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Abstract. Niejiacun Clay Whistle Tiger from Gaomi, Shandong, is a vital representative of traditional Chinese folk art. With strong folk culture reflected in its unique shape, color and structure, it was inscribed on the first national-level intangible cultural heritage list in 2006. This study takes Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products as the research object and adopts perceived value theory as the analytical framework. This theory holds that consumers perceived comprehensive value of products exerts a significant impact on their purchase intention during consumption decision-making. This study constructs a research model from four dimensions: design aesthetics, emotional design, cultural experience and functional experience, and introduces perceived value as a mediating variable to analyze its role in consumers' purchase decisions. Data were collected from 300 Chinese consumers via an online questionnaire measured with a 7-point Likert scale, and analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. The results show that emotional design, cultural experience and functional experience all have significant positive effects on consumers' purchase intention, while design aesthetics shows no significant effect. Meanwhile, perceived value plays a significant mediating role between the relevant variables and purchase intention. The findings enrich the application of perceived value theory in the research of creative product consumption, and provide practical references for the design, development and marketing of intangible cultural heritage creative products.

Keywords: Perceived Value Theory, Purchase Intention, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger.

1. Introduction

Against the background of the continuous development of the global cultural industry, the cultural and creative industry has gradually become an important force driving cultural communication and cultural economic growth. With the rising demand for cultural consumption, how to activate traditional cultural resources through design innovation and market-oriented transformation has become a key topic in cultural industry research. Cultural and creative products can not only transform traditional cultural symbols into modern consumer goods, but also enhance consumers' sense of identity and participation in traditional culture by conveying cultural and emotional values (Liu & Zhao, 2024; Xu, 2023). In this context, China has put forward the concept of "creative transformation and innovative development" of excellent traditional Chinese culture, emphasizing that traditional cultural resources should be revitalized in contemporary society through design innovation and industrial development.

In the cultural and creative industry system, intangible cultural heritage (ICH), as an important part of traditional culture, has gradually become a key resource for creative product design. In recent years, scholars have widely acknowledged that the development of creative products and the redesign of cultural symbols can promote the market-oriented transformation of traditional cultural resources, achieving the dual goals of cultural inheritance and economic development (Su, Albakry, & Mat Salleh, 2024). Meanwhile, as the cultural consumption market expands, consumers' demand for cultural products has gradually shifted from single functional demand to integrated demand for cultural experience and emotional value, which provides new development opportunities for the innovative design of traditional cultural elements (Han, Tan, & Tan, 2025).

Among various ICH resources, the Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger is one of the important representatives of traditional Chinese folk clay sculpture art. It usually has a square head, short body, and thick shape, with an exaggerated and vivid image and bright colors, showing a distinct folk art style (Yang, 2020). As a traditional folk toy, the Clay Whistle Tiger not only has entertainment functions, but also carries cultural implications such as praying for blessings and exorcising evil spirits. In recent years, with the development of the cultural and creative industry, the Clay Whistle Tiger has gradually shifted from a traditional folk toy to a design resource for cultural and creative products. Its shape symbols, color style and cultural implications provide rich cultural elements for modern creative product design.

However, the inheritance and marketization of the Clay Whistle Tiger still face multiple challenges in the development of ICH creative products. On the one hand, some creative products lack sufficient design innovation and are disconnected from contemporary aesthetic trends and consumption scenarios, which reduces their acceptance among young consumers. On the other hand, although some regions have begun to integrate traditional cultural elements into creative product design in recent years, creative products generally still suffer from insufficient innovation and serious homogenization, which has become a common problem in the current development of the cultural and creative industry (Zhang, 2025). Therefore, exploring the key factors influencing consumers' purchase behavior of ICH creative products from the consumer perspective is of great significance for promoting the effective transformation of traditional cultural resources.

In the field of consumer behavior research, Perceived Value Theory is widely used to explain consumers' comprehensive value judgments of products or services. This theory argues that consumers comprehensively evaluate the benefits and costs brought by products during purchase decision-making, thus forming an overall perceived value (Zeithaml, 1988). In the research of cultural and creative products, scholars have gradually applied perceived value theory to the study of cultural consumption behavior. Since creative products not only have practical attributes, but also carry cultural symbolic meanings and emotional experience values, consumers often pay more attention to the cultural and emotional values contained in products when purchasing creative products (Li & Li, 2022). Relevant studies show that consumers' perceived value greatly affects their purchase attitude and intention, and plays an important mediating role between product attributes and consumer behavior (Shang et al., 2025; Kleijnen et al., 2007).

Although existing studies have begun to focus on creative product consumption behavior, current research on ICH creative products mainly focuses on design strategies or cultural communication, and empirical research on the formation mechanism of consumers' perceived value is still limited. Especially, there is a lack of systematic empirical analysis on the relationship between consumers' perceived value and purchase intention.

Based on the above background, this paper takes Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger creative products as the research object, constructs a research model under the framework of perceived value theory, collects consumer data through an online questionnaire, and conducts empirical analysis using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to explore the key factors affecting consumers' purchase intention. Specifically, this paper attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What factors influence consumers' perceived value of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger creative products?
2. Does consumers' perceived value further affect their purchase intention?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger

The Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger is mainly produced in Niejiacun Area, Jiangzhuang Town, Gaomi City, Weifang City, Shandong Province. As an important representative of traditional Chinese folk clay sculpture art, it has a long history and rich folk cultural connotations. It has an exaggerated and vivid shape, bright colors, and a sound-producing function through an internal whistle structure. In

traditional society, it was not only a children's toy, but also carried cultural implications such as praying for blessings and exorcising evil spirits. As one of the most representative works of Niejiacun clay sculpture, the Clay Whistle Tiger has a history of more than 400 years. It has gradually formed a unique production process and artistic style in its long-term development, and has become an important physical material for studying Shandong folk art and regional culture (Yang, S., 2020). As a National Intangible Cultural Heritage, the cultural and creative market of the Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger has formed a preliminary scale after transformation and exploration under the guidance of the "creative transformation and innovative development" policy, showing a development trend of "breaking through innovation with prominent potential but still having shortcomings".

2.2. Perceived Value Theory

In the field of consumer behavior research, Perceived Value Theory is widely applied to explain consumers' purchase decision-making process. Perceived value is usually defined as consumers' subjective evaluation of the overall utility of a product after weighing the benefits and costs of the product. Valarie A. Zeithaml pointed out in her classic study: "the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (Zeithaml, V. A., 1988). In the context of cultural and creative product consumption, products not only have functional attributes, but also carry cultural symbols and emotional meanings. Therefore, consumers often pay attention to both cultural value and emotional experience when evaluating creative products (Li & Li, 2022).

Furthermore, the consumption value theory proposed by Sheth et al. (1991) states that consumers' decision-making behavior is jointly influenced by multiple value dimensions, including functional value and emotional value. When consumers perceive high value in multiple dimensions, their purchase intention tends to increase. Therefore, in the research of ICH creative products, scholars usually analyze consumers' value cognition from the perspectives of product design and consumption experience. Based on this, this paper discusses the important factors affecting consumers' perceived value of the Clay Whistle Tiger from four aspects: design aesthetics, emotional design, cultural experience and functional experience.

2.3. Value Dimensions of the Clay Whistle Tiger

2.3.1. Design Aesthetics

Design aesthetics refers to consumers' aesthetic perception and evaluation of the visual appearance, shape structure and overall artistic design of a product during contact or use. Existing studies point out that the aesthetic characteristics of a product can affect consumers' emotional reactions and value judgments through visual perception, thus playing an important role in consumption experience. The visual appearance and artistic design of a product significantly influence consumers' evaluation of the product. Research shows that high-level design aesthetics can attract consumers' attention and trigger positive emotional reactions, thereby improving the perceived value and purchase intention of the product. Experimental studies find that products with high design aesthetics obtain higher purchase intention and arouse more positive emotional experiences than those with low design aesthetics (Li, Y., & Li, H., 2022). In addition, studies on creative products indicate that design aesthetics can further affect purchase intention by improving consumers' perceived value, and plays an important role in the context of cultural consumption (Guo, Y., Hou, G., & Li, Y., 2021).

2.3.2. Emotional Design

Emotional experience is regarded as an important mechanism to improve consumers' product evaluation. Emotional design emphasizes stimulating consumers' emotions through product form, color, symbols and interactive experience, so as to enhance the emotional connection between consumers and products. In the consumption decision-making process, positive emotional experience can strengthen consumers' perceived value of products and promote purchase behavior. In the research of creative products, emotional attributes are considered an important dimension affecting

consumers' perceived value and further influencing purchase intention. Relevant studies show that cultural and emotional attributes can significantly improve consumers' perceived value and further promote purchase intention through behavioral attitude (Norman, D. A., 2004).

2.3.3. Cultural Experience

Cultural experience refers to the cognitive and emotional feelings that consumers obtain through the cultural symbols, stories and connotations carried by products during contact and use. Relevant studies show that cultural and creative products can stimulate consumers' understanding and emotional resonance of cultural significance through the expression of cultural symbols and images, thereby enhancing cultural identity (Valarie A. Zeithaml, 1988). When products integrate traditional cultural symbols or stories, consumers are more likely to generate cultural identity and improve their perceived value and purchase intention of the product. Relevant studies taking cultural and creative products as research objects find through structural equation modeling that cultural attributes, symbolic meanings and cultural values can significantly affect consumers' purchase decisions (Shang, C., Zhang, A., Xue, Y., An, G., & Liu, W., 2025). Therefore, cultural experience is generally regarded as an important factor influencing consumers' purchase behavior in the research of cultural and creative products.

2.3.4. Functional Experience

The functionality and practicality of products are still important dimensions for consumers to evaluate product value. Consumers usually evaluate product value based on product quality, performance and ease of use. Relevant studies point out that the functional attributes of a product can directly affect consumers' value judgment of the product and further influence purchase intention. Therefore, functional experience is considered an important part of perceived value.

2.4. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention refers to consumers' willingness to engage in purchase behavior, and is widely used as an indicator to predict actual market behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Existing studies show that perceived value and product attributes have significant impacts on consumers' purchase intention (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). In the field of cultural and creative products, consumers' perceived value is particularly important, because such products not only contain functional features, but also contain cultural connotations and emotional values.

3. Research Hypothesis

Based on consumer behavior theory and perceived value theory, this study constructs a research model of consumers' purchase intention toward Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger creative products. Relevant studies show that product design features and consumption experience affect consumers' overall value evaluation of products and further influence their purchase decisions (Shi et al., 2021; Li & Li, 2022).

Combined with the consumption characteristics of creative products, this paper selects design aesthetics, emotional design, cultural experience and functional experience as the main influencing factors. Among them, design aesthetics reflects the visual aesthetic value of the product, emotional design emphasizes the emotional resonance brought by the product, cultural experience reflects the cultural connotation carried by the product, and functional experience reflects the practicality and usage feeling of the product. Meanwhile, perceived value is introduced as a mediating variable, and purchase intention as the outcome variable, so as to construct a research model of the relationships between relevant variables and explore the influencing mechanism of consumers' purchase intention toward Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger creative products.

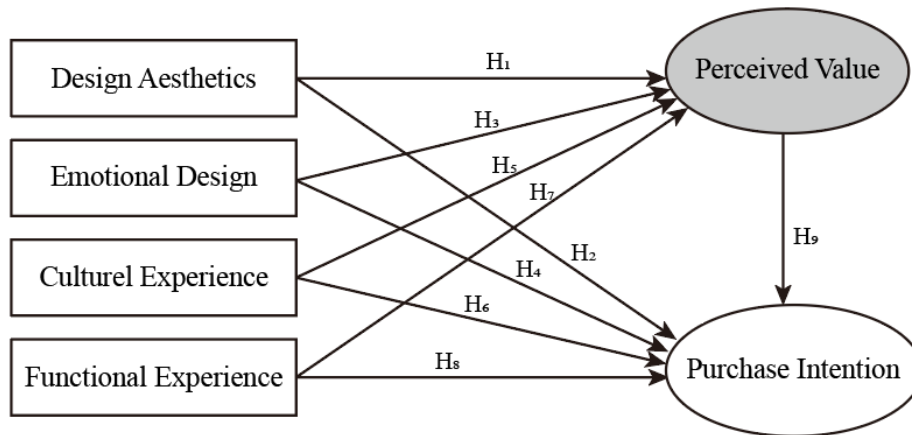


Figure 1. Theoretical Model of Factors Influencing Consumers' Purchase Intention toward Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger Series Creative Products

3.1. Effects of Design Aesthetics on Perceived Value and Purchase Intention

Design aesthetics refers to consumers' aesthetic perception and evaluation of the product's appearance, color matching, structural proportion and overall visual style when contacting the product. The appearance design of a product can not only attract consumers' attention, but also affect consumers' judgment of product value through visual experience. Research shows that consumers often quickly judge the overall aesthetic level of a product through visual cues when facing a product, and form a preliminary cognition of product quality and value accordingly. Aesthetic psychology research points out that people usually evaluate the aesthetic level of products through pattern recognition based on visual cues without fully identifying all details of the product (Berlyne, 1971). In addition, the aesthetic design of a product can enhance the perceived value of the product by improving consumers' emotional experience and cognitive evaluation (Guo et al., 2021). Relevant studies further point out that in the context of cultural and creative product consumption, design aesthetics can significantly affect consumers' perceived value and further influence purchase intention through value perception (Li & Li, 2022).

Product design aesthetics is also considered an important factor affecting consumers' purchase decisions. Recent studies also note: the buying intent ratio was significantly higher for the high-design-aesthetic products than for the low-design-aesthetic products (Zhao, 2025; Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2008). In the context of cultural and creative product consumption, products with high design aesthetics are more likely to attract consumers to purchase. Based on the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Design aesthetics of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products positively affects consumers' perceived value.

H2: Design aesthetics of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products positively affects consumers' purchase intention.

3.2. Effects of Emotional Design on Perceived Value and Purchase Intention

Emotional design is a design method that stimulates consumers' emotional reactions through design elements (such as form, color, symbols or interactive experience), so as to enhance the emotional connection between consumers and products. Emotional experience plays an important role in consumers' decision-making process, and positive emotional reactions can significantly improve consumers' evaluation of products. Norman (2004) points out that product design can affect users' emotional experience through three levels: visceral, behavioral and reflective, thus changing consumers' perception of product value. Relevant studies show that emotional attributes are an important factor affecting consumers' perceived value, and products can improve consumers' overall value judgment of products through emotional experience (Shang et al., 2025).

Emotional experience has also been proven to significantly affect consumers' purchase behavior. When a product can arouse consumers' positive emotions or emotional resonance, consumers are more likely to generate purchase intention. Therefore, in the context of cultural and creative product consumption, emotional design can effectively promote consumers' purchase behavior. Based on the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H3: Emotional design in Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products positively affects consumers' perceived value.

H4: Emotional design in Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products positively affects consumers' purchase intention.

3.3. Effects of Cultural Experience on Perceived Value and Purchase Intention

Cultural experience refers to the cognitive and emotional experience that consumers generate through the cultural symbols, stories and connotations conveyed by products during contact or use. Research shows that cultural elements can enhance consumers' cultural identity with products and improve the perceived value of products (Xu, 2023). In addition, in the research of cultural tourism and cultural and creative product consumption, cultural symbolic meaning is considered an important factor affecting consumers' purchase decisions. Products with cultural connotations can strengthen consumers' cultural identity, thereby improving their value evaluation (Kim & Hall, 2020).

Cultural experience can also significantly affect consumers' purchase intention. Studies have proved that when a product can reflect local culture or cultural symbols, consumers are more likely to generate cultural identity and emotional resonance, thereby improving purchase intention (Yu et al., 2022). Based on the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H5: Cultural experience in Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products positively affects consumers' perceived value.

H6: Cultural experience in Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products positively affects consumers' purchase intention.

3.4. Effects of Functional Experience on Perceived Value and Purchase Intention

Functional experience refers to the overall experience that consumers form regarding the practicality, quality performance, ease of use and functional satisfaction of a product during use. Although cultural and creative products usually have strong cultural and artistic attributes, the functionality of products is still an important factor for consumers to evaluate product value. Research shows that the functional value of a product can significantly affect consumers' perceived value and is an important dimension of consumers' value evaluation (Zeithaml, 1988). In addition, consumption value theory also points out that the functional attributes of a product are one of the important bases for consumers' decision-making (Sheth et al., 1991).

In cultural and creative products, durability, ease of use and exquisite craftsmanship can enhance perceived value and further promote positive purchase attitudes (Mutsikiwa & Marumbwa, 2013). When a product can meet consumers' actual use needs, consumers are more likely to generate purchase behavior. Therefore, in the context of cultural and creative product consumption, good functional experience can significantly improve consumers' purchase intention. Based on the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H7: Functional experience in Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products positively affects consumers' perceived value.

H8: Functional experience in Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products positively affects consumers' purchase intention.

3.5. Effect of Perceived Value on Purchase Intention

Purchase intention reflects consumers' willingness to engage in purchase behavior and is usually used to predict actual market behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Previous studies show that perceived value and

product attributes have significant impacts on consumers' purchase intention (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991).

In consumer behavior research, consumers' perceived value is widely regarded as a key determinant of purchase intention. Perceived value refers to consumers' overall evaluation of the benefits obtained from a product relative to the costs paid during the purchase process (Zeithaml, 1988). When consumers perceive that a product provides higher value in terms of quality, emotional satisfaction, cultural significance or functional practicality, they are more likely to form a positive attitude toward the product and show stronger purchase intention. Previous studies consistently show that perceived value plays an important role in influencing consumers' decision-making and behavioral intention (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991). In the context of cultural and creative products, perceived value often goes beyond functional benefits and includes symbolic, cultural experience and emotional dimensions, which further enhance consumers' purchase motivation (Han, Tan, & Tan, 2025). Based on the above discussion, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H9: Consumers' perceived value of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products positively affects purchase intention.

4. Methodology

4.1. Variable Measurement

The scales of this study mainly include six latent variables: design aesthetics, emotional design, cultural experience, functional experience, perceived value and purchase intention. Among them, the design aesthetics scale measures the appearance design and visual aesthetic feeling of the product; the emotional design scale measures the emotional resonance of the product to consumers; the cultural experience scale mainly measures consumers' perception of cultural connotation during the consumption of creative products; the functional experience scale evaluates the functional performance of the product in actual use; the perceived value scale measures consumers' evaluation of the overall value of creative products; the purchase intention scale measures the degree of consumers' willingness to purchase the product in the future.

The measurement items of this study are derived from previous literature and adapted according to the specific characteristics of the Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products. Design aesthetics (DA) mainly quotes 2 items of the sensory experience (SE) dimension in the scale of Wang et al. (2025), and the rest refer to items in the scale of Yu et al. (2022). Emotional design (EE) mainly quotes 2 items of the emotional experience (EE) dimension in the scale of Liu and Zhao (2024), and the rest refer to items in the scale of Zong et al. (2023). Cultural experience mainly quotes 2 items of the sensory experience (CE) dimension in the scale of Shang et al. (2025), and the rest refer to items in the scale of Liu and Zhao (2024). Functional experience mainly quotes items in the scales of Shang et al. (2025) and Liu and Zhao (2024). Perceived value mainly quotes 2 items of the perceived value (PV) dimension in the scale of Ye and Yu (2024), and the rest refer to items in the scale of Shang et al. (2025). Purchase intention mainly quotes 2 items of the purchase intention (PI) dimension in the scale of Li et al. (2020), and the rest refer to items in the scale of Shang et al. (2025).

The questionnaire adopts a 7-point Likert scale, where "1" means strongly disagree and "7" means strongly agree. Since the respondents of this study are all Chinese consumers, forward-backward translation was used to translate the questionnaire items during the scale design to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the scale content. First, a professional Chinese-English bilingual translator translated the items in the original English scale into Chinese; then, another Chinese-English bilingual translator who did not participate in the preliminary translation and did not know the original scale translated the Chinese version back into English. By comparing the back-translation results with the original English scale, items with differences or ambiguities were repeatedly discussed and revised, and finally a Chinese questionnaire scale with consistent semantics and clear expression was formed to ensure the equivalence and reliability of the scale in cross-language situations.

Table 1. Measurement Items of Variables for Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger Series Creative Products

Construct	Item	Describe	Resource
Design Aesthetics	DA1	I believe the proportions of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products are coordinated.	Yu et al. (2022) Wang et al. (2024)
	DA2	I think Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products have a strong sense of design.	
	DA3	I find the appearance of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products aesthetically pleasing.	
	DA4	I hold that the overall color matching of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products is harmonious.	
Emotional Design	EE1	This series of creative products evokes positive emotions in me.	Zong et al. (2023) Liu and Zhao (2024) Wang et al. (2024)
	EE2	This series of creative products can spark my curiosity about intangible cultural heritage.	
	EE3	I grow fonder of this series due to its value orientation of respecting intangible cultural heritage.	
	EE4	Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products carry unique cultural connotations.	
Culturel Experience	CE1	Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products carry unique cultural connotations.	Tu et ai. (2019) Shang et al. (2025) Liu and Zhao (2024)
	CE2	I can identify the intangible cultural heritage elements reflected in Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products.	
	CE3	Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products can leave a deep impression on me.	
	CE4	The regional cultural characteristics and cultural stories contained in this series are of great significance to me.	
	CE5	This series of creative products helps me gain a deeper understanding of the features and relevant content of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger as an intangible cultural heritage.	
Function Experience	FE1	I think the functions of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products are clear.	Shang et al. (2025) Liu and Zhao (2024)
	FE2	I hold that Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products have certain practicality.	
	FE3	I believe Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products can meet my needs.	
Perceived Value	PV1	I think the cost-performance ratio of this series of creative products is high.	Wang et al. (2024) Ye and Yu (2024) Liu and Zhao (2024)
	PV2	I hold that this series of creative products fully meets my needs and expectations.	
	PV3	This series of creative products can deepen my understanding of intangible cultural heritage.	
	PV4	I think it is worthwhile to purchase this series of creative products in terms of the energy and time invested.	
Purchase Intension	PI1	I will consider purchasing this series of creative products.	Li et al. (2021) Shang et al. (2025)
	PI2	I will buy similar creative products that I like.	
	PI3	I will purchase this series of creative products if someone recommends them to me.	
	PI4	I will recommend this series of creative products to my friends.	

4.2. Data Collection

The respondents of this study are consumers with the ability to consume creative products. This study adopts an internet-based questionnaire survey to design and distribute the questionnaire. The online questionnaire was mainly released through online platforms such as Tencent Questionnaire and spread through social media.

To ensure the scientificity and feasibility of the questionnaire design, this study first conducted a questionnaire pre-test before the formal survey. The data analysis results show that the Cronbach's coefficient is >0.7 , indicating that the questionnaire data have high reliability. The pre-test randomly selected some respondents to fill in the questionnaire, and evaluated the clarity, difficulty of understanding and logical structure of the questionnaire items. The pre-test can identify potential problems and make necessary modifications and improvements to the questionnaire.

A total of 300 questionnaires were recovered in this study. To ensure data quality, the recovered questionnaires were screened to eliminate incomplete, obviously invalid and duplicate responses. Finally, 217 valid questionnaire data were obtained, with a recovery rate of 72.3%, which were used for subsequent statistical analysis.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Sample Characteristics

Construct	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	103	47.47
	Female	114	52.53
Age	Under 18 years old	3	1.38
	18–24 years old	48	22.12
	25–30 years old	79	36.41
	31–40 years old	63	29.03
	41–50 years old	17	7.83
	51–60 years old	6	2.76
	Over 61 years old	1	0.46
Education Level	Junior high school or below	2	0.92
	Senior high school/Technical secondary school	8	3.69
	Junior college	32	14.75
	Bachelor's degree	153	70.51
	Master's degree or above	22	10.14

This paper conducted a statistical analysis of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as gender, age and education level, to understand the basic situation of the sample. The sample statistics are shown in Table 2.

In terms of gender distribution, 103 were male (47.47%) and 114 were female (52.53%). Overall, the gender ratio is relatively balanced, with a slightly higher proportion of females.

In terms of age structure, the sample is mainly concentrated in young and middle-aged groups. The largest group is 25–30 years old (36.41%), followed by 31–40 years old (29.03%) and 18–24 years old (22.12%). The proportion of groups over 41 years old is relatively small. Overall, the sample of this study is mainly young consumers aged 18–40, who are usually the main consumer group of creative products, so the sample structure is representative to a certain extent.

In terms of education distribution, the overall education level of the respondents is high. The largest group is bachelor's degree (70.51%), followed by master's degree or above (10.14%), junior college degree (14.75%), senior high school or technical secondary school (3.69%), and junior high school or below (0.92%). Overall, the sample of this survey is mainly groups with bachelor's degree or above, indicating that the respondents have high overall education level and relatively strong cognitive and consumption ability for cultural and creative products.

In summary, the sample of this study is relatively balanced in gender structure, mainly young groups in age structure, and high in overall education level, which can reflect the basic characteristics of creative product consumer groups to a certain extent.

5. Results

5.1. Measurement Model Testing

To test the reliability and convergent validity of the questionnaire scale, this paper analyzed the measurement model using SmartPLS4, and evaluated it through indicators such as Cronbach's α coefficient, composite reliability and average variance extracted.

The analysis results show that the Cronbach's α coefficients of each latent variable range from 0.743 to 0.867, all higher than 0.7. A Cronbach's α coefficient of 0.7 or above is usually considered an acceptable reliability level for the scale (Nunnally, 1978; Hair et al., 2007). Meanwhile, the composite reliability of each latent variable meets the recommended standard, indicating that the scale has good stability and reliability.

In addition, the average variance extracted of each latent variable is higher than 0.5, indicating that the latent variables can well explain the variance of their observed variables and have good convergent validity. Therefore, the measurement scale adopted in this study meets the basic requirements of structural equation modeling analysis in terms of reliability and convergent validity, and can be used for further data analysis.

Table 3. Reliability, Convergent Validity and External Factor Loadings

Construct	Item	Loading	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
CE	CE1	0.749	0.838	0.885	0.607
	CE2	0.791			
	CE3	0.789			
	CE4	0.757			
	CE5	0.809			
DA	DA1	0.781	0.777	0.855	0.595
	DA2	0.767			
	DA3	0.761			
	DA4	0.776			
ED	ED1	0.723	0.786	0.862	0.610
	ED2	0.798			
	ED3	0.809			
	ED4	0.790			
FE	FE1	0.727	0.743	0.852	0.658
	FE2	0.828			
	FE3	0.872			
PV	PV1	0.828	0.856	0.903	0.699
	PV2	0.845			
	PV3	0.796			
	PV4	0.873			
PI	PI1	0.879	0.867	0.909	0.716
	PI2	0.800			
	PI3	0.820			
	PI4	0.881			

To further test the discrimination degree between each latent variable, this paper conducted a discriminant validity test on the model. Discriminant validity is mainly evaluated through the correlation between latent variables.

The results show that although there is a certain degree of correlation between each latent variable, they still maintain good discrimination overall. In terms of variable relationships, the correlation coefficients between each latent variable are within a reasonable range, indicating that different constructs are both related and can reflect different research dimensions.

Overall, each latent variable in the research model has good discriminant validity, indicating that the measurement model structure is reasonable, and each latent variable can effectively distinguish different research concepts, providing a reliable basis for subsequent structural model analysis.

Table 4. Fornell–Larcker and HTMT

Construct	CE	DA	ED	FE	PI	PV
CE	0.779	0.750	0.839	0.692	0.761	0.897
DA	0.627	0.771	0.767	0.686	0.727	0.707
ED	0.683	0.611	0.781	0.788	0.816	0.830
FE	0.566	0.526	0.615	0.811	0.809	0.867
PI	0.653	0.617	0.676	0.665	0.846	0.888
PV	0.757	0.598	0.682	0.709	0.773	0.836

To further verify the quality of the measurement model, this paper tested the external factor loadings of each observed variable. The results show that the factor loadings of each observed variable on its corresponding latent variable meet the recommended standard, indicating that each measurement item can well reflect its corresponding latent variable.

From the specific dimensions, the measurement items of design aesthetics, emotional design, cultural experience, functional experience, perceived value and purchase intention all have high factor loadings, indicating that the scale has good measurement ability, and each measurement index can effectively reflect the characteristics of the corresponding latent variable. Therefore, the measurement model of this study has good measurement quality and can be used for subsequent structural model path analysis.

5.2. Structural Model Analysis

After completing the measurement model test, this paper used SmartPLS4 to test the structural model path through the Bootstrapping method to analyze the influence relationships between each latent variable.

The results are shown in Table 5. In the context of creative product consumption, different design dimensions have different degrees of influence on consumers' perceived value and purchase intention.

Cultural experience can significantly improve consumers' perceived value, indicating that when creative products can convey rich cultural connotations to consumers, they will enhance consumers' cognition of the overall value of the product. However, the direct impact of cultural experience on purchase intention is not significant, indicating that cultural experience acts on purchase behavior indirectly mainly by affecting consumers' value perception. Design aesthetics has a significant positive impact on purchase intention, indicating that creative products with good aesthetic design can better attract consumers and thus improve their purchase intention. But the impact of design aesthetics on perceived value is not significant. Emotional design has a significant positive impact on both perceived value and purchase intention, indicating that when creative products can arouse consumers' emotional resonance, they can not only improve their perceived value of the product, but also promote their purchase behavior. Functional experience also has a significant impact on perceived value and purchase intention, indicating that while creative products have cultural and artistic attributes, their functionality is still an important factor affecting consumers' evaluation of products.

In addition, perceived value has a significant positive impact on purchase intention, indicating that when consumers think creative products have high value, their purchase intention will increase accordingly.

Table 5. Path Analysis Results

	original sample (β)	P	Result
CE→PI	0.016	0.831	Not supported
CE->PV	0.425	0.000	Supported
DA->PI	0.156	0.010	Supported
DA->PV	0.063	0.267	Not supported
ED->PI	0.176	0.044	Supported
ED->PV	0.137	0.026	Supported
FE->PI	0.155	0.015	Supported
FE->PV	0.351	0.000	Supported
PV->PI	0.437	0.000	Supported

5.3. Mediating Effect Test of Perceived Value

To further test the mediating role of perceived value between each variable and consumers' purchase intention, this paper adopted the Bootstrapping method in the PLS structural equation model to test the indirect effect, and analyzed the influence of design aesthetics (DA), emotional design (ED), cultural experience (CE) and functional experience (FE) on purchase intention through perceived value.

The results show that cultural experience has a significant indirect impact on purchase intention through perceived value, with a path coefficient of $\beta=0.186$, $T=4.058$, $P=0.000$ ($P<0.001$), indicating that cultural experience can further enhance consumers' purchase intention by improving their perceived value. The indirect impact of emotional design on purchase intention through perceived value is $\beta=0.060$, $T=2.107$, $P=0.035$ ($P<0.05$), indicating that emotional design can promote purchase behavior by improving consumers' perceived overall value of the product. Functional experience has a significant indirect impact on purchase intention through perceived value, $\beta=0.153$, $T=4.595$, $P=0.000$ ($P<0.001$), indicating that the functionality and practicality of the product can further promote consumers' purchase decisions by improving perceived value.

In contrast, the indirect impact of design aesthetics on purchase intention through perceived value is $\beta=0.028$, $T=1.113$, $P=0.266$ ($P>0.05$), which is not significant, indicating that its mediating effect on purchase intention through perceived value is not significant.

Overall, perceived value plays a significant mediating role between cultural experience, emotional design, functional experience and purchase intention, while the mediating effect of design aesthetics is not supported. This indicates that in the context of cultural and creative product consumption, consumers' perception of product value is an important mechanism affecting their purchase decisions. Therefore, in the design and development of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger creative products, attention should be paid to improving the cultural connotation, emotional experience and functional experience of the product to improve consumers' perceived value and promote purchase intention.

Table 6. Results of Mediation Effect Test

	(β)	T (O/STDEV)	P	Result
ED -> PV -> PI	0.060	2.107	0.035	Supported
FE -> PV -> PI	0.153	4.595	0.000	Supported
CE -> PV -> PI	0.186	4.058	0.000	Supported
DA -> PV -> PI	0.028	1.113	0.266	Not supported

6. Discussion

Based on perceived value theory, this study constructs and empirically tests a relational model between design aesthetics, emotional design, cultural experience, functional experience, perceived value and purchase intention, to explore the mechanism of consumers' value cognition and purchase behavior in the context of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger creative product consumption. The results

partially support the research hypotheses and reveal the key paths of consumers' value perception and behavioral decision-making in the consumption of ICH creative products.

First, the results show that emotional design (ED), cultural experience (CE) and functional experience (FE) all have significant positive effects on perceived value (PV), supporting hypotheses H3, H5 and H7. This is basically consistent with existing studies. Consumers' value evaluation of products usually comes from multi-dimensional consumption values, including functional value, emotional value and cultural value (Sheth et al., 1991; Zeithaml, 1988). Among them, the emotional experience, cultural significance and functional attributes brought by products will significantly affect consumers' perception of the overall value of the product (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Liu & Zhao, 2024). Emotional design can improve the emotional value of products by stimulating consumers' emotional resonance (Yu et al., 2022); cultural experience enhances consumers' cultural identity by strengthening the expression of traditional cultural symbols and connotations, thereby improving the cultural value and symbolic significance of products (Liu & Zhao, 2024; Dong & Li, 2025); functional experience, as an important basic dimension of product value, its practicality and functionality are still important bases for consumers to evaluate value (Sheth et al., 1991; Zeithaml, 1988). This result indicates that the value composition of ICH creative products has multi-dimensional characteristics, including emotion, culture and function.

However, the direct impact of design aesthetics (DA) on perceived value (H1) is not supported. This result is different from some studies that believe design aesthetics can significantly improve perceived value (Li & Li, 2022). Relevant studies point out that the design aesthetics of a product can usually improve the perceived value of the product by affecting consumers' emotional reactions and evaluation processes. However, in the context of cultural and creative product consumption with obvious cultural symbol characteristics, consumers often form value judgments of products based on existing cultural cognition and symbolic significance (Sheth et al., 1991; Liu & Zhao, 2024). Therefore, in the context of this study, the Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger has a relatively stable and symbolic traditional visual form, and consumers may have formed a fixed aesthetic expectation, thus weakening the direct impact of design aesthetics on perceived value (Kim & Hall, 2020; Norman, 2004). Therefore, design aesthetics may play more of a "basic factor" rather than a key factor to directly improve value perception.

Second, in the paths directly affecting purchase intention, design aesthetics (H2), emotional design (H4) and functional experience (H8) all have significant positive effects on purchase intention. This indicates that the visual appeal, emotional expression and functional practicality of the product can directly stimulate consumers' purchase motivation. Among them, although design aesthetics does not significantly improve perceived value, its intuitive visual appeal can still directly promote consumers' purchase behavior (Bloch, 1995; Li & Li, 2022). In contrast, the direct impact of cultural experience on purchase intention (H6) is not significant, indicating that cultural factors often need to further affect purchase decisions through consumers' cognition and evaluation of product value (Sheth, Newman & Gross, 1991).

Third, the results show that perceived value has a significant positive impact on purchase intention (H9) and plays an important mediating role in the model. Mediating effect analysis further shows that perceived value plays a significant mediating role between emotional design, cultural experience, functional experience and purchase intention. This result further verifies the core role of perceived value in connecting product attributes and consumer behavior (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Liu & Zhao, 2024). Whether consumers finally generate purchase behavior largely depends on whether they think the product has sufficient value.

7. Conclusion

This study takes Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger series creative products as the research object, constructs a research model under the framework of perceived value theory, and explores the influencing mechanism of design aesthetics, emotional design, cultural experience and functional

experience on consumers' perceived value and purchase intention. Based on 217 valid questionnaire data, empirical analysis is conducted using PLS structural equation modeling. The results show that emotional design, cultural experience and functional experience can significantly improve consumers' perceived value, among which cultural experience and functional experience have more significant impacts, indicating that creative products are more likely to improve consumers' value evaluation when they can convey rich cultural connotations and meet actual use needs. Among the factors directly affecting purchase intention, design aesthetics, emotional design and functional experience all have significant positive effects. Among them, although design aesthetics fails to significantly improve consumers' perceived value, its visual appeal can still directly promote consumers' purchase intention. This indicates that in the process of cultural and creative product consumption, product appearance design plays an important role in attracting consumers' attention and stimulating purchase motivation (Bloch, 1995; Li & Li, 2022). Meanwhile, the direct impact of cultural experience on purchase intention is not significant, but acts indirectly through perceived value, indicating that cultural factors promote purchase behavior mainly by affecting consumers' value cognition (Sheth, Newman & Gross, 1991). In addition, perceived value has a significant positive impact on purchase intention and plays an important mediating role between emotional design, cultural experience, functional experience and purchase intention. Overall, in the context of ICH creative product consumption, consumers' purchase intention is not only directly affected by product design factors, but also mediated by perceived value, a psychological cognitive factor. This study provides an empirical basis for understanding consumers' value cognition and behavioral decision-making in the consumption of ICH creative products, and also provides a reference for the design, development and market promotion of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger creative products.

7.1. Theoretical Contributions

From a theoretical perspective, this study applies perceived value theory to the context of ICH creative product consumption, and explores its influencing mechanism on consumer behavior from multiple dimensions such as design, emotion, culture and function, thus enriching the theoretical perspective of creative product consumption behavior research. The results show that cultural experience indirectly affects purchase intention mainly through perceived value, while the influence path of design aesthetics on consumer behavior is relatively more direct.

7.2. Practical Implications

From a practical perspective, this study provides several implications for the design and development of Gaomi Clay Whistle Tiger creative products. First, the cultural expression and narrative of the product should be strengthened to improve consumers' perception of cultural value. Second, the emotional appeal of the product should be enhanced through emotional design to promote the emotional connection between consumers and the product. Meanwhile, attention should still be paid to the design of functionality and usage scenarios in the product design process to improve the actual use value of the product. In addition, on the basis of maintaining traditional cultural characteristics, design innovations in line with modern aesthetics can be appropriately integrated to enhance the market appeal of the product.

7.3. Research Limitations and Future Prospects

Although this study has achieved certain results, it still has some limitations. The research sample is mainly concentrated in young and highly educated groups, and future research can expand the sample scope to improve the universality of the research conclusions. In addition, this study uses cross-sectional data for analysis, and future research can further explore the dynamic relationship between perceived value and purchase intention through longitudinal research, and introduce variables such as cultural identity and product involvement to more deeply analyze the differences between different consumer groups.

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