

FACTORS INFLUENCING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH ART EXHIBITIONS: THE CASE OF AN ART COLLEGE IN YUNNAN, CHINA*

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the key factors influencing satisfaction with art exhibitions, specifically among students from an art college in Yunnan, China. The research focused on six potential influencing factors: perceived communication, perceived trust, service, product, social value, and emotional value. A quantitative methodology was employed. Data were collected via a questionnaire survey from a sample of 90 students and analyzed using Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) to test the relationships between these factors and overall satisfaction.

The analysis revealed that students' satisfaction is significantly and positively influenced by perceived communication, perceived trust, service, and emotional value. Interestingly, the product dimension (representing the artwork and exhibition content itself) showed a significant negative impact. In contrast, social value was found to have no statistically significant effect on satisfaction in this context. These findings suggest that for this student group, the quality of

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communication, trust in the exhibition, and emotional engagement are more critical drivers of satisfaction than the intrinsic quality of the artworks or the social aspects of the visit.

Keywords: Emotional value, Perceived communication, Perceived trust, Products, Services, Social value, Satisfaction, Art Exhibitions

Introduction

Rentschler and Gilmore (2002) believed that the main function of art museums is to collect, display and study various kinds of objects. Its purpose is to enrich the spiritual and cultural life of the masses. Evans et al. (2012) found that art museums play an important role in non-profit fields, art circles, social fields and cultural heritage fields. Art exhibitions and museums are not only important Windows for cultural transmission, but also key carriers for regional cultural inheritance and development (Alebakis, 2012). In recent years, Yunnan has made great efforts to explore and promote its local culture, and has made Yunnan culture shine through rich and diverse art exhibitions and unique museums. Yunnan's art exhibitions cover a variety of fields, including traditional painting, modern art, and ethnic handicrafts. Modern art exhibitions keep up with the trend of The Times and integrate various innovative elements to bring new visual experience to the audience. National handicraft exhibition is dazzling, there are exquisite paper-cut, gorgeous embroidery, simple wood carving and so on. Among them, Dai brocade and Bai tie-dye, with their unique craftsmanship and gorgeous colors, have attracted much attention and have been included in the national intangible cultural heritage list.

This study focuses on the students of the School of Art. The students are from Yunnan Arts University. Because art school students are more aware of art aesthetics than non-art majors, they are more interested in art exhibitions. Their consumption, life experience, learning practice and future employment choices

are closely related to art exhibitions. Therefore, the author chooses the influencing factors and the hypothesis of satisfaction to conduct intervention research on these students.

This study provides an important theoretical basis for the planning and operation of art exhibitions by deeply discussing the influencing factors of college students' satisfaction with art exhibitions. As an important carrier of cultural communication, art exhibition's attraction and participation directly affect the inheritance and development of art and culture (Evans et al., 2012). By analyzing the influencing factors of the key group-college students' satisfaction, the curator can better understand the needs and expectations of college students, so as to optimize the exhibition content, form and service. For example, the study reveals the significant influence of emotional value, perceptual communication and other factors on satisfaction, which suggests that curators can enhance the participation enthusiasm of college students by enhancing the interaction and emotional resonance of the exhibition, thus expanding the influence and dissemination scope of the art exhibition.

Objectives

1. To assess and analyse the current status of students' satisfaction with art exhibitions in terms of perceived communication, perceived trust, service, product, social value, emotional value, and art college student satisfaction.

2. To studies the influence of perceived communication, perceived trust, service, product, social value, emotional value and satisfaction of art college students on students' satisfaction with art exhibitions.

Literature Review

1. Theory of Satisfaction

Satisfaction theory originates from the expectation discrediting paradigm in marketing theory. Oliver (1980) believes that satisfaction comes from the psychological results generated when the psychological expectations of consumption are confirmed or not. Cardozo (1965) ; Barber and Venkatraman (1986) believe that satisfaction is the degree to which customers' judgment of product performance conforms to their perception of product performance. Yi (1990) believes that this difference is the difference between consumers' perception of product performance and standard comparison.

The theory of satisfaction has been continuously deepened in the research and expanded the scope of application. Therefore, the factors affecting satisfaction are no longer limited to product performance and quality. As summarized by Petter et al. (2013), satisfaction is the sum of a person's reaction feelings and attitudes towards various factors in a specific situation. In fact, satisfaction theory has been applied to many fields such as online shopping, education and teaching, tourism activities, information system, medical service, hotel industry, retail industry and so on.

2. Theoretical Framework Related to the Model

The researchers focused on the art industry to discuss the problem. Among them, the researchers focused on the relationship between these factors. Researchers believe that perceived communication and perceived trust play a role in relationship maintenance and are important factors in art marketing, which have an impact on customer perceived satisfaction. Therefore, this study examines the interaction between art students and staff in folk art sale workshops. Students' perceived satisfaction was investigated through perceived communication and perceived trust.

Massoud et al. (2022) put forward eight hypotheses from the framework: The first hypothesis verifies the impact of relationship investment on customers' purchase intention. The second hypothesis examines the effect of relational investment on customer perceived trust. The third hypothesis examines the effect of perceptual communication on perceived satisfaction. The fourth hypothesis examines the effect of perceived communication on perceived trust. The fifth hypothesis examines the effect of perceived trust on perceived satisfaction.

The second theoretical framework was proposed by Song et al. (2017). The framework sets out the factors that influence satisfaction and the knock-on effects of satisfaction. The researchers applied this framework to the study of cosmetics and beauty fairs. The researchers believe that product value plays a decisive role in various studies of satisfaction. This study examines the product evaluation of Folk art sale workshops by art majors. The researchers also asked 11 students to make predictions about the project. Finally, the researchers modified the measurements. The researchers hired seven students to survey visitors on the day of the fair. The results show that except for the hypothetical relationships between venue, convenience, procedure and satisfaction, the other hypothetical relationships have been effectively verified. The study also revealed the determining role of product quality in tourist satisfaction. Based on the results of the study, the team of researchers put forward constructive suggestions for the cosmetic beauty fair.

The third theoretical framework establishes the relationship between after-sales service and satisfaction. This framework was proposed by Cao et al. (2018). The researchers believe that online shoppers value after-sale experiences more. The researchers identified customer service, shipping, logistics tracking, and returns as after-sales factors valued by online shoppers.

This theoretical framework assumes the direct influencing factors that lead to customer satisfaction in the process of online shopping. But these direct influencing factors are constrained by control variables. So, the researchers set up these hypothetical relationships in the context of control variables and tried to test them. First, verify the factors that lead to customer satisfaction in customer service. Second, the after-sales logistics service is the factor that leads to customer satisfaction. The results show that consumers in China pay more attention to customer service. Consumers in Taiwan pay more attention to return services. After-sales transportation and logistics tracking has an impact on all consumer satisfaction.

The fourth theoretical framework establishes a causal framework of service-value-satisfaction. Researchers believe that perceived value factors are closely related to satisfaction. Researcher Lee (2020) applied this conceptual framework to a study of COSMOBEAUTY exhibition. The researchers focus on the influence of emotional value, economic value and social value on customer satisfaction.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative survey design. Data were collected via a questionnaire and analyzed using Multiple Linear Regression (MLR).

1. Research Design

A quantitative research design, specifically a survey research approach, was adopted.

Population and Sample

The study targeted students from an art college in Yunnan Province, China.

Pilot Test Sample: 30 students participated in a pilot test to assess the questionnaire's validity.

Research Population: The final sample for the main study consisted of 90 students (42 males, 48 females).

2. Research Variables

Independent Variables: Perceived communication, Perceived trust, Service, Product, Social value, Emotional value.

Dependent Variable: Student satisfaction with art exhibitions.

Research Instruments

The primary research instrument was a structured questionnaire. Its content validity was verified using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC).

3. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Jamovi software.

Descriptive Statistics: Means and Standard Deviations were calculated for all measurement scales.

Inferential Statistics: Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) was conducted to test the hypothesized relationships between the six independent variables and the dependent variable (satisfaction). The model's explanatory power was $R^2 = 0.82$.

Research Framework

The research revolves around six independent variables: perceived communication, perceived trust, service, product, social value and emotional value. Through the research methods of IOC test, pretest and multiple regression analysis (MLR), this paper finally discusses how these factors affect the dependent variable-students' satisfaction with art exhibitions. The whole framework, starting from the research goal, goes through independent variables to research methods, and finally implements the core research problems (Figure 1).

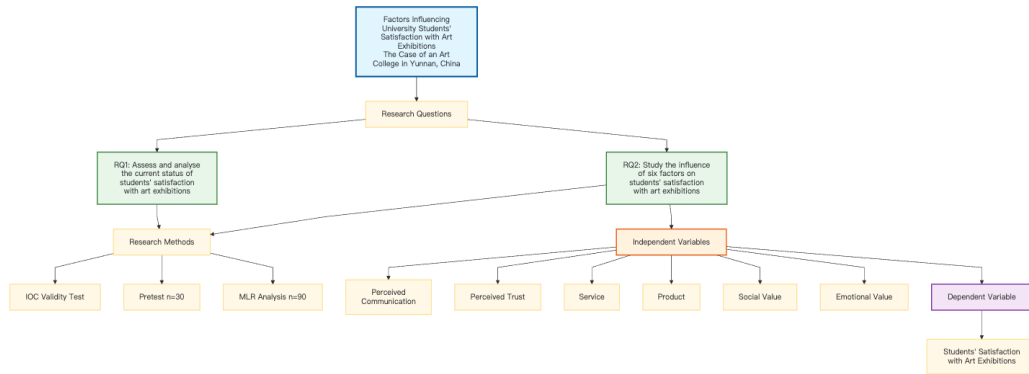


Figure 1 Framework (Source: Constructed by the researchers)

Results

1. Assess the current state of student satisfaction and the affect factors

1.1 Sample Size

Based on recommendations from previous studies, a sample size of 30-500 people is appropriate for most studies. In this study, 30 students from art colleges were selected to complete the effectiveness test, and 90 students were selected to perform the reliability test.

Table 1 Research Sample Size

No.	Stages	Students' numbers	Methods
1	Pilot test	30	Questionnaires
2	Research population	90	Questionnaires

According to Table 2, a total of 90 students participated in the study. There were 48 females (46.7%) and 42 males (53.3%). The results show that the majority of the respondents are female.

Table 2 Profile of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent	Cumulative
Male	42	46.7	46.7	46.7
Female	48	53.3	53.3	100.00
Total	90	100.00	100.00	

1.2 Descriptive analysis of the measurement scales

This study employed descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, to summarise the responses. The specific results are as follows:

Table 3 Descriptive analysis of the measurement scales

Constructs	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Student's Satisfaction		1.417	1.081
	SS1	1.326	1.326
	SS2	1.192	1.192
	SS3	1.042	1.042
	SS4	1.326	1.326
Perceived Communication		1.70	1.018
	PC1	2.37	1.326
	PC2	1.60	1.192
	PC3	1.13	1.042
Perceived Trust		2.011	1.063
	PT1	2.70	1.343
	PT2	1.77	1.165
	PT3	1.57	1.165
Services		1.491	0.959
	S1	1.53	1.306
	S2	1.80	1.349
	S3	1.40	1.380
	S4	1.23	1.223

Products		1.778	1.201
	P1	2.37	1.497
	P2	1.37	1.273
	P3	1.60	1.192
Social Value		1.567	1.226
	SV1	1.50	1.358
	SV2	1.53	1.592
	SV3	1.67	1.322
Emotional Value		1.717	1.344
	EV1	1.77	1.406
	EV2	1.67	1.470

According to Table, the overall mean for Student’s Satisfaction is 1.42, well below the scale midpoint, indicating that participants are generally dissatisfied with their academic experience. The standard deviation is 1.08, showing moderate dispersion. Item-level means are consistently low (1.04 – 1.33), with SS3 (“I am satisfied with the support services offered by the university”) recording the lowest mean (1.04, SD = 1.04) and the tightest spread, suggesting near-unanimous dissatisfaction.

The overall mean for Perceived Communication is 1.70, still below neutral, implying that students perceive communication channels as inadequate. The construct-level SD is 1.02. PC1 (“The university clearly communicates important deadlines”) carries the highest mean (2.37, SD = 1.33) and the greatest variability, signalling polarised views, whereas PC3 (“Academic staff are approachable outside class hours”) returns the lowest mean (1.13, SD = 1.04), evidencing consistently poor perceptions.

Perceived Trust records an overall mean of 2.01, just below the neutral point, with a standard deviation of 1.06. PT1 (“I trust the university to act in students’ best interests”) produces the highest mean (2.70, SD = 1.34) and the

widest dispersion, indicating divergent trust levels, while PT2 and PT3 cluster around 1.6 – 1.8 with slightly lower variability.

Services obtains an overall mean of 1.49, reflecting a negative evaluation of university services. The construct SD is 0.96. S2 (“Library resources meet my study needs”) shows the highest mean (1.80, SD = 1.35) and the largest standard deviation, revealing disparate user experiences; conversely, S4 (“IT services are reliable”) registers the lowest mean (1.23, SD = 1.22), implying widespread dissatisfaction.

Products presents an overall mean of 1.34, the lowest among all constructs, with the smallest standard deviation (0.65), denoting uniformly poor ratings. P1 (“Course materials are up-to-date”) yields the lowest item mean (1.17, SD = 0.99), whereas P2 (“Teaching facilities are modern”) peaks at 1.53 yet remains below the neutral threshold.

Social Value achieves an overall mean of 1.68, below neutral, with the lowest construct-level SD (0.49), indicating consensus. SV3 (“I feel a sense of belonging to the university community”) deviates markedly (mean = 2.33, SD = 1.63), driving the construct’s variability, whereas SV1 and SV2 remain tightly distributed around 1.2 – 1.5.

Emotional Value records an overall mean of 1.72, slightly higher but still negative, with a standard deviation of 1.34. Both items display similar means (1.67 – 1.77) and high variability (SD \approx 1.4), suggesting heterogeneous emotional appraisals of the university experience.

Overall, the data reveal consistently negative perceptions across all six constructs, with particularly acute dissatisfaction regarding products and student support. The moderate to high standard deviations on key items (e.g., PT1, SV3) highlight notable intra-group differences, underscoring the need for targeted institutional interventions to enhance communication, rebuild trust, and improve both tangible services and intangible socio-emotional value.

2. The Effects of Various Factors on Student Satisfaction

This part uses multiple linear regression to test the hypothesis relation. In this study, the 6 dimensions of independent variables and dependent variables are continuous variables, so the multiple linear regression method is adopted to analyze the hypothesis relationship of this study. The following table shows the analysis results:

Table 4 The MLR Results on Students' satisfaction

Variables	t-value	p-value	Stand. Estimate(β)	R ²
Perceived communication	4.289	<0.01	0.3222	0.820
Perceived trust	3.288	0.001	0.3016	
Services	2.579	0.011	0.2591	
Products	-2.051	0.043	-0.1816	
Social value	0.962	0.338	0.0866	
Emotional value	2.471	0.015	0.1985	

According to the MLR results tested by Jamovi, the social value of art exhibitions does not support the impact on student satisfaction in art colleges ($p > 0.05$). Other hypothesis relationships meet the needs of this study ($p < 0.05$). The experimental data show that the value of R² is 0.82. The independent variable accounts for 82% of the dependent variable. The standardized beta estimation test shows that perceived communication, perceived trust, service and product have a high impact on art students' satisfaction.

2.1 The influence of perceived communication on satisfaction

Perceived communication exhibited the strongest positive influence on art college students' satisfaction toward art exhibitions ($\beta = 0.3222$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that for every one-unit increase in students' perceived quality of communication (encompassing clarity of exhibition narratives,

effectiveness of curator-led explanations, interpretive signage quality, and interactive dialogue opportunities), satisfaction increases by 0.322 units, holding other variables constant. This result underscores that transparent, engaging, and multidimensional communication mechanisms constitute the primary driver of positive student experiences in art exhibition contexts.

2.2 The influence of perceived trust on satisfaction

Perceived trust demonstrated the second strongest positive effect on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.3016$, $p = 0.001$). This standardized coefficient implies that students' confidence in the credibility, professionalism, and ethical integrity of exhibition organizers significantly shapes their overall satisfaction levels. Trust in this context encompasses beliefs regarding the authenticity of artworks, the academic rigor of curatorial decisions, the honesty of informational content, and the reliability of institutional promises. The significance level ($p = 0.001$) confirms that this relationship is highly reliable, suggesting that when students trust the exhibition's intellectual foundations and institutional backing, their satisfaction increases substantially, regardless of other experiential factors.

2.3 The influence of service quality on satisfaction

Service quality manifested a significant positive influence on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.2591$, $p = 0.011$). This result encompasses various tangible and intangible service elements including staff professionalism and helpfulness, exhibition environment comfort (lighting, temperature, spatial layout), accessibility features, crowd management, and auxiliary amenities such as seating and resting areas. magnitude of this effect suggests that while service quality is important, it operates as a complementary rather than dominant factor relative to communication and trust.

2.4 The influence of product on satisfaction

Contrary to expectations, the product dimension (representing exhibition content, artwork quality, thematic coherence, and physical display attributes)

exhibited a statistically significant negative influence on satisfaction ($\beta = -0.1816$, $p = 0.043$). This result challenges conventional assumptions that superior artwork quality automatically translates to higher satisfaction among educational audiences.

2.5 The influence of social value on satisfaction

Social value demonstrated no statistically significant influence on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.0866$, $p = 0.338$). This non-significant result indicates that variables related to social interaction, community belonging, peer sharing opportunities, and collective identity formation did not substantially contribute to explaining variance in satisfaction scores. This finding implies that, within the current study context, students' exhibition experiences were predominantly individualistic rather than socially embedded, or that existing exhibition designs failed to activate sufficient social mechanisms to impact satisfaction meaningfully.

2.6 The influence of emotional value on satisfaction

Emotional value exhibited a significant positive influence on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.1985$, $p = 0.015$). This finding supports the proposition that exhibitions capable of evoking strong emotional resonance and personal relevance generate higher satisfaction levels among art students, aligning with experiential learning theories that emphasize the centrality of emotional engagement in educational contexts.

Discussion

Student Satisfaction with Art Exhibitions (SSAE) is a critical metric in art education and cultural communication, shaped by factors like communication, trust, service, products, social value, and emotional value. These variables capture the interplay between students and the exhibition environment, reflecting the link between psychological perception and aesthetic experience.

Amid ongoing art education reforms emphasizing student-centered approaches, enhancing SSAE through better communication, emotional engagement, and trust-building has become a priority.

This study employed a quantitative framework, revealing that perceived communication has the strongest impact on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.3222$), establishing it as the primary driver. Perceived trust ($\beta = 0.3016$) and service quality ($\beta = 0.2591$) are also highly influential, aligning with existing theories that personal relevance and trust are key to audience satisfaction. Emotional value ($\beta = 0.1985$) significantly boosts satisfaction, supporting the experience economy argument that emotional participation enhances the overall visit.

Conversely, products negatively affect satisfaction ($\beta = 0.1816$), suggesting a mismatch between student expectations and the actual exhibition offerings, requiring curators to re-evaluate product design. Social value shows no significant effect ($p=0.338$), possibly because exhibitions have yet to foster a strong sense of community or because students prioritize personal experience over social interaction.

This study extends value-based satisfaction frameworks to Chinese art colleges, demonstrating that emotion and communication are actionable levers for improvement. It also challenges the notion that impactful exhibitions require costly renovations, showing that relationship-building and narrative adjustments can yield significant benefits even with limited resources.

Methodologically, the use of IOC verification and multiple linear regression provides operational evidence accessible to institutions without external funding, with the effect sizes serving as a benchmark for future research. However, limitations include a single-college sample, requiring replication across diverse institutions, and a cross-sectional design that can only establish correlation, not causation.

Conclusion

Multiple linear regression confirms that communication, trust, service, products, and emotional value are key drivers of student satisfaction with campus art exhibitions ($R^2=0.82$, high explanatory power).

Two main conclusions emerge:

1. Communication and trust are paramount: These factors show the strongest effects ($\beta=0.3222$, $\beta=0.3016$), underscoring that improving dialogue quality and transparency is critical for enhancing the student experience. This is especially valuable for campus museums lacking the brand prestige of state institutions, as strong relationships can compensate for limited resources.

2. Service and emotion are vital: Service quality ($\beta=0.2591$) and emotional value ($\beta=0.1985$) significantly boost satisfaction, indicating that optimizing the visit process and fostering emotional engagement are effective strategies.

Notably, products exert a negative influence ($\beta=0.1816$), suggesting a mismatch with student expectations that requires curators to re-evaluate product design and positioning. Social value shows no significant effect, implying students currently prioritize personal experience over social identity.

In summary, the findings advocate for a student-centric approach focused on dialogue curation, transparent communication, quality service, and emotional participation to fulfill the educational mission of university museums.

Recommendation

1. Practical Recommendations

Enhance communication: Use clear language, multiple channels, and accessible guides.

Build trust: Ensure transparent curation, genuine student involvement, and responsive feedback.

Improve services: Optimize visit flow, environment comfort, and staff responsiveness.

Design for emotion: Foster engagement through storytelling, interaction, and personalization.

Refine products: Align exhibitions with student needs and adjust offerings as needed.

2. Future Research Recommendations

Longitudinal tracking: Monitor changes in student satisfaction over time.

Mediation analysis: Test if trust mediates the link between communication and emotional value.

Multi-group comparison: Contrast satisfaction drivers between art and non-art majors.

Behavioral outcomes: Track revisit rates, social media mentions, and elective enrollment as objective satisfaction indicators.

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