

# Exhibition Experiential Value of CCPs

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The protection of industrial cultural heritage is related to sustainable urban development. Cultural and creative parks (CCPs) are a way for many cities to protect their industrial cultural heritage. The four antecedents (attractiveness, existential authenticity, self-congruence, and exhibition–park image congruence) have a positive impact on exhibition experiential value. Exhibition experiential value has a positive impact on CCP experiential value, which in turn, affects behavioral intentions toward the CCP. In addition, Exhibition experiential value has a mediating effect between the four antecedents and CCP experiential value, CCP experiential value has a mediating effect between exhibition experiential value and behavioral intentions.

Keywords: cultural and creative parks ; experiential value ; attractiveness ; existential authenticity ; self-congruence ; exhibition–park image congruence

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## 1. Experiential Value

Pine and Gilmore <sup>[1]</sup> argued that in an experiential economy, the income of organizations is correlated with the experiential value that their products provide. Experiential value refers to the perceived value that consumers derive from direct use or indirect observation of a product or service <sup>[2]</sup>. Experiential value is a multi-dimensional construct that consists of cognitive, affective, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions associated with the service experience <sup>[3]</sup>. Holbrook <sup>[4]</sup> emphasized the experiential value brought by consumers' consumption experience process and divided the experiential value into four quadrants based on the two dimensions of internal/external value and active/reactive value. Based on the quadrants divided by Holbrook <sup>[4]</sup>, Mathwick et al. <sup>[2]</sup> proposed the four dimensions of experiential value and the experiential value scale (EVS), including consumer return on investment, service excellence, playfulness, and aesthetics, which have been widely applied in tourism research <sup>[5][6][7]</sup>. The experiential value theory has been widely employed in the study of consumer behavior <sup>[7]</sup>.

In the context of tourism, the experiential value is the process by which visitors perceive the benefits they derive from their travel and stay at a particular destination, including the assets or resources that they, together with other visitors and the property owner, invest in creating the experience <sup>[8]</sup>. This study adopts the experiential value perspective of Mathwick et al. <sup>[2]</sup>, focusing on the impact factors that influence visitors' experiential value of the exhibitions held in a CCP. Furthermore, this study explores whether exhibition experiential value has an impact on visitors' experiential value and behavioral intentions toward CCPs.

## 2. CCP Experiential Value and Exhibition Experiential Value

A CCP is a place and space that creates an environment where cultural and creative activities, products, and services are provided to satisfy visitors' needs <sup>[9][5][10][11][12]</sup>. To attract and satisfy visitors, CCP managers should pay more attention to understanding visitors' perception and CCP experiential value <sup>[5]</sup>. The formation of the perception of experiential value is based on the numerous attractions that a CCP has to offer, from architectures and exhibitions to the souvenirs sold in the gift shop. Hung et al. <sup>[5]</sup> suggested that a park can increase its experiential value by providing a playful environment, superior staff service, upgraded aesthetics, and a quality ambiance.

Some parks attach great importance to enhancing CCP experiential value by organizing various exhibitions as a key development strategy. For example, Taipei Huashan 1914 Creative Park and Taipei Songshan Cultural and Creative Park have attached great importance to exhibitions and frequently host exhibitions with various themes. In 2018, Huashan 1914 Creative Park held 128 exhibitions, while Songshan Cultural and Creative Park held 157 exhibitions, amounting to an average of over 10 multiple-themes per month. Exhibitions at CCPs can increase the value of CCPs and enhance creative tourism and its sustainability by offering innovative products and services <sup>[13][14]</sup>.

Regarding visitors, an exhibition is a highly experience-oriented product <sup>[15]</sup>. Exhibition experiential value is influenced by many factors. For example, Lee and Min <sup>[16]</sup> found that the quality of the exhibition itself (e.g., exhibit program, admission experience, site environment) has a direct impact on the exhibition experiential value. However, research on the impact factors of exhibition experiential value remains relatively scarce, which calls for further investigation.

### **3. Antecedents of Exhibition Experiential Value**

#### **3.1. Attractiveness**

The attractiveness of the destination has a pulling effect on the visitors <sup>[9][17][18]</sup>, which is a key factor to drive people to the particular destination. In this research, attractiveness refers to the destination's ability to provide the benefits that the visitors seek <sup>[19]</sup>, reflected in the visitors' perception of the destination's capability to meet their specific travel needs <sup>[18]</sup>.

As a pull motivation, attractiveness has an effect on visitors' experiential value. Studies in ecotourism parks and malls have all confirmed that attractiveness can enhance visitors' experiential value <sup>[17][20]</sup>. For example, in ecotourism destination research, the attractiveness of an ecotourism destination has a significant positive effect on the visitors' experiential value <sup>[17]</sup>. Tandon et al. <sup>[20]</sup> identified that the attractiveness of mall atmospherics has a positive effect on the value of the mall shopping experience.

#### **3.2. Existential Authenticity**

In the tourism sector, existential authenticity, related to activities, is the state of being that is conceived by way of the visitor's participation in the touristic activities <sup>[21]</sup>. Existential authenticity takes place when there is a connection between the visitor and the destination, where the "existence" state is activated in relation to the visitor in action <sup>[21]</sup>. In this study, existential authenticity refers to an exhibition's ability to allow visitors to enter a special state of being in which they are true to themselves.

Scholars in the field of tourism have paid much attention to existential authenticity <sup>[22][23][24]</sup>; this study also adopts the same perspective. Scholars have found that existential authenticity has a positive effect on visitors' experiential value. In heritage tourism, visitors participate in activities associated with heritage-related activities that contribute to existential authenticity, which in turn, influences their perceived value of the experience <sup>[25]</sup>. Domínguez-Quintero et al. <sup>[26]</sup> found that the higher the visitor's perception of existential authenticity is, the better the quality of the visitor's experience.

Based on the discussion above, the influence of existential authenticity on the value of visitor experience can be found. We infer that when visitors' existential authenticity is stimulated by the exhibition, it affects the value of visitors' experience of the exhibition.

#### **3.3. Self-Congruence**

Self-congruence is defined as the degree of match between the product image and the consumer's self-concept <sup>[27][28]</sup>. Self-concept reflects "all of the individual's thoughts and feelings about themselves as an object" <sup>[29]</sup>. Self-concept is a multidimensional concept that consists of the real self, the ideal self, the social self, and the ideal social self <sup>[27][28]</sup>. Consumers reinforce their self-concept by choosing to purchase products that are self-congruent <sup>[27]</sup>. In this study, self-congruence refers to the congruence between the exhibition's image and the visitor's self-concept.

At present, few studies have examined the impact of self-congruence on exhibition experiential value; however, past research might be able to provide some cues. For example, Luna-Cortés <sup>[30]</sup> pointed out that self-congruence promotes customers' experiential value when they use their digital social networks. Self-congruence contributes to the experiential value of shopping <sup>[31]</sup>. Moreover, studies in the tourism industry have found that self-congruity has various effects on tourists' experiential value. For example, tourists' self-congruity has an effect on their perceived value of a destination <sup>[32]</sup>.

#### **3.4. Exhibition–Park Image Congruence**

Image congruence is defined as the consumer's personal judgment toward the image consistency and compatibility between products and other objects <sup>[33]</sup>. For example, the restaurant–guest image congruence refers to whether consumers perceive the chef's image as compatible and consistent with the restaurant <sup>[34]</sup>. In this study, exhibition–park image congruence refers to the visitor's assessment of the alignment between the exhibition's image and the CCP's image.

Regarding co-branding theory and the match-up hypothesis, the former believes that the pairing between an event and the brand image of the destination will shift the image perception of the event to that of the destination; the latter predicts an effect of image transfer influenced by the degree of matching between the event and the destination brand <sup>[35]</sup>. In addition, other studies have found that image congruence has an impact on consumer behaviors. For instance, in a study on the relationship between a racing event and its host city, Hallmann and Breuer <sup>[33]</sup> found that the congruence between the image of the marathon and that of the host city has an impact on visitors' satisfaction and their willingness to revisit the host city. Likewise, consumers' judgment of the degree of suitability of an event held by a particular shopping outlet has an effect on their satisfaction with the event and their shopping enjoyment <sup>[36]</sup>. Similarly, consumers' perception of the image congruence of a luxury restaurant and a guest chef has an effect on their perception of the restaurant <sup>[34]</sup>.

Regarding CCPs, each park possesses its own characteristics and positioning in creating a specific image. The congruence between the image of a park and that of an exhibition held in the park is vital for the experiential value for both the park and the exhibition.

## **4. The Influence of Exhibition Experiential Value on CCP Experiential Value**

Previous scholars have pointed out that as one of the elements of a park for arousing visitors' emotions, exhibitions can affect the park's ratings, which is a topic that warrants further research <sup>[5]</sup>. In this paper, when visitors visit a CCP-held exhibition, they develop an assessment based on their observations, contacts, and onsite product and service consumption <sup>[2]</sup>. Exhibitions can enrich visitors' value perception and enhance the attractiveness and competitiveness of the park. For the CCP managers, an exhibition can serve as one product that brings experiential value to visitors.

At present, the topic of exhibition experiential value as related to CCPs has not been established; however, other studies provide useful references for examining the relationship between the two. For instance, Lee et al. <sup>[37]</sup> found that visitors' satisfaction with a festival has an effect on their attachment to the host destination, which in turn, affects their loyalty to the destination. Tsaur et al. <sup>[38]</sup> found that festival attachment positively affects attachment and loyalty to the festival destination.

## **5. The Effect of CCP Experiential Value on Behavioral Intentions**

In this study, behavioral intentions mainly refer to visitors' behavior of revisiting a CCP and advocating for the CCP through word of mouth <sup>[39]</sup>. The services experienced by the consumers can affect their behavioral intentions <sup>[40]</sup>. The better the service experience consumers perceive, the greater the likelihood that they will have favorable behavioral intentions.

In the tourism industry, stimulating factors inspire the consumers' experiential value perception, which, as an intrinsic psychological evaluation, affects their behavioral intentions. In a water park, visitors' experience quality affects their experiential value perception and their behavioral intentions toward the park <sup>[41]</sup>. At ecotourism destinations, the experiential value of the destination has a positive effect on visitors' behavioral intentions <sup>[17]</sup>.

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