



# A Study of Consumers' Ambivalent Attitude Toward Cultural Creative Products

Heda Zhang<sup>(✉)</sup>, Siyang Wen, Lin Lin, Sheng Luo, and Tianxiang Song

Beijing University of Chemical Technology, Beijing, China  
mengyb433@163.com

**Abstract.** Based on the ambivalent attitude theory, this paper summarizes the attributes of cultural creative products. In light of this, the factors influencing consumers' ambivalent attitude toward cultural creative products are proposed from both the internal individual and external situation aspects of consumers, specifically: (1) in terms of individual factors, consumer involvement, perceived consumer effectiveness, and price sensitivity influence ambivalent attitude respectively; (2) in terms of situational factors, choice richness and persuasion influence ambivalent attitude respectively. In addition, this paper also explores the negative effect of ambivalent attitude on purchase intention. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of ambivalent attitude and has implications for the marketing management of cultural creative businesses.

**Keywords:** *ambivalent attitude · cultural creative products · purchase intention*

## 1 Introduction

In recent years, the cultural industry has been booming, and cultural creative products have gradually entered the public eye. With the profound historical and cultural significance, and a design combining beautiful material and exquisite workmanship, the products have fueled a consumption boom. However, during the actual consumption process of cultural creative products, many consumers eventually give up the purchase due to high prices and unclear perception of practicability, etc., despite that they show great interest in the products. The discrepancy between interest and actual purchase behaviour is essentially a reflection of consumers' ambivalent attitude toward cultural creative products. Overall, consumers' ambivalent attitudes toward cultural creative products are very common in reality. More specifically, ambivalent attitude refers to that the consumers possess both positive and negative cognitive evaluations and emotional experience of a certain marketing element.[1].

There are already deep analyses of dualistic attitudinal ambivalence towards financial products, ecological products, and other commodities in the academic field of ambivalence, but there is a lack of relevant research from the perspective of cultural creative products. Therefore, applying the theory of ambivalent attitude together with the consumption status of cultural creative products, this paper summarizes the attributes of

cultural creative products and puts forward the relevant influencing factors of the consumers' ambivalent attitude towards cultural creative products. On this basis, trying to explore the internal mechanism of the influence of cultural creative product properties on the purchase intention in the hope of providing a theoretical basis for marketing personnel to reasonably adjust the level of consumers' ambivalent attitude toward cultural creative products and formulate appropriate marketing strategies.

## **2 Research Situation Today Both Nationally and Internationally**

Ambivalent attitude in the field of consumer research was first introduced by Otnes and Lowrey et al. [2] It results from the interaction of internal and external factors, which directly or indirectly act on consumers' attitudes and behaviours before, during, and after purchase, and is defined as the existence of both positive and negative cognitive evaluations and emotional experience of a certain marketing element by consumers. According to Gao Haixia et al. [3], the ambivalent attitude theory is a development of the traditional monistic theory. This is due to the assumption that one can have several emotional dimensions to a target at once, whereas the majority of earlier studies assumed that attitude could only be expressed as "like" or "dislike".

In recent years, the focus of research in the field of consumers' ambivalent attitude has shifted from the concept and measurement of ambivalent attitude to the mechanism by which ambivalent attitude influences consumer behaviour. Studies on the mechanism of ambivalent attitude influence in particular contexts, like online shopping [4][5] and traveling abroad [6], have been conducted in China. Among them, the relationship between ambivalent attitude and purchase intention has been extensively researched. For example, ambivalent attitude and purchase intention regarding ecological products [7], "to buy or not to buy" regarding souvenirs [8], and the mechanism of online reviews on consumers' ambivalent attitude and purchase intention [9].

Research in this field on cultural creative products is yet incomplete. There have been a number of studies of ambivalent attitude in various domains, but as different products and services have distinct attributes, the influencing factors they have are different. Consider souvenirs as an illustration: Many cultural creative products with local cultural elements are sold as souvenirs today, as local culture is frequently spread through tourism. However, the essential character of souvenirs is locality, while the essential character of cultural creative products is culturality. There are fundamental contrasts between the two [10]. Therefore, the forming process of ambivalent attitude and purchase intention of cultural creative products have study value.

## **3 Attributes of Cultural Creative Products**

### **3.1 Experiential Storytelling**

The natural economic attributes of a commodity and the connotation of cultural stories are combined in cultural creative products, which are frequently sold on the basis of their connotation and serve to promote consumption. In order to make cultural creative products more consistent with consumers' emotional activities in terms of experience,

commercial design should be employed to highlight the connotations of storytelling. While the popularity of Chinese culture and creativity is currently on the rise, there is a serious homogenization problem with cultural creative products. As a result, consumers' concerns are gradually shifting to whether these products can foster culturally emotional resonance. To put it another way, giving customers access to a compelling cultural story can increase their sense of belonging and shopping experience.[11].

By enriching the content of product stories, consumers' perceptions of products during consumption can be improved, and culture is effectively diffused.[12] The mechanism of this action is based on the natural characteristics of quality stories - appeal. There must be a compelling cultural narrative to draw consumers behind a cultural creative product with high acceptance. Customers' emotional needs are triggered and satisfied by cultural stories, which also contribute to their perception of cultural glamour. Stories can elicit a strong emotional response from consumers, encouraging them to consume cultural creative products, and they can also strengthen the bond among culture, products, and users. As a result, cultural creative products possess excellent experiential storytelling.

### 3.2 Cultural Diffusion

Firstly, due to their design background and cultural orientation, cultural creative products possess functions of preserving social memory and diffusing historical culture. In addition, culture have positive or negative influence on social progress and human civilization since its formation. Thus, in order to play a positive role, it is essential to actively mobilize subjective initiative when creating cultural creative products. In this way, cultural creative products can take a certain responsibility for moralization and expand their social benefits. For example, increasing youth awareness of the beauty of the Forbidden City's classic collections is one of the original purposes of the Forbidden City's cultural creative products.[13].

With the new development of the cultural creative industry, people no longer only design products creatively, but also incorporate traditional cultural elements into their design so as to inject new vitality and promote the expansion of the cultural inheritance. Subsequently, promoting cultural creative products to society has become an effective way of diffusing traditional culture's outstanding qualities. As a result, the cultural creative industry plays a positive social role in promoting social development, such as edifying sentiment, guiding public value, and promoting public education throughout the process of design, production, sales, and use.[14] Thus, cultural creative products possess cultural diffusion.

### 3.3 Designability

Although the cultural connotations of cultural creative products are their key selling features, their physical existence suggests that they cannot be developed beyond their material form. Actually, they should be designed as "daily objects" that allow consumers experience culture in using. When consumers are unable to confirm a product's truly comprehensive worth, they typically judge it initially in terms of its appearance and functionality. Therefore, the design that enrich the customer's experience and match up

to the customer's expectations is of significance. It's vital to make design adhere to the consumer's aesthetics and habits.

In addition to drawing customers' attention, good design also lessens consumers' impressions of other unfavorable aspects of the product. The Research on Chinese culture and creativity demonstrates that social functions like taking photos and posting them online are additional outcomes of good design. While the majority of this product's audience is youth, products with a high level of design are more likely to satisfy the social needs of the audience. Cultural creative products that suit consumers' social requirements make customers satisfied and reliant upon them.[15] As a result, a product with better design will be used more frequently and become more popular. In conclusion, cultural creative products possess designability, combining both functional and aesthetic design.

### 3.4 Added Value

The imagery in the cultural creative products echoes the style of life, historical culture, and the spirit of the times. Because they resonate with consumers' hearts, they have a stronger cultural connotation than other daily products. In terms of aesthetic creativity, the aesthetics displayed by the appearance of cultural creative products resonate with consumers to a certain extent, bringing spiritual satisfaction and thus making the price more acceptable to consumers. As a result, the price of cultural creative products is higher than that of ordinary daily products. In summary, after removing the selling price of the product, the value of materials and the price of semi-finished products at the manufacturing stage, the remaining intangible values such as emotion, culture, and creativity are defined as the added value of the product [16].

## 4 Influencing Factors and Their Relationship to Purchase Intention

### 4.1 Factors Influencing Ambivalent Attitude

#### 4.1.1 Individual Factors

*Consumer Involvement* Consumer involvement is the association of consumers with products and services based on their intrinsic needs, values, and interests.[17] On the one hand, a consumer's emotional connection to cultural creative products can be considerably strengthened by consumer involvement in the product, leading to a cultural "immersion" experience. This is a distinct psychological process that combines emotion, attention, and intention.[18] The deeper the experience, the more the transportation of narratives customers get.[19] On the other hand, the cultural connotations that cultural creative products convey, such as local customs and historical stories, are their key selling points. If the core cultural connotations do not drive consumer interest or if consumers do not have sufficient knowledge to support their understanding and appreciation of the cultural connotations of the product, consumers will digest and assess the relevant information less. For example, in the situation of purchasing cultural creative products related to Dunhuang culture, consumers may be interested in the Dunhuang

cultural creative products only when they have a level of appreciation for the culture or when they have a need to further expand their knowledge concerning Dunhuang.

The most essential feature of consumer involvement is the personal connection to the products, and the experiential storytelling enables the product itself to play a more powerful role in establishing a connection with the consumer: a high degree of consumer involvement in the product promotes active information gathering and application, thus contributes to a deeper assessment of all aspects of the product. These result in a reduction of ambivalence in the more active information gathering and a tendency to buy. Conversely, when consumers are at a low degree of involvement, they lack the motivation for spending effort on complex information search and processing.[20] Passive and confused Consumers who lack complex information processing develop more pronounced ambivalent attitudes. Therefore, they adopt the principle of simplicity when faced with a conflict [21], then change attitudes immediately. Thus, low consumer involvement is often associated with patterning, impulsive, and habitual purchase behaviour. In general, consumer involvement can influence consumers' ambivalent attitude.

*Perceived Consumer Effectiveness* Perceived consumer effectiveness is the effect that consumers expect their behaviour to have on the resolution of a problem.[22] Perceived consumer effectiveness affects consumers' ambivalent attitude and purchase intention. In the case of cultural creative products, the products' designability and cultural diffusion can make consumers feel that their consumption behaviour benefits the establishment of the ideological system during the purchase process. Perceived consumer effectiveness will be strengthened consequently, which influences the consumers' ambivalent attitude toward cultural creative products.

As the popularity of cultural creative products continues to increase, more and more designers are focusing on the full integration of appearance and practicality. This kind of trend is essentially a manifestation of the designability of cultural creative products. Nowadays, the cultural creative industry attaches importance to developing the practical function of products, so consumers are more able to appreciate the practicality of products during the purchase process, driving changes in the level of perceived consumer effectiveness. As a result, ambivalent attitudes changes, then the willingness to purchase shows hesitation. In addition to the influence of designability and cultural diffusion, consumers can feel the cultural connotation of the product and realize the significance of culture, which then influences the formation of attitude structure and changes the level of ambivalent attitudes.

*Price Sensitivity* Price sensitivity usually refers to the degree to which consumers perceive and react to a change in the price of a product or service.[23] Consumer price sensitivity is not a constant psychological characteristic, it varies from environment to environment and from person to person. For a consumer, switching the consumption environment can lead to different price sensitivity: the pricing of cultural creative products directly affects customer price sensitivity, and their relatively high prices increase price sensitivity. For a consumption environment, different individuals will also have different price sensitivity: positive consumer sentiment generally reduces price sensitivity, while negative consumers' level of product pickiness rises, their price sensitivity increases subsequently.

Cultural creative products have added value to consumers owing to not only recreating cultural heritage scenes, but also associating cultural heritage with the value of its derivatives, cultural prototypes, and re-creations. When the added value results in a price that is different from the consumer's psychological expectations, the consumers will be more concerned about the pricing of the product, which will affect their price sensitivity. The experiential storytelling of cultural creative products determines the consumer's evaluation of the product, which then influences the consumer's acceptance of the price and thus changes the consumer price sensitivity. Therefore, both the added value and the experiential storytelling affect price sensitivity. Depending on their price sensitivity, consumers' ambivalent attitude toward the product they purchase will also vary.

This shows that price sensitivity can have an impact on consumers' purchasing behaviour. When consumers are satisfied with their experience, they have positive emotions that reduce their price sensitivity and concern about the price, and ease their ambivalent attitude as well. When the price sensitivity of particular products is relatively low, consumers are more likely to purchase the product. On the contrary, when consumers' expectations cannot be met, they may become dissatisfied, disgusted, or even angry, thus increasing their price sensitivity and becoming suspicious of the price offered, reinforcing their ambivalent attitude. When this price sensitivity is relatively high, consumers will be more inclined to seek alternative goods and their willingness to purchase is then greatly reduced.[24].

#### 4.1.2 Situational Factors

*Choice Richness* Choice richness is the level of choice diversity created by the quantity situation of products over a certain period of time. As commercial trade booms, the number of relevant products available on the market has tended to increase significantly, giving consumers more options during the purchasing process. Choice richness regarded as a situational factor can have a significant impact on consumer behavior. Bettman et al. suggest that an overabundance of product choices may lead to an ambivalent attitude.[25].

Experiential storytelling is a key attribute that distinguishes cultural creative products from other commodities, revealing a multitude of cultural connotations and establishing a rich story system. In the production and consumption of cultural creative products, the various cultures carried by cultural creative products can inspire designers to continuously develop new series of cultural creative products. Ultimately, this influences consumer choice richness and changes the level of ambivalent attitude. The choice richness of cultural creative products therefore has an impact on consumers' ambivalent attitude.

*Persuasion* Persuasion is an act of choosing appropriate strategies to influence others' beliefs or behaviour according to the situation, purpose, and target audience.[26] Therefore, when faced with persuasion from marketers, consumers' ambivalent attitudes are influenced by the persuasive skills of the marketers. For consumers, the level of persuasion is related to their own level of persuasive knowledge and the persuasive skills of the marketer. In particular, the role of persuasion knowledge is reflected in the consumers' ability to analyze and identify various persuasive intentions based on the information

they have, and then to choose and implement a response that they consider appropriate and effective.[27].

The impact of ambivalent attitude varies according to the level of persuasion perceived by the consumer for the cultural creative products. In general, the level of persuasion affects the level of virtual value that consumers confirm and influences the added value they are able to accept, which is directly manifested in the change in consumer interest resulting from a sales message with persuasive intent. When the marketer's persuasive intent makes consumers feel uncomfortable, they will no longer show a positive attitude towards the persuasion and will instead show less interest in the product. Consumers' ambivalent attitude increases due to their rejection of compulsive feelings.[28].

## 4.2 Ambivalent Attitude and Purchase Intention

Purchase intention measures how likely a consumer is to engage in a specific purchasing behaviour.[29] The connection between purchase intention and ambivalent attitude has been the subject of extensive investigation. MA Yan-li asserts that the level of consumers' ambivalent attitude influences their purchase intention. The higher the level of ambivalent attitude, the less likely the consumer is to purchase the product. Conner et al. [30] also stated that the level of ambivalence affects purchase intention after the consumer has processed the pertinent information regarding the product. The less ambivalent the final attitude, the more likely the purchase intention is to be formed.

Due to their special cultural manifestations, cultural creative products are appealing to consumers, but their comparatively expensive price makes customers hesitate. As a result, consumers frequently have both positive and negative attitudes while making purchasing decisions, and the existence of both can cause ambivalence. Consumers with ambivalent attitude experience high levels of psychological distress and struggle with decision-making. So, the consumers' ambivalent attitude toward cultural creative products has a negative impact on their purchase intention (Fig. 1).

## 5 Conclusions and Suggestions

From the perspective of consumer ambivalent attitude study, experiential storytelling, cultural diffusion, designability, and added value are the four attributes of cultural creative products. On the basis of these, the factors influencing consumers' ambivalent attitude toward cultural creative products can be divided into two aspects: individual factors and situational factors. Among them, individual factors include consumer involvement, perceived consumer effectiveness, and price sensitivity, while situational factors include choice richness and persuasion. These variables affect customers' ambivalent attitudes in addition to being related to the attributes of cultural creative products. Additionally, consumers' ambivalent attitude toward cultural creative products has a negative impact on their purchase intention.

In terms of the intrinsic individual characteristics of consumers, as ambivalent attitude is influenced by consumer involvement, perceived consumer effectiveness, and price sensitivity, cultural creative businesses can leverage them to formulate their marketing strategies and increase profitability. In order to change consumer involvement, businesses

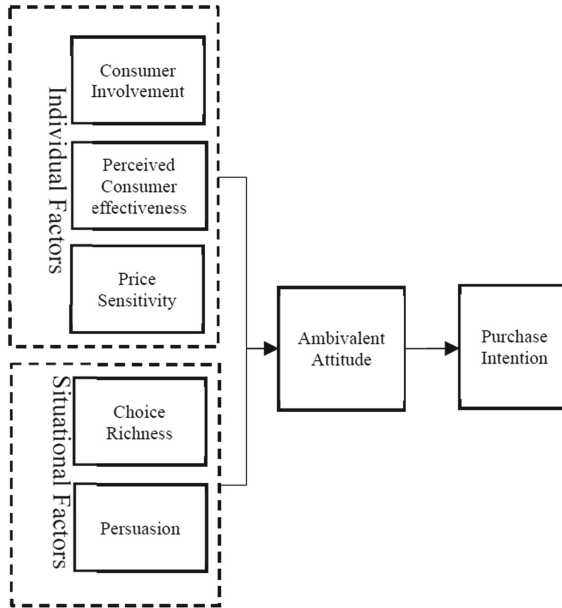


Fig. 1. Theoretical model diagram

need to take into account the preferences and aversions of their target consumers while designing cultural creative products. When forming the product's image, businesses can consider how consumers view a product's attributes. For example, marketing strategies can be formulated by taking into account how consumers view products' designability and cultural diffusion, thereby altering perceived consumer effectiveness and affecting ambivalent attitude. Additionally, businesses can research how consumers treat and respond to the pricing of their products, then properly price and maximize returns. Businesses should limit the price range since cultural creative products are already relatively expensive owing to their attributes. If the price of the product falls within an acceptable range, consumers will respond more favourably.

In terms of external situation factors, as ambivalent attitudes are influenced by choice richness and persuasion, cultural creative businesses can use them to improve the consumption situation to promote profitability. Therefore, businesses can regulate the number of product categories that are supplied to customers and the richness of customer choices with a variety of connotations of cultural creative products, so that the choice richness changes the consumers' ambivalent attitude. Additionally, businesses need to pay more attention to the management of sales staff for cultural creative product. Sales workers should be encouraged to regulate the level of persuasion by means like regular training to improve their marketing expertise. This will improve customer service and alter consumers' ambivalent attitude about the consumption situation.



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