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# The Impact of Perceived Design Elements on Young Adults' Purchase Intentions for Museum Cultural and Creative Products

Hong Ding[1], Mohd Fauzi Harun[*2]

[1,2]Faculty of Art,Sustainability and Creative Industry,Sultan Idris Education University, 35900 Tanjung Malim, Perak, [1]College of Art and Design,Bengbu University, 233030 Anhui Province, China

Email: 13085523000@163.com

Corresponding Author Email: fauziharun@fskik.upsi.edu.my

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**Abstract**

In recent years, museum cultural and creative products (MCCPs) have become an important medium for connecting cultural heritage with contemporary consumer markets. However, despite their growing popularity, many museums struggle to understand which design features most effectively drive young consumers' purchasing behavior. Addressing this gap, this study investigates how perceived design elements—functional design, color design, and shape design—affect young consumers' purchase behavior toward MCCPs. Drawing on the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB) and the Perceived Value (PERVAL) framework, a structured questionnaire was distributed to young adults in Anhui Province, China. Using stratified random sampling, 400 responses were collected, with 365 valid responses retained for analysis. Structural equation modeling (SEM) revealed that all three design elements significantly influence purchase intention, with perceived shape design exerting the strongest effect. Functional and color design also directly impact purchase decisions, while shape design affects purchase decisions indirectly through purchase intention. The findings underscore the mediating role of behavioral intention and highlight the dual influence of symbolic and practical design features. The study contributes to consumer behavior theory by extending the DTPB framework to the cultural consumption context and offers actionable insights for museums and designers aiming to enhance the market appeal of MCCPs.

**Keywords:** Perceived Design Elements, Museum Cultural and Creative Products, Purchase Intention, Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior, Young Consumers

## Introduction

The cultural and creative industries have become key drivers of cultural dissemination and economic development worldwide. Museums, as cultural institutions, now play a vital role in this ecosystem by transforming cultural heritage into tangible, marketable experiences through museum cultural and creative products (MCCPs). These products not only extend

visitors'experiences beyond exhibitions but also create new channels for cultural engagement and financial sustainability. Globally, MCCPs represent a growing intersection between culture, commerce, and creativity, transforming heritage into consumable experiences that promote cultural identity while supporting institutional growth (Gao & Ma, 2024; Han & Tan, 2025). In China, this trend reflects not only a broader cultural revival but also the increasing demand for products that blend historical heritage with modern design aesthetics (Li & Li, 2022).

Design has become a critical factor influencing consumer perception and purchase intention, serving as a bridge between cultural value and market appeal. Studies across different countries have demonstrated that design elements—such as functionality, color, and shape—significantly affect both emotional responses and perceived product value (Shang, 2024; Long & Zhang, 2022). Ergonomic forms and harmonious color palettes can evoke positive emotions, increase product appeal, and enhance perceived quality, thereby influencing consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Cross-cultural research further indicates that integrating traditional motifs with modern design principles strengthens consumers' identification with cultural narratives and enhances their intention to purchase products with symbolic meaning (Zheng et al., 2024; Shang & Zhang, 2025).

Empirical studies in consumer behavior have confirmed that product packaging and visual design—including color, typography, and graphics—shape purchase intention by affecting brand experience and emotional engagement (Cheng et al., 2023; Li & Li, 2022). However, despite global evidence supporting the role of design aesthetics in consumer decision-making, there remains a lack of focused research examining how perceived design elements specifically influence consumers' purchase intentions and behaviors toward MCCPs in emerging cultural markets such as China. This gap highlights the need to integrate design perception into established behavioral frameworks to better understand the mechanisms that drive cultural consumption.

Given this context, this study seeks to address the following research questions:
Q1. Which features of product design (functional, color, and shape) significantly affect consumers' purchase intentions for MCCPs?
Q2. To what extent does purchase intention mediate the relationship between perceived design elements and consumers' final purchase decisions?

This study is significant because it advances understanding of how design perception shapes consumer behavior in the cultural and creative sectors. By examining how specific design elements influence purchasing decisions through behavioral intention, the study bridges theoretical and practical gaps in consumer research. It contributes to the social science field by extending the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB) and Perceived Value frameworks to a cultural consumption context, emphasizing how design-driven value creation fosters cultural engagement, emotional connection, and sustainable market development.

## Literature Review

*Understanding Consumer Behavior and Theoretical Foundations*

Understanding consumer behavior, particularly purchase decisions, has long been a focus of behavioral research. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a robust framework for explaining how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control shape an individual's behavioral intentions, which subsequently drive actual behavior. The Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB) extends TPB by disaggregating its components into belief-based constructs, such as perceived usefulness, compatibility, and self-efficacy, offering a more nuanced understanding of how psychological and contextual variables affect consumer intentions and decisions. In cultural consumption, studies confirm that purchase intention strongly predicts final behavior, particularly when aligned with personal values and cultural identification (Xu, 2024).

*Perceived Design Elements in Consumer Decision-Making*

Design has emerged as a central factor influencing consumer decision-making, especially in cultural product markets. Research highlights that visual and structural design aspects—color, shape, and functionality—jointly affect both cognitive and emotional evaluations of products (Ren & Anuar, 2024); (Singh, 2024).

*Functional Design (PFD)*

Functional design encompasses usability, practicality, and material quality—factors that shape the consumer's rational evaluation of a product's value. Products that demonstrate superior functionality often foster higher perceived quality and satisfaction (Liang, 2020). In cultural and creative goods, durability, ease of use, and material craftsmanship enhance perceived value and promote positive purchase attitudes (Mutsikiwa & Marumbwa, 2013).

*Color Design (PCD)*

Color is a powerful visual cue that evokes emotional and cultural associations. Research shows that warm and vivid colors attract attention and generate positive emotional responses, while culturally symbolic hues reinforce authenticity and identity (Nugroho, 2025). Studies in packaging and product design confirm that color can significantly enhance consumer intention by stimulating both affective engagement and brand recognition (Chitturi et al., 2019). Similarly, regional research in China indicates that color aesthetics in cultural packaging improves consumers' emotional connection and perceived product value (Kuo et al., 2023).

*Shape Design (PSD)*

Shape design contributes to product distinctiveness and symbolic meaning. The physical form of museum cultural and creative products (MCCPs) often reflects traditional aesthetics and conveys cultural stories, which strengthen identity and pride among consumers (de Mello, 2008). Experimental studies reveal that smooth and harmonious shapes evoke positive emotional responses, enhancing perceived authenticity and intention to purchase (Yang & Wang, 2025).

*Purchase Decision for Museum Cultural and Creative Products (MCCPs)*

MCCPs integrate cultural heritage with modern consumer aesthetics, functioning as both tangible souvenirs and symbolic artifacts (Zhu & Jung, 2024). They allow consumers to express identity through design-linked cultural consumption, blending rational and emotional

motives. While previous studies in FMCG or fashion emphasize design's effect on brand preference and purchase intention (Naik, 2019)
, limited empirical work has examined MCCPs specifically, despite their distinct symbolic and experiential characteristics.

Existing gaps suggest the need for an integrated model that connects perceived design elements, purchase intention, and final purchase decisions—particularly in emerging cultural markets such as China. This study, therefore, proposes and empirically tests a conceptual model combining perceived design (functional, color, and shape) with the DTPB and Perceived Value Theory (PVT), offering theoretical and practical insights for enhancing MCCP design and consumer engagement (Xu, 2024).

*Mediating Mechanism: The Role of Purchase Intention*

Purchase intention serves as a psychological bridge between consumers' perceptions of product attributes and their actual purchasing decisions. It reflects the degree to which consumers are motivated to transform positive evaluations of a product into behavioral outcomes. Within the frameworks of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model, purchase intention functions as the organism stage—where external stimuli such as design elements are internalized through cognitive and emotional appraisal before manifesting in behavior (Wang et al., 2024).

Empirical studies have demonstrated that visual and functional design cues—including color, form, and layout—affect purchase decisions indirectly through their impact on consumers' psychological engagement and perceived value (Liu et al., 2025). Design-driven attributes not only enhance perceived quality and brand image but also trigger emotional responses that elevate purchase intention, which in turn significantly predicts purchasing behavior (Barbaritano & Savelli, 2021).

Recent studies confirm that purchase intention mediates the relationship between various perceptual factors and purchase decisions. For instance, perceived product quality, innovation, and aesthetic design positively influence purchase decisions through purchase intention as an intermediary variable (Jaya & Heryjanto, 2023; Miranti et al., 2024). Similarly, design aesthetics, particularly in product packaging and cultural creative goods, stimulate consumers' perceived value and emotional resonance, which strengthen purchase intention and subsequently drive purchase behavior (Ren & Anuar, 2024).

Moreover, research in the cultural product domain supports this mediating mechanism. A study on traditional cultural products among Chinese Gen-Z consumers found that cultural and aesthetic design elements significantly influenced purchase intention through emotional engagement, which then shaped final purchasing decisions (Zheng et al., 2024). This aligns with findings in sustainable and design-intensive industries, where perceived aesthetics and symbolic meaning evoke affective responses that mediate design–behavior relationships (Duche et al., 2025).

Taken together, these findings establish purchase intention as a crucial mediating mechanism that links perceived design elements (functional, color, and shape) to consumers' actual purchase decisions. By integrating insights from TPB, PVT, and S-O-R models, this study

conceptualizes purchase intention as both a cognitive and affective mediator—transforming consumers' design perceptions into tangible buying actions.

## Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative approach to explore how perceived design elements—namely, functional, color, and shape design—affect young adults' purchase intentions and decisions regarding museum cultural and creative products (MCCPs). Quantitative methods are particularly suited to this research because they allow for the systematic testing of theoretical models, enable generalization to a broader population, and provide statistical rigor in identifying relationships among latent constructs. Prior consumer behavior research widely applies quantitative designs to validate conceptual frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and to examine complex relationships among psychological, perceptual, and behavioral variables (Ferreira & Pereira, 2023; Rukhsar et al., 2024). By employing a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection tool, this research captures both cognitive and behavioral dimensions of consumer decision-making in the museum context, consistent with established practices in quantitative marketing and consumer studies (Bukhari & Hussain, 2023; Adam & Ali, 2022; Duche et al., 2025).

The development of the research instrument was grounded in validated measurement frameworks drawn from consumer behavior and design perception literature. The structured questionnaire consisted of five sections: demographics (age, education, and income), general consumption behavior, perceived design elements, purchase intention, and purchase decision. Perceived design elements were measured through multi-item Likert scales covering functional, color, and shape design dimensions. Functional design captured usability, practicality, material quality, and packaging influence; color design assessed aesthetic appeal, emotional resonance, and perceived quality; and shape design reflected cultural symbolism, stylistic uniqueness, and integration of traditional motifs. These items were adapted from validated scales including the PERVAL model for perceived value and aesthetic evaluation, and design-related constructs for visual form and symbolism. Purchase intention and decision constructs were developed following the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB) framework, which effectively models intention–behavior relationships in consumer studies. Similar quantitative approaches have been validated in museum cultural product research and design perception studies, ensuring the reliability and construct validity of the measurement model (Ding & Romainoor, 2023; Liu & Zhao, 2024; Kuang & Chung, 2024; Shanbhag et al., 2023; García-Salirrosas & Acevedo-Duque, 2022).

The population targeted in this study consisted of university students aged 18 to 35 in Anhui Province, China. This demographic was selected because young adults represent a critical segment of cultural consumers who are digitally literate, open to cultural engagement, and responsive to product aesthetics. To ensure representation across diverse academic and social backgrounds, the study employed a stratified random sampling method. Five universities were chosen based on geographic distribution and disciplinary breadth: University of Science and Technology of China, Hefei University of Technology, Anhui Normal University, Anhui University of Finance and Economics, and Anhui Medical University. These institutions were intentionally selected to capture the diversity of educational backgrounds and consumer perspectives within the province, encompassing disciplines ranging from science and technology to humanities and health sciences. This diversity enhances the

representativeness of the sample and reflects variations in aesthetic preferences, cultural awareness, and purchasing motivations among young adults. Random sampling within each university, proportional to enrollment size, further ensures balanced participation and strengthens the external validity and generalizability of the study's findings..

The sample size was determined using the formula recommended by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), which considers population size and acceptable margins of error. Online surveys were distributed via Google Forms and Wenjuanxing—the latter being a widely adopted survey platform in China from July to August 2024. The survey remained open for approximately four weeks, allowing sufficient time for participants to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. Targeted outreach was conducted through university mailing lists, student organizations, and social media platforms. This approach was chosen to maximize accessibility and ensure consistency across responses while minimizing potential interviewer or mode bias. A total of 400 valid responses were received, exceeding the minimum sample size requirement of 384, thus ensuring statistical robustness and generalizability. Respondents were informed about the voluntary nature of participation, and informed consent was obtained before survey submission. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained, and no personally identifiable data were collected. After data screening for completeness and consistency, the final dataset was analyzed using SPSS 26.0. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (all > 0.70), and validity was confirmed through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's test of sphericity. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) further verified convergent and discriminant validity based on AVE, CR, and Fornell-Larcker criteria (Duche et al., 2025; Bukhari & Hussain, 2023).

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed using SmartPLS 4.0 to examine the hypothesized relationships within the quantitative framework derived from the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB) and Perceived Value Theory (PVT). The PLS-SEM technique was chosen for its suitability in analyzing complex models with multiple latent constructs and moderate sample sizes. It simultaneously assessed the direct effects of perceived design elements (functional, color, and shape) on purchase intention and purchase decision, as well as the mediating role of purchase intention. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was applied to determine the significance of both direct and indirect paths. The model's reliability and validity were verified through indicator loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE), while $R^2$ and $Q^2$ values were used to evaluate explanatory and predictive power.

**Results**

This chapter presents the empirical findings derived from the analysis of the 365 valid responses collected for this study. The results are organized into three main sections: sample characteristics, reliability and validity testing, and hypothesis testing using structural equation modeling (SEM).Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and purchasing behavior. The majority of respondents were aged 18–30, predominantly female, and well-educated, with most having prior experience purchasing museum cultural and creative products (MCCPs).

The reliability and validity of the measurement instruments were confirmed prior to hypothesis testing. All constructs demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's

α> 0.70) and satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity, indicating that the measurement model was statistically sound for further structural analysis.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0 was employed to test the hypothesized relationships between perceived design elements, purchase intention, and purchase decision(figure 4.1). The model demonstrated good fit, with key indices meeting conventional benchmarks: Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.957, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = 0.944, and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.046. These values indicate strong explanatory capacity and acceptable approximation in the measurement and structural models.

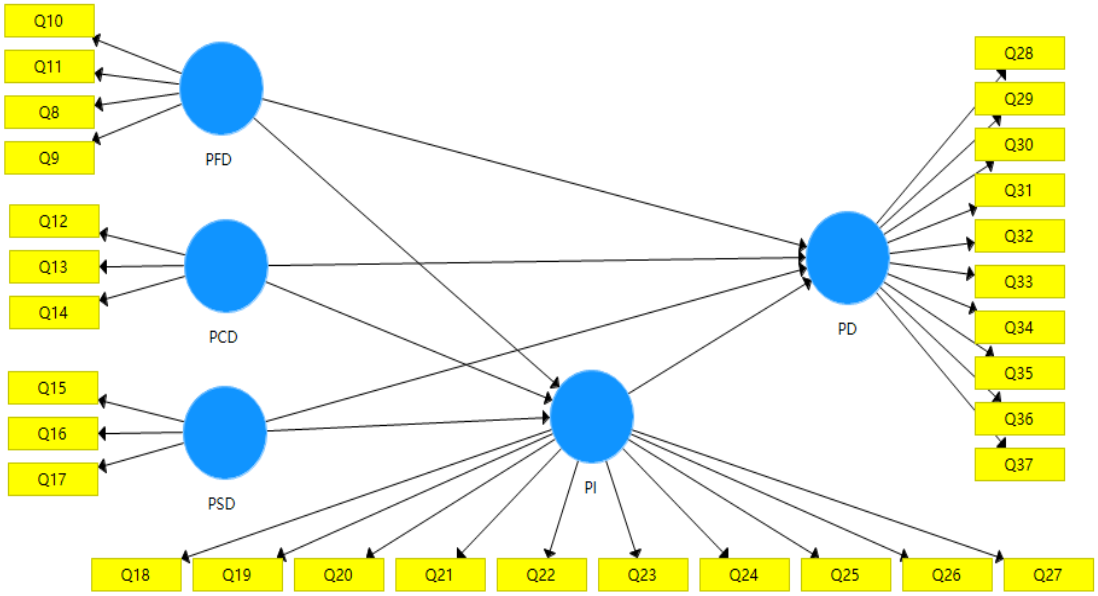


Figure 4.1 Structural Model

*Direct Effect*

The structural model revealed several significant direct effects among the latent variables. Specifically, the three perceived design elements—perceived functional design (PFD), perceived color design (PCD), and perceived shape design (PSD)—each showed statistically significant effects on purchase intention (PI). Among them, PSD had the strongest direct effect on PI (β = 0.435, T = 9.966, p < 0.001), indicating that the cultural uniqueness and symbolic value embedded in product shape are especially influential in shaping young consumers' intention to purchase museum cultural and creative products. PFD also significantly predicted PI (β = 0.141, T = 2.791, p = 0.005), suggesting that the practicality and usability of the product play a meaningful role in influencing intention. PCD exhibited a weaker yet still significant effect on PI (β = 0.116, T = 2.286, p = 0.022), implying that aesthetic and emotional responses to color moderately drive intention formation.

Furthermore, purchase intention was found to have a strong and statistically significant direct effect on purchase decision (PD), with a standardized path coefficient of β = 0.539 (T = 14.134, p < 0.001). This confirms the central mediating role of intention within the model and aligns with the assumptions of the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB), wherein behavioral intention is a key predictor of actual decision-making.

When examining the direct effects of perceived design elements on purchase decision, both PCD and PFD were found to have significant positive influences. PCD had a direct effect on PD with β = 0.169 (T = 3.881, p < 0.001), while PFD had a similar magnitude (β = 0.150, T = 3.201, p = 0.001), confirming that aesthetic and functional aspects of product design contribute independently to final purchasing behavior. However, the direct effect of PSD on PD was statistically non-significant (β = -0.009, T = 0.181, p = 0.856), suggesting that while shape design influences intention, it does not translate into direct purchasing behavior without the mediating influence of intention.

Table 4.1
*Direct effect*

| | Original sample | M | STDEV | T | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PCD -> PI | 0.116 | 0.117 | 0.051 | 2.286 | 0.022 |
| PFD -> PI | 0.141 | 0.141 | 0.05 | 2.791 | 0.005 |
| PSD -> PI | 0.435 | 0.436 | 0.044 | 9.966 | 0.000 |
| PI -> PD | 0.539 | 0.539 | 0.038 | 14.134 | 0.000 |
| PCD -> PD | 0.169 | 0.169 | 0.044 | 3.881 | 0.000 |
| PFD -> PD | 0.150 | 0.151 | 0.047 | 3.201 | 0.001 |
| PSD -> PD | -0.009 | -0.009 | 0.051 | 0.181 | 0.856 |

These results indicate that while all three design dimensions affect consumer cognition at the intention stage, only functional and color design also exert direct influence on actual purchasing. Shape design appears to impact behavior only indirectly, mediated through purchase intention.

*Indirect effect*

To assess the mediating role of purchase intention (PI) in the relationship between perceived design elements (PDE)—namely perceived functional design (PFD), perceived color design (PCD), and perceived shape design (PSD)—and purchase decision (PD), indirect effects were examined using bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 samples.

The results indicated that PI significantly mediates the effect of all three design elements on PD. Specifically, the indirect effect of PCD on PD via PI was statistically significant (β = 0.063, T = 2.268, p = 0.023), indicating a partial mediating role of intention. This suggests that while color design directly influences purchasing decisions (β = 0.231, p < 0.001), it also contributes indirectly through the enhancement of purchase intention.

Table 4.2
*Indirect effect*

| | Original sample | M | STDEV | T | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PCD -> PI -> PD | 0.063 | 0.063 | 0.028 | 2.268 | 0.023 |
| PFD -> PI -> PD | 0.076 | 0.076 | 0.028 | 2.728 | 0.006 |
| PSD -> PI -> PD | 0.235 | 0.235 | 0.030 | 7.941 | 0.000 |

Similarly, the indirect effect of PFD on PD through PI was also significant (β = 0.076, T = 2.728, p = 0.006), further confirming that purchase intention partially mediates the relationship.

Although PFD had a direct impact on PD (β = 0.226, p < 0.001), a portion of its influence is transmitted through increased purchase intention (PFD → PI: β = 0.141, p = 0.005; PI → PD: β = 0.539, p < 0.001).

Table 4.3
*Total effect*

| | Original sample | M | STDEV | T | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PCD -> PD | 0.231 | 0.232 | 0.048 | 4.787 | 0.000 |
| PCD -> PI | 0.116 | 0.117 | 0.051 | 2.286 | 0.022 |
| PFD -> PD | 0.226 | 0.227 | 0.056 | 4.055 | 0.000 |
| PFD -> PI | 0.141 | 0.141 | 0.050 | 2.791 | 0.005 |
| PI -> PD | 0.539 | 0.539 | 0.038 | 14.134 | 0.000 |
| PSD -> PD | 0.226 | 0.225 | 0.054 | 4.210 | 0.000 |
| PSD -> PI | 0.435 | 0.436 | 0.044 | 9.966 | 0.000 |

In contrast, the mediating effect of PI was most pronounced in the case of PSD. The indirect effect of PSD on PD through PI was substantial and statistically highly significant (β = 0.235, T = 7.941, p < 0.001). This is particularly notable when considering that the direct effect of PSD on PD remained significant (β = 0.226, p < 0.001), suggesting that PI acts as a strong partial mediator, rather than full mediator. PSD also exerted the strongest direct effect on PI (β = 0.435, p < 0.001), highlighting the dominant role of shape design in driving intention, which in turn strongly influences actual decision-making.

Collectively, these findings support the hypothesized mediation model, confirming that perceived design elements affect purchase decisions not only directly but also indirectly through the mediating role of purchase intention. Among the three elements, shape design exhibited the strongest overall effect via both direct and mediated pathways, underscoring the importance of culturally resonant and visually distinctive product design in influencing young consumers' behavior.

**Discussion**

This study investigated how young consumers perceive key design elements—namely functional, color, and shape design—in museum cultural and creative products (MCCPs), and how these perceptions influence their purchase intentions and decisions. By integrating the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB) with Perceived Value Theory (PERVAL), this research constructed a dual-path framework that captures both rational and emotional dimensions of consumer behavior in a cultural context.

*Interpretation of Findings*

The findings indicate that all three perceived design elements—functional design (PFD), color design (PCD), and shape design (PSD)—significantly influence purchase intention. Among them, perceived shape design (PSD) exerts the strongest effect, suggesting that cultural symbolism and stylistic uniqueness play a central role in stimulating young consumers' willingness to purchase museum cultural and creative products (MCCPs). This result aligns with existing literature indicating that Millennials and Gen Z consumers are highly responsive to products that express individuality and cultural meaning, as such designs foster emotional attachment and self-identity reinforcement (Xu, 2023; Chiu & Chen, 2024). In contrast,

functional and color design contribute to intention formation through perceived usability, quality, and aesthetic harmony, reflecting the cognitive dimension of consumer evaluation.

Regarding actual purchase decisions, the analysis revealed that functional and color design exert stronger direct effects compared with shape design, emphasizing that rational and utilitarian considerations dominate at the point of purchase. Meanwhile, purchase intention mediates the relationship between perceived shape design and purchase decision, confirming that symbolic and affective appeal first generate intention, which then translates into behavior. This mediating mechanism supports the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB), wherein behavioral intention serves as the key link between perception and action (Li & Fan, 2022). These findings collectively illustrate a dual-path process in design-driven consumption: aesthetic and cultural appeal initiate purchase motivation, while functional and practical attributes ultimately determine purchasing behavior (Sousa et al., 2020).

*Implication*

This study advances the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB) by extending its application to museum-based cultural consumption, showing that perceived design elements—particularly those with symbolic and emotional value—are integral to intention formation and behavioral outcomes. By integrating the PERVAL framework, the findings further demonstrate that multidimensional perceived value—functional, aesthetic, and symbolic—jointly drives consumer responses, emphasizing that product design serves as a key medium for value transmission. Practically, museums and designers should balance cultural symbolism with usability and color appeal to convert aesthetic appreciation into purchase behavior. Incorporating storytelling and cultural narratives into product design can enhance identity resonance, while collaborations with young creators and digital engagement strategies may help cultural institutions adapt to evolving consumer preferences and strengthen the market appeal of museum cultural and creative products (Wang et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2024; Chen & Chiu, 2023; Jin & Huang, 2023).

**Conclusion**

This study examined how perceived functional, color, and shape design elements influence young consumers' purchase intentions and decisions toward museum cultural and creative products (MCCPs). Using the Decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (DTPB) and the PERVAL framework, the findings confirm that all three design dimensions significantly affect purchase intention, with shape design having the strongest influence, while functional and color design directly shape purchase behavior. The results highlight purchase intention as a key mediator linking design perception to consumer action. The study extends DTPB into cultural consumption and underscores that design—beyond aesthetics—functions as a strategic medium for transmitting cultural value and driving consumer engagement.

This study acknowledges several limitations that open avenues for future research. The sample, drawn from university students in Anhui Province, may limit generalizability; thus, future studies should include larger, multi-regional, or cross-cultural samples. The cross-sectional design restricts understanding of behavioral changes over time, suggesting that longitudinal or experimental approaches could provide deeper insights. Further research could also expand the model by incorporating variables such as brand equity, social influence,

or technology-enhanced experiences to offer a more comprehensive view of design-driven cultural consumption.

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