An Empirical Study on the Impact of Cultural Experience on Sharing Intention on Social Media — A Case Study of China Time-honored Restaurants in Guangzhou

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Abstract. This study, based on experiential marketing theory, constructs a model to explore the influence of cultural experience on consumers’ sharing intention on social media, with psychological engagement and visual perception as mediators. A total of 111 valid questionnaires are retained and analyzed with Smart PLS software. The findings show that cultural experience has a direct and significant positive impact on sharing intention, while visual perception and psychological engagement play a mediating role between cultural experience and sharing intention. Furthermore, the study finds that visual perception exerts a more significant effect on sharing intention, while psychological engagement has no impact on sharing intention. This study brings enlightenment to the development of cultural experience marketing in time-honoured restaurants in China.

Keywords: Cultural Experience; Psychological Engagement; Visual Perception; Sharing Intention.

1. Introduction

China time-honored restaurants, condensing the essence of a region’s food culture, finally survive in the long-term commercial competition [1]. However, so of them have gradually lost their competitive advantages, along with the intensified competition among products and services [1]. Some scholars attribute the decline of China time-honored restaurants to failing innovating their marketing strategies to the needs of the Times, particularly not to make the full potential of the cultural connotation [2]. Therefore, this paper is to investigate whether cultural experience marketing could affect consumers’ intention to share information of time-honored restaurants, further enhancing competitiveness.

In the era of experience economy, not a few of restaurants in China have launched a series of cultural experience strategies, such as offering immersive, Shadow-play cultural environment to attract more potential consumers and enhance their competitiveness [3]. A restaurant with strong cultural connotation can bring emotional satisfaction to consumers, which is the key to the success of a time-honored brand [2]. Multi-dimensional experiential activities can help create a unique dining culture and cultural experience, both of which will foster consumers’ purchase or sharing intention, further enhancing the brand awareness and influence of time-honored restaurants [4].

However, empirical researches on the correlation between cultural experience and consumers’ sharing intention in the context of time-honored restaurants with visual perception and psychological engagement as mediators are not sufficient [5]. Most of Studies focus on the contexts of tourism and hospitality. Therefore, this paper is to investigate how these four variables relate to each other in the context of time-honored restaurants.

Existent literature focus the research contexts to restaurants in Beijing [6], Jiangsu province [1],
or Jiangxi province, few in Guangdong province. Guangzhou, as a business capital of Guangdong province for thousands of years, has a “rich heritage” of time-honored brand. The “White Paper on Time-honored State-owned Enterprises in Guangzhou” released on 8 February 2023 reveals that there are twenty-four state-owned time-honored restaurants with history of more than 100 years. Therefore, this paper targets at time-honored restaurants in Guangzhou.

Based on experiential marketing theory, this study constructs a model to explore the relationship between cultural experience and sharing intention, with visual perception and psychological engagement as mediators in the context of time-honored restaurants in Guangzhou. The main questions raised in this study are as follows: 1) How does cultural experience affect consumers’ sharing intention? 2) What is the relationship between cultural experience, consumers’ visual perception and psychological engagement? 3) What is the mediating role that consumers’ visual perception and psychological engagement play between cultural experience and sharing intention?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Cultural Experience

Cultural experience originates from “experiential marketing”, emphasizing the psychological experience of sensory satisfaction and consumer behaviour [7]. Contradictory to traditional product-oriented marketing, experiential marketing tended to provide customers with a memorable experience. Later, Schmitt redefined the experiential marketing in terms of customers’ sense, feel, think, act, and relate [7]. In other words, cultural experience refers to a unique sense in which individuals feel the profound emotion embedded in culture and constructively generate culture based on touch, experience and cognition of culture [8].

Currently, cultural experience has been applied into many fields. In the context of hospitality, immersive cultural experience can promote the healthy development of hospitality. In tourism, the integration of Chinese red culture into the construction of tourist attractions makes Chinese red culture deeply rooted in people’s hearts and thus contribute to the high-quality development of Chinese red tourism. In the field of the catering, Yang Xiao’an states that consumers can experience and immerse themselves in boat cuisine if more cultural connotations could be developed [9].

Cultural experience can stimulate consumers’ senses and emotions through various media, such as websites. By triggering consumers’ thoughts and association, they will act and experience, and then constantly deliver the benefits of the brand or product [10]. To be specific, traditional or modern culture can help enterprises establish a social and cultural atmosphere with consumers, so as to effectively influence consumers’ perception and promote consumption behavior [7]. Through experiencing the products or services offered by the company, consumers can actually feel the quality or characteristics of the products or services, and then re-understand and choose the right products or services.

However, empirical researches on the relationship between cultural experiences and sharing intention in the context of restaurants are not sufficient. Hence, this study is to fill the gaps by examining time-honored restaurants in Guangzhou.
2.2 Sharing Intention

Sharing refers to behaviors of individuals who transmit their own information to others and interact with others through the media [11]. In the past, letters and radio were main media for people sharing information. Nowadays, WeChat, a new online media, has become the main channel for sharing. More than 86% of the content is shared through WeChat. Pictures, sound and video style are the main forms that consumers share through WeChat.

The intention to share comes through word of mouth. Word of mouth refers to the process in which consumers make a comprehensive evaluation of the products of the activity after completing an activity, and share the recommendation to others [12]. Sharing intention are correlated to the environment, customer experience, etc. [11]. Sharing often leads to risk perception, and specific emotional experiences may reduce this risk perception, thereby contributing to increased intention to share [13]. When cultural activities or scenes render a specific ritual scene and environmental atmosphere, or situation renders a specific ritual scene and environment, consumers can obtain a deep sense of experience and ritual through participation on the basis of their own perception, and such positive emotions can encourage people to actively share their positive experiences [14]. What’s more good experience quality and self-perceived value can contribute to word-of-mouth recommendation and re-dissemination [8].

Existing literature suggests that the willingness to share has a positive and constructive impact on sharing behavior. Consumer online sharing behavior can be viewed as a conscious behavioral choice influenced by website factors, consumer traits, and context [15]. Sharing intention are closely related to sharing behaviors. Products that have a high level of emotional resonance with consumers will create a psychological and subjective experience that leads to a sharing intention and thus generating purchase behaviour. In other words, consumers’ sharing intention has a direct impact on their purchase behaviour.

2.3 Psychological Engagement

Psychological engagement has been widely applied in the fields of psychology, management, and information technology. Accordingly, definitions of psychological engagement varies. From a social psychology perspective, the psychological engagement is defined as the relationship between the individual and the subject [16]. Patterson et al. believed that psychological engagement refers to a certain degree of vitality, contribution, concentration and interaction that individuals possess from the perspective of social psychology and organizational behavior [17]. However, in the consumer field, consumer engagement refers to a hidden and uncertain behavior that is jointly influenced by self-psychology and external environment, and will affect individuals consciously or unconsciously to others.

There is increasing attention to consumers’ psychological engagement in marketing literature. In general, psychological involvement is a concept of strategic necessity, which is directly affected by a company’s marketing activities. Gong et al. pointed out that consumer psychological engagement is influenced by subcultures, which can provide a sense of immersion and satisfy consumers’ psychological needs of consumers’ sense of identity and belonging, thus having a positive impact on their sharing behavior.
2.4 Visual Perception

Vision is currently the most significant component of human perception, which can obtain information far more source than that of other senses [18]. Deng and Lin state that that vision is the primary sense through which the subject perceives external stimuli, and the user’s psychological response depends on the visual perception of the stimulus factors [19]. Therefore, visual perception is the most important important way of human perception, through which multiple spiritual, physiological and psychological aesthetic experience can be obtained by connecting with the landscape [14].

Visual perception can directly trigger the emotional changes at the level of the observer’s aesthetic experience, and such emotions can influence people’s behavior. The perception of visual space can evoke people’s perception through landscape vision, form spatial experience feedback and produce different degrees of positive or negative feelings [20]. These perceptual experiences, in turn, cause emotional changes that can affect people’s behavior.

The research of visual perception has been applied into various fields. In tourism, visual perception has a direct positive impact on consumers’ behavioral intention and attention, which can attract tourists to choose the tourist destination, attract tourists to experience on the locals, and promote tourism development [19]. In the field of hospitality, customer perception represents the hotel’s competitiveness. By incorporating Chinese cultural elements into the architectural layout and decoration of the hotel, the Chinese model' of the hotel industry can be improved to attract consumers to stay in the hotel, so as to promote its development.

3. Theoretical Hypotheses

3.1 Cultural Experience and Psychological Engagement

Previous literature has proved the interplay between cultural experience and psychological engagement. For example, in the field of teaching and learning, learners’ experiences, such as emotions, positively influence their level of psychological engagement in learning [21]. Scott and Uncles findings claimed that creating a different experience from the brands help to influence consumers’ psychological activities and improve their perception of the environment, thus enabling companies to better understand consumer emotions, producing more products that can appeal to consumers and increasing the stickiness of consumers [22]. In a word, cultural experience positively influences consumers’ psychological activities. What’s more, different experiences customers feel in the shop have a significant positive impact on their psychological engagement [23]. In the context of restaurants, the findings of Zahra et al. confirmed the positive and significant impact between the cultural experience and psychological engagement [24]. Therefore, this study infers that there is a correlation between cultural experience and psychological engagement, and proposes hypothesis H1:

H1 : Cultural experience has a positive impact on psychological engagement.

3.2 Cultural Experience and Visual Perception

The positive impact of cultural experience on visual perception has been verified in previous literature. Those good-looking, attractive and interesting and exciting experiences create a
perceptual experience for the consumer that influences their perception of the brand aesthetic [25]. In tourism, the involvement of tourists in culturally relevant activities and scenarios, such as handicrafts, can deepen the experience of tourists, giving them a positive sense of experience and thus enhancing their sensory perception [26]. In other words, there is a positive correlation between the cultural tourism experience and the degree of sensory perception of tourists. In addition, the symbols that affect the senses, such as cultural elements, stimulate the sensory experience of the consumer and visually stimulate the customer [24]. This means that various experiences of the consumer have a positive impact on their visual perception. Therefore, this study infers that cultural experience is relevant to customers’ visual perceptions, and proposes hypothesis H2:

H2: Cultural experience have a positive impact on visual perception.

3.3 Visual Perception and Sharing Intention

The positive effect of visual perception on sharing has been repeatedly verified in the literature. A study by Jiang et al. suggests that visuals of scenes and images in tourism places that have appeared in films and televisions can positively influence tourists’ behavioral intention to revisit and recommendation [27]. In addition, visual perception evaluation supported by digital footprints helps to accurately identify the landscape preferences of tourists, implying that the visual perception preferences of the landscape to consumers affect their sharing intention and sharing behaviour [28]. Deng and Lin also confirmed the positive correlation between tourists’ visual perception and their behaviour [19]. However, Zhu et al. argued that visitors’ perceptions have no significant positive effect on their sharing behaviour [14]. Nevertheless, this study still infers that visual perception and customers’ sharing intention are correlated, and specifically proposes hypothesis H3:

H3: Visual perception has a positive impact on sharing intention.

3.4 Psychological Engagement and Sharing Intention

Consumers’ sharing intention refers to the intention and willingness of a consumer to adopt a certain behaviour in the future. The existing literature shows a positive and significant effect of psychological engagement on sharing intention. For example, Risitano et al. conducted a survey in the context of Italian food finding that psychological engagement positively influenced consumers’ behavioral intention [29]. In the context of short video Apps, hedonic and social attributes was proved to indirectly affect customers’ sharing behaviour through psychological engagement [30]. In other words, the degree of consumers’ psychological engagement significantly and positively affected their intention to participate. However, so scholars argued that no significant correlation existed between the degree of users’ engagement intention and their sharing intention [31]. Nevertheless, the study infers that there is a correlation between psychological engagement and consumers’ sharing intention, and proposes hypothesis H4:

H4: The psychological engagement has a positive impact on sharing intention.

3.5 Cultural Experience and Sharing Intention

Prior literature proved that cultural experience can strongly predict sharing intention. An increased level of psychological engagement may directly affect engagement behaviors, Harwood noting that psychological engagement and involvement will drive emotional and physical behaviors such as word-of-mouth recommendations [32]. Yoon and Lee found that cultural experience in the
host country positively affects their consumption intention [33]. In hospitality, satisfying customer experience, is proved to highly correlate to customers’ sharing intention [34]. Yuan Ling stated that the quick response the service staff in tourist destinations offered can bring more outstanding service experience, thus promoting tourists’ intention to recommend the spot by word-of-mouth and attract more visits [35]. In other words, visitors’ experience has a positive impact on their intention of word-of-mouth recommendation. Hu et al. study reconfirmed cultural experience’s positive role on consumers’ sharing intention [11]. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that cultural experience are relevant to customers’ sharing intention, and proposes hypothesis H5:

H5: Cultural experience has a positive impact on sharing intention.

3.6 The Mediating Role of Psychological Engagement

Existing literature has examined psychological engagement’s mediating role between cultural experience and sharing intention. Zahra et al. points out that customer experience can stimulate consumers’ psychological engagement and thus positively influence their behavioural intention [24]. Short videos with a higher degree of life scenario reproduction and virtual touch can bring consumers an immersive and realistic experience, leading to a sense of psychological satisfaction and pleasure, thus generating and increasing their behavioural intention [36]. According to Li Shengnan, the vivid virtual experience simulated by AR applications creates a psychological immersion and engagement in the user’s use of AR, further enhancing their social sharing intention in a positive way [37]. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that psychological engagement plays a role between customers’ cultural experience and sharing intention, and proposes hypothesis H6:

H6: Psychological engagement will significantly mediate the relationship between cultural experience and sharing intention.

3.7 The Mediating Role of Visual Perception

Visual perception’ mediating role between cultural experience and sharing intention has been verified in previous studies. Customer experience can stimulate consumers’ visual perceptions and thus positively influence their behavioural intentions [24]. In the agro-processing industry, Xu Nuo revealed that experiencing the special food culture of Liuzhou enhances their perception of the connotation of the Liuzhou special food, thus making them willing to recommend this special food to their family and friends [38]. In virtual tourism research, Jiang and Zhou noted that virtual technology provides a more natural, richer and more realistic experience of the destination than pictures and videos, and that this experience stimulates the visual perception of authenticity through a more comprehensive and vivid visual presentation, thus influencing their behavioural intention [39]. Therefore, this study hypothesizes that visual perception are relevant to customers’ cultural experience and sharing intention, and proposes hypothesis H7:

H7: Visual perception will significantly mediate the role between cultural experience and sharing intention.

Based on previous literature, this paper designs the research model shown as Figure 1.
4. Methodology

4.1 Variables and Measurement

Cultural experience was adapted from Chang and Hung [40] scale and Schmitt [7] cultural experience scale. Four items were used, with a sample item stating, “The architecture, decorative objects and style of decoration of the restaurant highlight the historical and cultural background.” Sharing intention was adapted the scale from Xu et al.[41]. A sample item reads, “I would like to share experiences in this restaurant.” Visual perception and psychological engagement, were adapted from Xu et al.[41], with 3 items respectively. The sample items read, “This restaurant attracts my visual attention.” and “This restaurant stimulates my curiosity.” All items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree=1” to “strongly agree=5”.

4.2 Questionnaire Design and Data Collection

The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first section presents questions about demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, education, dining frequency in restaurant, monthly spending in restaurant and time-honored restaurants Guangzhou you have been. The second part includes 13 items mentioned in 4.1.

The questionnaires were distributed via Online questionnaire during February 2023, with those who have been to Guangzhou’s time-honored restaurants as our target respondents. Among 126 questionnaires collected, 111 valid questionnaires were retained for further analysis. The 15 invalid responses were mainly due to an incomplete filling.

The statistical results shown in Table 1 indicate that 65.76% of the respondents were female (34.24% male), 68.46% were between 20 to 25 years old, 81.99 % got undergraduate degree or above. 34.23% dined two to three times a week, 36.03% once a week and 27.94% once a month. Among them, 67.57% of respondents dined 1 to 2 times at Guangzhou’s time-honored restaurants, 28.82% dined 3 to 4 times, and 3.61% dined five times or above.
Table 1. Demographic Characteristics (N=111)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables/Categories</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>65.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20 or below</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>68.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46 or above</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Background</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High School or below</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>71.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Including vocational graduate)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate or above</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining Frequency at Restaurants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two to three times a week</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>34.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Expenditure on Dining in Restaurant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>500 YUAN or below</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>69.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>501-800 YUAN</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>801-1100 YUAN</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1101 YUAN or above</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of visiting Time-honored Restaurants in Guangzhou</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-2 times</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>67.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-4 times</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 times or above</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The variance inflation factor (VIF) accounts for the presence of multicollinearity between variables. VIF values ranges from 1.258 to 2.921, staying under the recommended threshold of 5.0 [42]. Therefore, there was no issue of multicollinearity in the data.

5. Results

The model and hypotheses of the research were tested by structural equation modeling with Smart-PLS software. Structural equation modelling can help researchers to test theoretical models consisting of different variables. Smart-PLS was chosen for the analysis of the data and validation of hypotheses for two reasons:. Firstly because it was proved to be a variance-based prediction method, authentical enough to analyse complex models [43]. Secondly, Smart-PLS neither requires a large sample nor assume the data to be normally distributed [42]. Therefore, Smart-PLS can provide researchers with the flexibility to analyse.

5.1 Measurement Model Evaluation

The scores for the reliability and validity of this model constructs are shown in Table 2. The factor loadings for all variables were statistically significant and exceeded the critical value of 0.70
In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all variables exceeded the critical value of 0.50, indicating that they had sufficient validity. The composite reliability of the measure ranged from 0.823 to 0.875, suggesting a high level of scale reliability (see Table 2).

Discriminant validity was assessed in terms of Fornell and Larcker criteria. As shown in Table 2, the square root of each construct’s AVE exceeded its respective interrelationship, predicting discriminant validity acceptable.

### Table 2. Construct Reliability, Validity and Discriminant validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>SI</th>
<th>ME</th>
<th>CE</th>
<th>VP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>0.819</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>0.730</td>
<td>0.781</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>0.691</td>
<td>0.711</td>
<td>0.797</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VP</td>
<td>0.623</td>
<td>0.627</td>
<td>0.727</td>
<td>0.821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>0.859</td>
<td>0.823</td>
<td>0.875</td>
<td>0.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVE</td>
<td>0.636</td>
<td>0.610</td>
<td>0.636</td>
<td>0.677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q²</td>
<td>0.387</td>
<td>0.351</td>
<td>0.295</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>0.529</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.506</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: SI = Sharing Intention; PE = Psychological Engagement; CE = Cultural Experience; VP = Visual Perception; AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability.

### 5.2 Structural Model Assessment

The structural model is evaluated through the following procedure, with the results shown in Table 2. Henseler et al. suggest using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) to assess model fit [44], which should be maintained at < 0.10. Our SRMS value is 0.083, predicting an adequate model fit. In addition, the study investigates the predictive power of the model by evaluating the R² and Q² values of the predictor variables. The results in Table 2 shows that all R² values are greater than 0.10: psychological engagement: 0.529; visual perception: 0.506; sharing intention: 0.602, corroborating the model’s predictive power [42].

Table 3 shows the estimated path coefficients for the model relationships. CX is significantly positive to PE (β=0.727, P≤0.05), VP (β=0.711, P≤0.05), thereby, establishing H1 and H2. Next, VP is found to significantly affect SI (β=0.488, P≤0.05), supporting H3. However, ME’s impact on SI is weak and not significant (β=0.152, P > 0.05), refusing H4. Further, CX’s impact on SI is significant (β=0.261, P≤0.05), establishing H5.

Next, the author tested the effect sizes of exogenous variables on endogenous factors based on Cohen’s critical values: 0.02 (small effect), 0.15 (medium effect), and 0.35 (strong effect). The f² values for our proposed pathways ranged from 0.026 to 1.124, demonstrating a small to strong effect of cultural experience, psychological engagement, visual perception and sharing intention (see Table 3).

### Table 3. Structural Model Results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Path</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t Value</th>
<th>f²</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>CX → ME</td>
<td>0.727***</td>
<td>14.734</td>
<td>1.124</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The study applied the product-of-coefficients approach to assess the significance of the mediators by using bootstrapping-base resampling. The results shown in Table 4 illustrate that visual perception mediates significantly the relationship between cultural experience and sharing intention ($\beta= 0.314$, $P \leq 0.05$), supporting H6. However, psychological engagement did not mediate the relationship between cultural experience and sharing intention ($\beta= 0.111$, $P > 0.05$), rejecting H7.

Table 4. Results of Mediating effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>Lower Boot</th>
<th>Upper Boot</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H6: CE→VP→SI</td>
<td>0.519***</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>0.415</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H7: CE→ME→SI</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>-0.058</td>
<td>0.259</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: SD = standard deviation; CX = cultural experience; SI = sharing intention; PE= psychological engagement; VP = visual perception; $\beta= $ path coefficient; * $p \leq 0.05$; **$p \leq 0.01$; ***$p \leq 0.001$.

6. Discussions and Conclusions

6.1 Discussions

The results of this research show that cultural experience has a positive and significant effect on psychological engagement, which is consistent with the findings of Scott and Uncles [22], Mohd-Ramly and Omar [23] as well. The positive impact of cultural experience on psychological engagement means that responding to the needs of consumers by creating cultural elements that make them feel and experience positive is essential for time-honored restaurants. What’s more, cultural experience’s impact on visual perception is significantly positive, which echoes the findings of Bashir et al. [25] and Oliveira [26]. It implies that different sensory symbols can be integrated as marketing campaigns to create different experiences for consumers, thus influencing their perceptions on restaurant environment, architectural style and so on.

The findings demonstrate that cultural experience positively influences consumers’ sharing intention, which is consistent with previous studies conducted by Wu and Cheng [34], Hu et al. [11]. It means that incorporating cultural elements into the architecture, décor, and other cultural activities of a restaurant can enhance consumers’ interaction with the cultural experience and stimulate their intention to share. This highlights the importance for marketers to understand the needs of their customers and capture their attention by incorporating cultural elements in their offerings.

Visual perception positively influences consumers’ sharing intention, which is in accordance with the findings of Jiang Yibin [27] and Zhou Xiang [28]. What’s more, visual perception partially
mediates the effect of cultural experience on sharing intention, which is in accordance with the findings of Xu Nuo [38] and Jiang et al. [39]. Therefore, restaurant managers are suggested to focus on the impact of visual perception on customers, so as to enhance the vitality of long-established restaurants. Through creating a culturally rich environment, etc., to enhance the consumers’ visual perceptions, thereby enhancing their experience and prompting a sharing intention.

However, psychological engagement’s impact on consumers’ sharing intention is insignificant, which is contradictory with previous studies [29, 30]. It also fails to mediate the relationship between cultural experience and sharing intention, which is inconsistent with the findings of Wang et al.[36] and Li Shengnan [37]. The reason may be attributed to individual concerns on privacy in social media, which hinders the increase in user engagement behavior.

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that in today’s competitive environment, Guangzhou’s long-established restaurants need to create a strong cultural experience via different interactive cultural experience activities, such as regional opera, to enhance the visual and psychological stimulation of consumers, evoking emotions and feelings, thus increasing consumers’ willingness to share the dining experience on social media.

6.2 Limitations and Future Research

Limitations are part of science and all researchers encounter certain limitations in their research process, and no exception for this study. The first is the data collection instrument. The data collection tool used in this study was a questionnaire. Taking interviews into account would make the survey more comprehensive. Therefore, it is possible to add interviews in future studies. Secondly, the research contexts and data sample are not sufficient enough. Therefore, further research could be conducted by involving more restaurants and respondents beyond Guangzhou, which could enhance the validity of these findings. Finally, given that the existing literature is sparse on the interplay between cultural experience, visual perception, psychological engagement and sharing intention, and that the results of this study show no significant effect of psychological engagement on willingness to share. Therefore, the author recommends further research to explore and validate the relationship between these variables.

References


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