


Article

The Empirical Research on Transfer of Cultural Meaning from Commodity to Customer—A Case Study for Hotel Staying Experience

Kuo-Jui Hu ¹, Chia-Pin Chueh ² and Yuh-Shihng Chang ^{3,*} 

¹ Graduate Institute of Color & Illumination Technology, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Taipei 10607, Taiwan; kuojui@mail.ntust.edu.tw

² Graduate Institute of Applied Science and Technology, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Taipei 10607, Taiwan; d10822503@mail.ntust.edu.tw

³ Department of Information Management, National Chin-Yi University of Technology, Taichung 41170, Taiwan

* Correspondence: eric_chang@ncut.edu.tw

Abstract: This purpose of this article is to explore the case for the integration of art, aesthetics, and the atmosphere of local life into hotel interior designs. We used statistical empirical methods to verify whether the transformation of cultural elements into tourism products can really bring tourists to feel cultural meaning. In this study, we use the “Movement of meaning” model proposed by McCracken as a validation of how consumers feel the effects of cultural learning through the consumption of hotel stays. This research focuses on the integration of local culture and hotel consumption in the part of cultural learning, and particularly on the second stage of the meaning trajectory: hotel tourists feel the cultural meaning transfer when they consume and stay. In order to objectively investigate the influence of cultural products on guest consumption experience, we asked more than 187 hotel guests for their data to understand their perceptions of artistic experience and cultural meaning through questionnaires. The contribution of our research is to provide a framework for testing the validity of cultural meanings transformed into commodity consumption for tourism. The value of this research lies in our empirical research on how people perceive the beauty of local culture, and how the combination of cultural elements and hotel design allows customers to experience the cultural meaning benefits. The quantitative verification method of this research for the “meaning movement” model can be used as an operational procedure for tourism relative research, especially for verifying the effectiveness of cultural meaning transmission by integrating culture into tourism products.

Keywords: customer perception; cultural learning; cultural meaning; tourism; “Movement of meaning”



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1. Introduction

In recent years, the incorporation of unique (and in many times niche) cultural experience into tourism activities has been taking place worldwide, e.g., anime pilgrimage in Japan, which “involves traveling to locations that resemble particular scenes in anime pieces” [1] or research in wildlife watching and its consumer perception [2]. To a larger extent, the area of cultural learning emphasizes the public’s education in knowing the environment, attitude, technology, and culture, to achieve environmental sustainability [3–5]. For example, through the discovery of cultural value and combining creativity into a commodity applied it into the tourism industry.

Douglas and Isherwood [6] and Sahlins [7] argued that consumer goods have commercial value and significance. The product itself has the ability to carry and convey cultural meaning. McCracken [8] believed that cultural meaning is transferred from the world of culture to consumer goods. Then the cultural meaning is transferred from the goods to individual consumers. In other words, cultural meaning can flow at two transfer points:

the real environment of culture is transformed into goods and then flows from goods consumption to individuals.

Besides the premium services that hotels provide through quality food, accommodation, and services, hotels can increase the consumer value by providing feel-good experiences in culture. Local culture can be an art-themed element of the global hotel industry or even transformed into a commodity. Successful examples of cultural-themed hotels are, for example, the Angkor Wat hotel in Cambodia [9] and the Kagaya hotel in Japan [10]. These hotels provide interior designs and the beauty of art for consumers to relax. They integrate art, aesthetics, and cultural atmosphere as a strategy for art-themed hotel businesses to increase guest experience. These are successful examples in which cultural meaning is extracted from the cultural constituted world, converted into tourist products, and transferred to consumers via the set of instruments and rituals. Cultural learning is also an important issue currently, and it is a common intersection in environmental sustainability, social sustainability, and economic sustainability [11,12].

Image involves both visual and non-visual elements in environment and is important for the success of goods promotion [13], especially products that make consumer experience value. Themed hotel users' reaction to the spatial environment and atmospheric design is a key factor that should enhance the art that is perceived while staying in hotels. The American architecture designer John Portman suggests different architectural spaces bring different feelings and that the journey that passes through a building should be delicately arranged [14].

Culture adapts to the nature of the environment and social life, forming the common thinking of people and social identity, then developing a higher-level artistic expression that belongs to local characteristics. The importance of the cultural environment and its preservation are the trends for the sustainable development of current cultural environment resources (see, e.g., [15,16]). Cultural learning is focused on the relationship between the environment, humanities, and arts how these can allow a country's social culture to create sustainable development and improve people's recognition of their society and country. Based on the above-mentioned theories and real observations, we can transform the cultural experience and learning into commodities through creative packaging. This is a business opportunity for the tourism development. The research question of this research is a set of tools and rituals for meaning transfer in hotel interior design and culture. How do we prove that tourists can understand cultural meaning through the accommodation experience?

McCracken (1986) regraded that culture is transferred from a culturally constituted world, that is, from daily consumption through the fashion and advertising system (representing the first stage of the trajectory), and then through various tools and rituals (the second stage of the trajectory) that represent people's consumer experience until the meaning is transferred to individual consumers. This model framework can be applied to observe whether goods successfully transfer cultural meaning to consumers [13], and can be applied to explain individuals' consumption behavior for empirical analysis. This study will adopt the "Movement of meaning" model as the theoretical framework, collect customer questionnaire data, establish hypotheses, and test whether they can verify that the packaging of cultural elements in the hotel space is effective in the transfer of cultural meaning via the consumption process of the hotel guests. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that tourists can perceive cultural meaning through the staying experience of hotel accommodation.

Previous studies based on McCracken's culture and consumption theory used frame explanations [8,17] or interviews [13] to conduct micro-analysis to explain individual consumption behavior. The contribution of this research lies in the empirical verification method proposed to conduct verifiable quantitative analysis on the consumption behavior of cultural commodities. These verification results truly reflect the thoughts and feelings of customers, and provide an innovative direction for the research on the integration of cultural commodities and tourism.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Taiwanese Cultural Puppet Show

The most popular type of puppetry in Taiwan is the puppets worn like a glove and manipulated by hand. The puppet show is one of Taiwanese folklore's traditional dramas. This kind of drama art uses hands to move puppets and tell stories [18] (see Figure 1a). Except for the head and limbs, the puppet is made from cloth. In the early 20th century in Taiwan, traditional outdoor drama was popular before television was invented. Watching traditional outdoor drama was one of the people's main entertainments at that time. Traditional outdoor drama derived from the harvest thanksgiving ceremony to thank the agricultural God for the crops harvested in fall [19] (see Figure 1b). A once thankful performance to God became public entertainment. Thus, it is called traditional outdoor drama. Since television was invented and became popular, in 1960, Taiwan television stations started to play the puppet show. With the broadcasting of TV programs and the promotion of the advertising system, the ratings of puppet shows reached 97%. Puppet show was a fashion system of mass communication at the time in Taiwan, but now it has become people's collective memory.



(a)



(b)

Figure 1. Puppet-shows express unique Taiwanese cultural practices, (a) the puppet characters and theater design represent Taiwan's craft and culture. [18]. (b) The original performance form of puppet show is performed outdoors in autumn, After harvesting crops in the autumn, the puppet show performs to thank God outdoors [19].

Cultural sustainability is committed to learning and practicing culturally relevant knowledge, content, and lifestyle in a sustainable manner [5,20,21]. Currently, cultural sustainability education has become a key issue. Taiwanese traditional culture has been regarded as an important resource for developing the tourism industry. Successful cases of tourism combined with local cultures in Taiwan include Jiufen Culture [22], Pingxi Sky Lanterns Festival [23], and Tainan "Yanshui" firework [24]. Puppet shows conveying historical stories have always been a form of drama and cultural space belonging to Taiwanese. They are suitable for consumers of all ages. But because of the digital age, people can easily obtain all kinds of information from the Internet, including entertainment programs. Puppet shows no longer attract people's attention. From the perspective of cultural sustainability, puppet art has a "gap" for the audience and needs to be filled. Modern audiences no longer watch puppet shows outdoors, or do not watch puppet shows in specific theaters. Their understanding of puppet culture lacks the experience of connecting with their real life, so through the contact of visual or physical objects of puppet shows in the environmental space, or the experience of watching puppet shows in travel can create the experience of contact and consumption for cultural significance. That is, to let consumers ("audience/reader") participate in the process of cultural meaning transfer.

Therefore, this study will use the case of puppet art to be integrated into hotel space design, convey cultural significance through the accommodation experience of hotel stay, and fill the gap in the understanding of puppet art and culture.

2.2. Model of “Movement of Meaning”

McCracken (1984) advocated that culture constitutes the world by supplying it with meaning [8]. Usually, cultural meaning flows from a culturally constituted world and transferred to a consumer good. Then the meaning is drawn from the consumer good and transferred to an individual consumer. In other words, cultural meaning is located in three objects: the culturally constituted world, the consumer good, and the individual consumer, and moves in a trajectory at two points of transfer: world to good and good to individual. Figure 2 summarizes this relationship. In order to check that cultural meaning flows continually between three objects, McCracken proposed to analyze this trajectory of meaning, taking two of its stages as following:

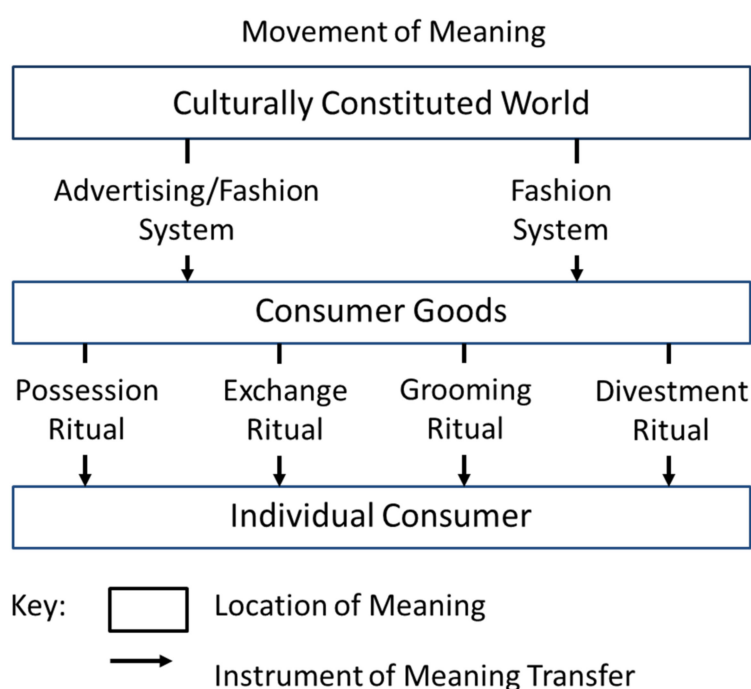


Figure 2. The model of “Movement of meaning” proposed by McCracken (1984).

2.2.1. Instrument of Meaning: Transfer World to Good

Meaning first exists in the culturally constituted world. To become a goods consumer, cultural meaning must be transferred from the world to commodities by means of transmission: advertising or product design via the fashion system. In the case of this research, the marketing director of the hotel tried to combine the two elements of puppets art and the hotel’s interior design, so that tourists could recognize the basic connection between them. When this symbolic equivalence is successfully established, the tourist will attribute his/her cultural experience of watching a puppet drama in a hotel to hotel accommodation products. The known attributes (puppet art) of the culturally constituted world therefore reside in the unknown attributes (tourism experience) of consumer goods, and complete the transfer of meaning from puppet culture to hotel accommodation products [8].

2.2.2. Instrument of Meaning: Transfer Good to Consumer

How does cultural meaning that is resident in goods move from the consumer good into the perception of the consumer? McCracken regarded that must be accomplished by a second set of instruments of meaning transfer. These instruments are “symbolic

action” or ritual [25,26]. Some forms of “symbolic action” or ritual are devoted to different socialization ends. Some forms are used to give “experiential reality” to immerse or accept cultural principles and concepts in a natural manner [27].

Ritual is used to transfer cultural meaning from goods to individuals. The possession ritual can be used to serve this purpose. It represents a stage in a more general process by which meaning is moved from consumer good to individual consume. For example, Taiwanese puppet shows have not only combined the digital industry to transform into digital video (for example, combined with animation, post effects, and movie scripts): they have tried to promote the culture to the world of young consumers; even combined with the Japanese anime industry to form puppet anime and spread to young people. The work team is involved in the flow of cultural meaning, including the director, puppet show performers, marketing companies, marketing directors, and voice actors and soundtrack (such as animated film music). The individual successfully adopts possession rituals to extract the meaningful properties that they have been watching in the puppet drama. Using possession rituals, individuals move cultural meaning out of watching puppet anime or movies and into their daily entertainment activities, which supports McCracken’s observation [8] that the consumer is the final essential participant in the process of meaning transfer. That is, the advertising agencies create fashion trends to move cultural meaning from the culturally constituted world into a consumer good.

2.3. Experience Design in the Tourism Industry

Possession ritual also includes consumers obtaining the right to use commodities through purchase, and then creating consumer experience in the process of using commodities. Experience can effectively convey the value of the product to consumers. With the consumption of commodities such as hotel accommodation, consumers can feel the service and accommodation value that the hotel brings to consumers because they have the right to stay and consume in the space.

The internationally famous architect John Portman once said, “if I can put the factors of five senses perception into design, I will have the ability to make impact on how and what people react to environment, and therefore a sort of meaningful world (space) will be created by me or is to be perceived directly by people.” Portman emphasizes the interactive experience between the environment and humans through the human’s five senses, mentality, or even affection for the senses [14]. The term experience is derived from the Latin “*experientia*”. Aristotle states that things are to be memorized by feelings and that experience as a process of memory accumulation can be formed by the same memory reminiscences [12].

The value of cultural experience has increased travelers’ good impressions of tour destinations and affects potential visitors [28–31]. In 1999, B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore proposed the statement of experience economy in which for individual perceptions in meaningful experiences, the value of experience is higher than the benefits of products or services. That is to say, the era of the service economy has ended, and the era of the experience economy has begun [32]. Moreover, they also mention the four phases for economic evolution, which are commodities, agricultural goods, industrial goods, as well as services and experience. Further, Kelly, J.R. suggests that experience refers to a recognition that is to be created in the process of certain activities in a certain time; experience as a sort of spiritual process can connect space and time, which is not a simple perception but a sort of behavior within consciousness [33].

Experience is the extension of service and the innovation value of the commodities [34]. The value of consumption is to be created by a good purchase experience to get customers into a pleasant meaning through immerse this product (possession ritual). Experience refers to a wonderful feeling created as a certain individual emotion or spiritual state to be reached in a certain realm or situation. In addition, for an individual, experience is a sort of sensation that provokes mental response and meaning is to be perceived by certain stimulations [32–39].

Experience is also considered to be one of the most effective sources of symbolic meaning to products. It can even effectively extract important elements from the culturally constituted world and put them into the product. This relationship promotes a circular flow of symbolic meaning derived from culture and transfers to the symbolic world of experience, which is then understood and used by consumers to construct her/his inner self-concept and her/his social world. [40] (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998). For example, in festivals in Eastern countries, people understand and confirm their identity with social culture and strengthen their sense of self-existence in this society by participating in the rituals in the festival and experiencing the meaning of culture.

As mentioned in Section 2.2, when the hotel regards puppet art of the culturally constituted world as a cultural element, it is integrated into the hotel's space design and packaged as a tourist product. Does this travel experience create a flow of cultural meaning and create a pleasant experience? This research hopes to use the structure of "Movement of meaning" proposed by McCracken as the research framework, and to further collect questionnaires from hotel guests. It offers an empirical study of the effective transfer of cultural meaning [8].

2.4. Previous Related Studies

Kepes (1995) states that visual language as a means of knowledge communication is used with human wisdom and is related to the factors of social culture, visual culture, and consumption culture, in which cultural learning is to be proceeded by using visual elements to interpret art, culture, style, or space [40]. With social communication, space as one of the visual elements is explained by culture, art, and style, especially by collective cultural activities. In the same view as Kepes, Geli (2011) argued that the cultural learning is to be achieved by self-involved scene ambiance and collective religious behavior in a space which is filled with art and culture [41].

Andrade et al. (2020) examined the trend towards an "authentic cultural" tourism experience and evaluated whether U.S. visitors will be willing to pay for a deeper integration and representation of Hawaiian culture in tourism offerings. They adopted the questionnaires to quantify the willingness to pay (WTP) more by the tourists to Hawaii in order to experience a more "authentic Hawaiian cultural experience" as well as "sustainable experiences". This study focused on continental U.S. visitors' perceptions of Hawaiian culture and the sustainability of Hawaiian tourism products, as well as the assessment of locally grown food and tourists' willingness to pay extra for these tourism products and experiences [42].

The development of artistic services is often unsuccessful because quality artistic services are characterized by offering new experiences to customers and pursuing excellence of the performing services in the details. Wang et al. (2018) proposed the ASISE model was conducted on Relais and Châteaux (R&C) hotel membership in Taiwan to better understand the steps and activities that describe service innovation processes. The ASISE model emphasizes an art-oriented and continuous cycle, via conducting field investigations and semi-structured interviews (with managers, employees, customers, artists). Their study thoroughly analyzed the obstacles of integrating art into hotel service processes, and successfully established a series of steps for developing art-oriented services [43].

Elliott and Wattanasuwan [39] believe that there is considerable empirical evidence that the attitudes formed through direct experience are stronger, easier to obtain, more confident, and more predictive of behavior than the attitudes formed through intermediary experience obtained through advertising [44,45], especially those products used in cultural learning or experienced as marketing. For such products as hotels advertised as culturally characteristic, the brand recognition of tourists does not come from the advertising system, but the pleasant experience after their stay to confirm their brand and achieve marketing effect.

Chheang regarded that the tourists visiting Angkor can be generally categorized as cultural tourists. Their motives and experiences are intertwined [9]. If there were no cultural

sustainability, for any race, any country, or an area, the history, local art and aesthetic, visual images, and storage would be gradually forgotten. Because of the interdependency of the influence of humanity and environment, cultural heritage sustainability concerns the love for local culture, the protection of cultural assets, and further cultural promotion and art innovation. By taking the Cambodian Angkor Wat art-themed hotel as an example, the Angkor Dynasty scene is the theme. With a great amount of art carved in the stone walls and Angkor roofing, Angkor wat history has been presented in an art-themed hotel. Chheang's research examined tourist perceptions and experiences through conducting survey based on the standard questionnaire. He argued that tourist perception is positive and their experiences are beyond expectations based on cultural enrichment and local people friendliness plus local hospitality facilities [9]. By incorporating history, culture, art, and aesthetic elements into the hotel, Angkor's atmosphere has been uniquely created and it attracts tourists worldwide, which makes it a successful hotel business.

UNWTO and KCTI (2016) joint publication presents 13 cases from three North-East Asian countries-Republic of Korea, Japan, and China-as good practices in cultural accommodation approach for sustainable tourism development. This book stated that cultural accommodations are emerging as a form of tourism product with a great potential to attract tourists combining traditional lodging services with authentic cultural experiences based on the traditional way of life of the host community [10]. For example, in Japan, there are hotels marked "cultural property hotel" that are hotels where all or part of the buildings are registered as tangible cultural properties of Japan (such as the Kagaya hotel). Cultural property hotels usually have a history of several hundred years, dating back to the Meiji and even Edo periods, and their architectural style and design have important architectural historical value and cultural significance [10]. Visitors in "cultural property hotel" can not only admire the meticulously crafted traditional historical buildings, but also experience the hotel's authentic hot spring facilities, delicious Japanese cuisine, and even beautiful Japanese gardens. Many travel enthusiasts choose "cultural property hotel" hoping to experience Japanese traditional culture and art through various senses such as sight, hearing, touch, etc., so that guests can learn about Japan and experience culture while staying in the hotel.

Based on previous relative studies in this section, we organize them as follows:

- (1) Kepes [40] and Gehl [41] believe that cultural learning can be realized in spaces full of arts and culture. Therefore, we set the interior design (atmosphere design in space) as independent variable that affects the customers' perception of culture meaning.
- (2) Elliott and Wattanasuwan [39], Fazio and Zanna [44], and Smith and Swinyard [45] believe that experience is an intermediary factor affecting marketing effectiveness. Andrade et al. [42] summarized four factors of tourism motivation from their research case for Hawaii tourism: (i) learn new thing; (ii) to be entertained; (iii) culture and history; (iv) experience atmosphere. The authors confirmed that the above four experiences can make culture sustainable development. Therefore, this case study is based on the theoretical viewpoints of the above-mentioned research literatures, that experience can affect the cultural learning. We assumed that perceived artistic experience and pleasant staying experience are the independent variables that affect the customers' perceived cultural meaning.
- (3) Wang et al. (2018) believed that the focus of marketing culture is to integrate art into hotel service processes and develop art-oriented services. They suggested that the use of innovation is one of the key factors to make the marketing of culture or art success [43]. We took marketing of culture as the independent variable affected the customers perceived the cultural meaning.
- (4) UNWTO and KCTI (2016) found in the case of "Review of Japanese Cultural Property Hotels" that cultural property hotels have important architectural, historical value and cultural significance, which is why tourists prefer to choose "cultural property hotels" [10]. They believe that marking cultural properties as the brand image of the hotel, which means choosing a hotel with the brand image of cultural property,

they can experience culture and art. Therefore, this research regards the brand image of the hotel as an independent variable that affects the customers perceive the cultural meaning.

- (5) As in the Section 2.2, McCracken (1986) argues that culture transfers meaning from the ritual of consuming experience to individual consumer [8]. The consumer owns the product and experiences it as a ritual. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that tourists can perceive cultural meaning through the staying experience of hotel accommodation. Here, we set the understanding of cultural meaning as the dependent variable of this study.

3. Research Method and Approach

The framework of this research adopts the “Movement of meaning” model published by McCracken (1986). The first stage of the research framework revolves around “institution as a means of meaning transmission: product design combining puppet art marketing packaging and travel fashion [8:74]. In our framework, travel fashion trends, travel agencies, and interior design agencies are the three main tools to transfer the cultural meaning of puppet art from the cultural structure of tourist consumers to the commodity (stay in hotel).

The tourism industry, together with advertising and media (such as travel agencies, travel magazines, digital advertising media, and e-commerce platforms), plays a key role in two parts of the development trajectory: from the culturally constituted world of consumers to the construction and investment of the meaning of products (i.e., hotel); and spread the art of puppetry to hotel residents. Constructs that affect the flow of cultural meaning include ‘Interior Design’, ‘Perceived Art Experience’, ‘Marketing of Culture’, ‘Hotel Brand Image’, and ‘Pleasant Staying Experience’. When the customer successfully receives the cultural meaning carried by these constructs, the meaning flow from the product to the customer is successfully completed.

We selected the HiOne Gallery hotel (in Taichun, Taiwan) as study field to investigate how the hotel staying (commodity) transfer the culture meaning to customers successfully during their stay. To promote local culture and increase their brand image for marketing, the hotel management created a Taiwanese puppet show themed hotel. The puppet shows and theatres are part of the hotel’s interior design and allow guests to enjoy a facet of Taiwanese historical and cultural artefacts. Besides business aspects, the hotel management intended to create more value for the customer in creating a space for experiencing local art.

The hotel is this study field which introduces puppet performance through culture themed design, so that tourists can watch puppet art performances and enjoy the puppet collections and exhibitions installed in the hotel space (Figure 3 shows some parts of the hotel’s interior design). We obtained questionnaires from 187 tourists staying in this hotel. Questionnaire respondents were random sampling and obtained their willingness to assist in completing the questionnaire (Appendix A).

The empirical research focuses on exploring the “second stage of the trajectory”: the flow constructs and rituals from the integration of puppet art into hotel space design to the transfer of cultural meaning to consumers. The empirical method of this research adopts quantitative verification. We choose the ‘Cultural Meaning’ that consumers finally receive as the dependent variable in Figure 4. As mentioned in the Section 2.4, the independent variables are derived from the theory reviewed from previous relative studies, and they are the medias of ritual of consumption when tourists staying in hotel (possession ritual): (1) ‘Interior Design’; (2) ‘Perceived Art Experience’; (3) Marketing of Culture; (4) Hotel Brand Image; (5) Pleasant Staying Experience. Then, the statistical model of our empirical work is presented in Figure 4, and its hypotheses will be explained as follows (as seen in Figure 5):



Figure 3. The puppet show themed design of the hotel. (a) This is the stage design of the Taiwanese Puppet Show in the space of the small theater image. (b) This is a set design of a specific puppet show for a Taiwanese Puppet Show's performance scene.

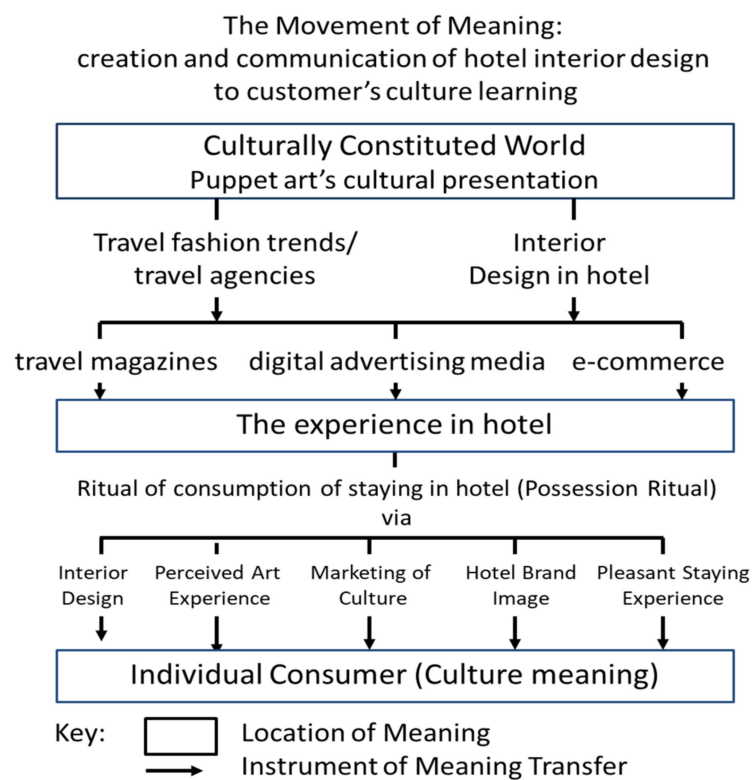


Figure 4. The research model.

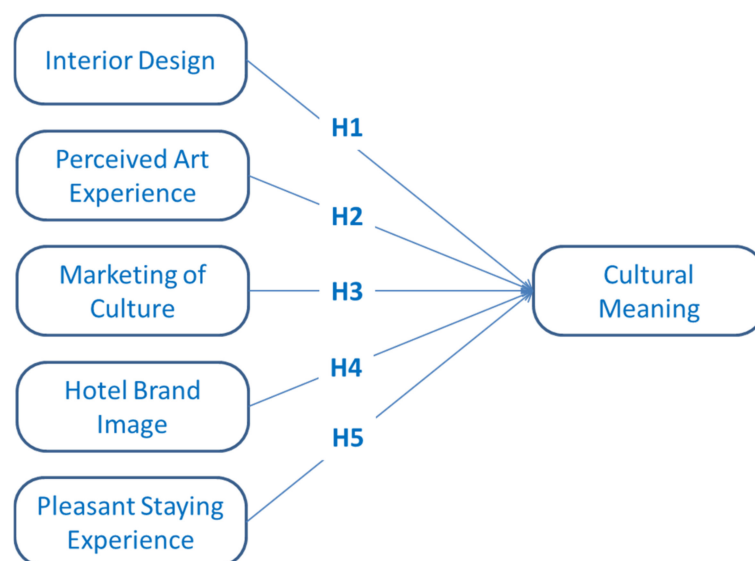


Figure 5. The statistical model for the evaluation of transfer of cultural meaning.

As mentioned, we proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): *The interior design is positively correlated with conveying culture meaning to customers.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2): *The perceived art experience is positively correlated with conveying culture meaning to customers.*

Hypothesis 3 (H3): *The marketing of culture is positively correlated with conveying culture meaning to customers.*

Hypothesis 4 (H4): *The hotel brand image is positively related with conveying culture meaning to customers.*

Hypothesis 5 (H5): *The pleasant staying experience is positively correlated with conveying culture meaning to customers.*

4. Empirical for Cultural Meaning Evaluation

In this research analysis, each construct's average value is over 3.5, which shows customers' positive feedback. The analysis and results of this questionnaire (Appendix A) are presented later in this article. Thus, each of the constructs' average value is over 3.5, which shows customers' positive feedback. Table 1 shows that there is positive feedback from the customer regarding the Hotel's "Interior Design", "Perceived Art Experience", "Hotel Brand Image", "Marketing of Cultural", "Pleasant Staying Experience" and "Cultural Meaning".

4.1. Study Reliability Analysis

The question of reliability rises as the function of scale is stretched to encompass the realm of prediction. One of the most popular reliability statistics used today is Cronbach's alpha [46]. Cronbach's alpha determines the internal consistency or average correlation of attributes in a survey instrument to gauge its reliability [47]. Reliable analysis can examine the standard of stability for a questionnaire. There is a high level of stability and reliability in the questionnaire survey as a high level of agreement is reached from a group of people's opinions in a certain questionnaire. In this research, a reliable analysis result for the construct of "Interior Design" is 0.853, "Perceived Art Experience" is 0.884, "Hotel

Brand Image” is 0.896, “Marketing of Cultural” is 0.886, “Pleasant Staying Experience” is 0.812 and “Cultural Meaning” is 0.845. All of these have a Cronbach α value of over 0.71, which shows a high level of reliability in each construct. Due to the same unit of variances, we used the Likert’s Cronbach’s α value as an approach to testify the reliability. There is a low level of reliability if the Cronbach’s α value is lower than 0.35, a value between 0.35 to 0.70 indicates a moderate level of reliability, and an α value more than 0.7 means a high level of reliability [48]. Thus, based on the analysis results in Table 2, there is a high level of reliability among the research constructs. Based on these values, our analysis is reliable.

Table 1. The average value of constructs.

Constructs	N	Average Value	Standard Deviation ¹	Total Variances ²
Interior Design	187	3.7923	0.56452	0.319
Perceived Art Experience	187	3.9143	0.61718	0.381
Marketing of Cultural	187	3.9249	0.54895	0.301
Hotel Brand Image	187	3.9376	0.59261	0.351
Pleasant Staying Experience	187	3.8452	0.54351	0.295
Cultural Meaning	187	3.9577	0.58249	0.339
Valid N			187	

¹ Standard deviation is to be defined by the variance square root, by which we obtain an average value from a group of variable values. ² Total Variances refers to the maximum value of the 187 questionnaires constructs variances. By taking interior design construct as an example, in this research, the average value is 3.6417, the maximum value will be: $3.7923 + 0.319 = 4.1113$ and the minimum value will be: $3.7923 - 0.319 = 3.4733$.

Table 2. The reliability analysis.

Constructs	Cronbach α Value
Interior Design	0.853
Perceived Art Experience	0.884
Marketing of Cultural	0.886
Hotel Brand Image	0.896
Pleasant Staying Experience	0.812
Cultural Meaning	0.845

4.2. Efficiency Analysis (Confirmatory Factors Analysis)

Efficiency analysis was applied to measure if the input meets the output. We used a confirmatory factor analysis to determine whether the questionnaire analysis results that have been obtained meet the reasonable facts. In this research, we used principal component analysis to verify the constructs, the Varimax of KMO (the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin), and Barlett’s test of sphericity interpretation to examine the value. The KMO test value is 0.948, which is near 1, and the sphericity test value is 7326.079, which means the constructs in the questionnaire can be carried out for confirmatory factors analysis. The constructs were merged into one construct. Each construct value must be over 1 to prove efficiency. Based on the overvalued size, the factor value was decided. The eigenvalue can show the total variances explained in each factor. If this value is higher, the factors’ explanation is stronger. A factor is considered decisive if the eigenvalue is over one [49]. Six constructs were obtained by principal component analysis [50] and the varimax method, and the eigenvalue of rotation sums of squared loadings are over 1. This means there is a high level of efficiency in this research questionnaire, as seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Total variance explained.

Constructs	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	Variable %	Cumulative %
Interior Design	14.082	52.157	51.157
Perceived Art Experience	2.093	7.753	59.910
Marketing of Cultural	1.225	4.538	74.288
Hotel Brand Image	1.330	4.927	64.837
Pleasant Staying Experience	1.199	4.441	78.729
Cultural Meaning	1.327	4.913	69.750

4.3. Correlation Coefficient Analysis

In this research, we used the Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis as a tool to examine the hypothesis of the correlation between variances. Based on the analysis results shown in Table 4, Figure 6 shows the significant correlation between variances. We propose that: (1) there is a significant positive correlation between “Interior Design” and “Perceived Art Experience”, correlation coefficient value is 0.748 and the significant correlation value reaches 0.01 (marked by **); (2) there is a significant positive correlation between “Interior Design” and “Hotel Brand Image”, correlation coefficient value is 0.705 **; (3) there is a significant positive correlation between “Interior Design” and “Cultural Meaning”, correlation coefficient value is 0.694 **; (4) there is a significant positive correlation between “Interior Design” and “Marketing of Cultural”, correlation coefficient value is 0.753 **; (5) there is a significant positive correlation between “Interior Design” and “Pleasant Staying Experience”, correlation coefficient value is 0.632 **. Incorporating puppet art into the visual aspect of interior design is positive correlated with constructs that include “Hotel Brand Image”, “Perceived Art Experience”, “Cultural Meaning”, “Marketing of Cultural”, and “Pleasant Staying Experience”. The results show that all five hypotheses are supported, and the correlation coefficient of each hypothesis is significant.

Table 4. The results of Pearson’s coefficient analysis.

Constructs	Interior Design	Perceived Art Experience	Hotel Brand Image	Cultural Meaning	Marketing of Cultural	Pleasant Staying Experience
Interior Design	1	0.748 **	0.705 **	0.694 **	0.753 **	0.632 **
Perceived Art Experience	0.748 **	1	0.759 **	0.749 **	0.648 **	0.613 **
Hotel Brand Image	0.705 **	0.759 **	1	0.787 **	0.742 **	0.691 **
Cultural Meaning	0.694 **	0.749 **	0.787 **	1	0.797 **	0.711 **
Marketing of Cultural	0.753 **	0.648 **	0.742 **	0.797 **	1	0.747 **
Pleasant Staying Experience	0.632 **	0.613 **	0.691 **	0.711 **	0.747 **	1

** Significant correlation value reaches 0.01; a two-tailed test.

Regarding perceived art experience, we obtain that: (1) there is a significant positive correlation between “Perceived Art Experience” and “Hotel Brand Image”, correlation coefficient value is 0.759 **; (2) there is a significant positive correlation between “Perceived Art Experience” and “Cultural Meaning”, correlation coefficient value is 0.749 **; (3) there is a significant positive correlation between “Perceived Art Experience” and “Marketing of Cultural”, correlation coefficient value is 0.648 **; (4) there is a significant positive correlation between “Perceived Art Experience” and “Pleasant Staying Experience”, correlation coefficient value is 0.613 **.

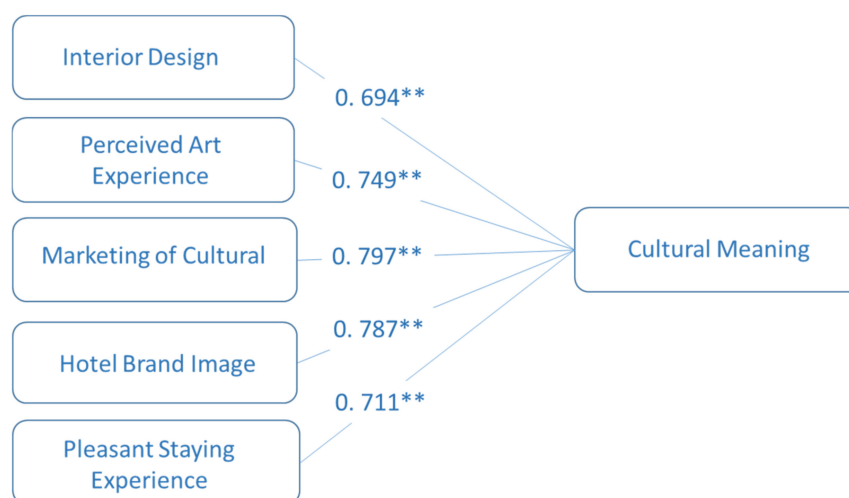


Figure 6. The correlation coefficient value in constructs. ** Significant correlation value reaches 0.01; a two-tailed test.

Based on the above empirical information, we prove that there are significant positive correlations between the following constructs: (1) there is a significant positive correlation between “Interior Design” and “Cultural Meaning”, correlation coefficient value is 0.694 **; (2) there is a significant positive correlation between “Perceived Art Experience” and “Cultural Meaning”, correlation coefficient value is 0.749 **; (3) there is a significant positive correlation between “Marketing of Cultural” and “Cultural Meaning”, correlation coefficient value is 0.797 **; (4) there is a significant positive correlation between “Hotel Brand Image” and “Cultural Meaning”, correlation coefficient value is 0.787 **; (5) there is a significant positive correlation between “Pleasant Staying Experience” and “Cultural Meaning”, correlation coefficient value is 0.711 **. These five hypotheses prove that consumption ritual (possession ritual) in the model of “Movement of meaning” does exist in the transfer of cultural meaning via the commodity (stay in hotel), and it also points out the flow way in which cultural meaning is transferred from the position of the commodity in the system to the position of the individual consumer.

5. Finding and Discussion

The key findings of this study, confirmed through the correlation coefficient analysis, are as follows:

1. Through the data obtained from the questionnaire survey of hotel consumers, we have verified that the meaning flow in the commodity has been transformed from consumer goods to consumer experience to acquire cultural meaning. In this case study, the puppet art will be spread to hotel consumers. The flow of cultural meaning includes ‘Interior Design’, ‘Perceived Art Experience’, ‘Marketing of Culture’, ‘Hotel Brand Image’, and ‘Pleasant Staying Experience’. When customers successfully receive the cultural meanings carried by these media, it has successfully completed the flow of meaning from commodity to customers. At the same time, this also represents the integration of Taiwan’s puppet show culture into the hotel’s “interior design” in this case, allowing customers to complete the experience of cultural learning;
2. Consumers are the ultimate necessary participants in the process of transmission for cultural meaning. The hotel’s experience with puppet art elements can effectively convey cultural values to consumers. The sensory experience of immersion in the space allows consumers to possess the real life experience between cultural influence and personal construction of their own cultural meaning.

Although the empirical research of this study is focused on verifying the “Movement of meaning” model published by McCracken [8], “the second stage of trajectory”, based on

Pearson's coefficient analysis in Table 4, in addition to the five hypotheses we put forward, there is a significant positive correlation. In the following, we further discuss the findings related to cultural learning in this case.

5.1. Hotel Interior Design Can Convey Cultural Meaning to Customers of Hotel

According to Pearson's coefficient analysis results in Table 4, incorporating puppet art into hotel interior design creates a cultural art atmosphere for customers to perceive culture meaning. This is supported by a correlation coefficient value between "Interior Design" and "Culture Meaning" of up to 0.694 **. Hypothesis 1 has been demonstrated that the hotel interior design can convey cultural meaning to customers of hotel.

5.2. Perceived Art Experience Positively Conveys Cultural Meaning to Customers

Cultural education could be achieved through the Taiwan puppet exhibitions in the hotel. The knowledge of Taiwanese culture-related puppet characters, costumes, drama, and history will be acquired by staying in the hotel. For this research, art atmospheric design is crucial. An example of visual art in staying hotel is a uniquely experience. There is a significant positive correlation between "Perceived Art Experience" and "Cultural Meaning", the correlation coefficient value is 0.749 **. Hypothesis 2 has been demonstrated that the perceived art experience positively conveys cultural meaning to customers.

5.3. Marketing of Culture Can Convey Cultural Meaning to Customers

Marketing of culture is a factor in hotel business strategy that is an industry concern of tourism. For this research, marketing of cultural and art-theme design are crucial. As Wang et al. found, one of the key factors to make the marketing of culture success is to integrate cultural art into hotel service processes [43]. In Table 4, the correlation coefficient value between "Marketing of Cultural" and "Cultural Meaning" is up to 0.797 **. Hypothesis 3 has been demonstrated that the marketing of culture can convey cultural meaning to customers.

5.4. Hotel Brand Image Can Convey Cultural Meaning to Customers

The hotel incorporates puppet drama aesthetic elements into the interior design to promote Taiwanese puppet show. The puppet exhibitions in the hotel that convey the culture of Taiwan puppet shows are presented in diverse languages, including Chinese, English, and Japanese to enhance the "Hotel Brand Image". The hotel with a brand image of cultural properties provides friendly language services, making it easier to accept the cultural meaning for travelers. As seen in Table 4, the correlation coefficient value between "Hotel Brand Image" and "Cultural Meaning" reached 0.787 **. Incorporating Taiwanese puppet drama into the spatial atmospheric design can enhance the hotel brand image to tourists. Hypothesis 4 has been demonstrated that the integration of art images into the hotel brand can convey cultural meaning to customers.

5.5. Pleasant Experience Positively Conveys Cultural Meaning

A pleasant staying experience can be provided to customers by incorporating Taiwan's culture into the hotel. The correlation coefficient value between "Pleasant staying experience" and "Cultural Meaning" reached 0.711 **. The hotel is not merely a place for resting. Instead, the experience of puppet culture and the reminiscences of tourism memories are the hotel's core values. In addition to the surprised facial expressions from the tourists who stayed in the hotel, we verify that possess ritual of "pleasant staying experience" can convey "cultural meaning" efficiency. Hypothesis 5 has been demonstrated that the customers' pleasant experience in hotels positively conveys cultural meaning to customers.

Douglas and Isherwood [6] and Sahlins [7] both advocated that consumer goods have meaning beyond their functionality and commercial value. This importance mainly depends on their ability to carry and convey cultural meaning. In this article, we follow the mobility model of cultural meaning suggested by McCracken [8] to analyze the combination

of cultural and artistic elements in hotels, and the flow of cultural meaning in tourism consumption. First, this view encourages us to view consumers and consumer products as transit points of meaning. In this way, we focus on staying in hotels as the orientation of commodity consumption and the characteristics of cultural flow during consumer experience. Secondly, through the possession ritual as a tool of meaning movement in the second-stage of model, we have confirmed that the culture is integrated experience into the commodity of hotel consuming and how cultural meanings are transferred from the world of culture to commodities, and finally to individual consumers, consumers perceive cultural meanings by themselves.

Compared with the previous studies on the integration of culture into hotel service or experience [10,39–43], the difference is that this study is based on the theoretical model of the “Movement of meaning” proposed by McCracken [8], according to which the hotels integrate culture and art as their properties of the marketing theme, and we verified that the hotel has successfully transferred the cultural meaning of the products to the consumers by quantitative statistics. This study provided a new verification method for cultural with creative packaging in the tourism industry, which is the difference between this study and previous research [10,39–43].

6. Conclusions

We concluded that improving the customer experience by providing artistic elements in the hotel can improve the hotel’s sense of immersion through questionnaire collection and statistical research hypothesis verification. This study found through data analysis that the perception of cultural connotation of individual customers comes from their experience of staying in a hotel. When they watch and come into contact with puppet drama, they can even pick up the experience of interacting with puppets. We found that middle-aged people between 30 and 50 are more interested in puppet art than young people. Middle-aged and elderly tourists from East Asia seem to particularly appreciate Taiwanese puppet art.

Through the “Movement of meaning” model proposed by McCracken (1986), we have identified the medium (research constructs) that carry cultural meaning. These dimensions generate cultural value through the customer’s owning ceremony of consumer goods, allowing individual customers to understand the value of the product:

- Interior design
- Perceive art experience
- Cultural marketing
- Hotel brand image
- Pleasant staying experience.

For individual customers, the cultural meaning via consuming the commodity by possess ritual in at hotels creates an increased sense of cultural meaning and awareness. We have proved that tourists can understand the cultural meaning through the accommodation experience, and we answered the research question of this research as follows:

- (1) We conclude that integrating cultural experiences into hotel interior designs increases the consumers’ perception for culture meaning (H1 has been proved).
- (2) Our questionnaire survey and statistical analysis clearly show that the hotel’s integration of Taiwanese puppet culture artefacts as a design element positively influences culture meaning for the customers. The correlation reached 0.797 between Perceived Art Experience with culture meaning as in Table 4 (H2 has been proved).
- (3) For hotel managers, the marketing of culture success is to integrate cultural art into hotel service processes increasing the perception of cultural meaning for customer (H3 has been proved).
- (4) In addition, the integration of Taiwanese puppet art to convey Taiwanese folklore in a hotel as a business strategy improves hotel brand image (H4 has been proved).
- (5) Creating a pleasant experience for hotel customers can improve the cultural meaning perception for customer (H5 has been proved).

As we already stated, customer opinions agree that cultural learning creates a sense of content and textures in hotel interior designs. These also create a valuable learning experience for hotel guests. As we show by applying data mining methods, cultural learning is the main driving factor for hotel guests returning to the hotel and staying loyal to the hotel. Our study confirms that customers' predicted willingness to return to the hotel is high if cultural learning experiences are provided. This is valuable feedback for hotel management and proves that their decision to integrate Taiwan's puppet culture in their venues was a well-received business strategy.

For individual customers, this means that creating cultural learning experiences at hotels creates an increased sense of cultural meaning awareness for travelers. These provide a better hotel atmosphere, create a more pleasurable stay at the hotel, and increase customer's satisfaction. We also want to stress the high marketing and branding value for the hotel. Our current study shall act as a reference for other hotels aiming to introduce similar kinds of initiatives. Even though we did not analyze the general validity of this study for other hotels, we foresee that this study's highly positive results seem to be generally valid and can also be adopted by other hotels.

As one limitation of the study, we would like to state that we could not integrate data related to revenue and occupancy rates into this study, as we did not have these data available. Despite the lack of data in this regard, we state that integrating cultural artefacts into hotel interior design improves hotel guests' sensibility for local culture. Thus, our study demonstrates that not only is the hotel benefiting, but the cultural marketing of the core values of diverse Taiwanese culture is also benefiting. This has a positive effect on making culture sustainable and available to a broader audience, which would typically not enjoy these cultural experiences. It can also act as a reference model for other local tourism industries and improve hotel business and cultural learning experiences. Thus, the hotel contributes to its own customers' consumer loyalty and also to Taiwan's cultural marketing to a larger extent.

This study provides a quantitative test model of movement of culture meaning. It provides the second stage of the trajectory in the theoretical model of McCracken (1986) with a new perspective that can be quantified and empirically. This research provides a test method for the flow of cultural meaning from commodities to consumers, and contributes to hotel management and cultural learning.

As future research suggestions, in similar research it is important to use a multidisciplinary approach. We suggest using the quantitative test results of this study combined with the focus interview method to deeply discuss each consumer's view on the transmission of cultural meaning. We can further describe the research design that employed focus groups to explore customer's understanding and consumption of cultural art imagery via hotel staying experience. We can perform a discussion of the findings within the context of McCracken's "Movement of meaning" framework.

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Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to data privacy of the tool and participants.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Appendix A Hotel Customer Survey

Personal Information

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Nationality: _____

Age

☐ Under 19 years old ☐ 20~30 years old ☐ 31~40 years old

☐ 41~50 years old ☐ Over 50 years old

☐ Monthly income:

☐ \$ 10,000 or less ☐ \$10,001~\$30,000 ☐ \$30,001~\$50,000

☐ \$50,001~\$100,000 ☐ More than \$100,001

How many times have you stayed at the hotel?

☐ once a year ☐ 2~3 times in a year (loyal) ☐ More than 3 times in a year (loyal)

Number of relatives or friends staying hotel together (Number of companions):

☐ person ☐ 2 people ☐ 3 people ☐ 4 or more people

The average amount of spending per staying hotel:

☐ \$1000 ~\$3000 ☐ \$3001~\$5000 ☐ \$5001~\$7000 ☐ More than \$ 7001

How long did you stay at hotel?

☐ day ☐ 2 days ☐ 3 days ☐ 4 days or more

Why did they stay in the hotel?

☐ Business ☐ Academic events ☐ other

Would you like to repeat your visit to the hotel next time?

☐ yes (loyal) ☐ no (chrun)

Table A1. The questionnaire for customer stay experience.

Questionnaires	Full Satisfied Satisfied Common Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied
It is possible to perceive the incorporation of puppet show culture into the spatial aspects of hotel visual design.	□□□□□
There is an educational value in incorporating Taiwanese puppet culture into the visual aspect of hotel interior design.	□□□□□
I can perceive puppet show cultural atmosphere by incorporating Taiwanese puppet culture into hotel interior design	□□□□□
I can perceive puppet show cultural elements by incorporating Taiwanese puppet culture into hotel interior design.	□□□□□
The perception in art while staying in hotel can be enhanced can by incorporating Taiwanese puppet culture into hotel interior design.	□□□□□
Cultural experience can be improved by incorporating Taiwanese puppet culture into hotel interior design.	□□□□□
Cultural experience can be created by incorporating Taiwanese puppet culture into hotel interior design.	□□□□□
Art atmosphere can be created by incorporating Taiwanese puppet culture into hotel interior design.	□□□□□
Incorporating Taiwanese puppet culture into atmospheric design is a unique feature of the hotel.	□□□□□
Hotel brand image can be enhanced by incorporating cultural art into hotel.	□□□□□
Cultural art can be enhanced by incorporating cultural art into hotel.	□□□□□

Table A1. Cont.

Questionnaires	Full Satisfied Satisfied Common Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied
Brand image can be improved by hotel art atmospheric design.	□□□□□
Hotel brand image can be enhanced by taking Taiwanese puppet as the main art aesthetic elements.	□□□□□
In contrast to other hotels, taking Taiwanese puppet show as the main interior design elements is the defining feature of hotel.	□□□□□
Cultural education and its heritage can be created by the exhibition of Taiwanese puppet art and the service guide in hotel.	□□□□□
Cultural learning can be provided by the exhibition of Taiwanese puppet art and the service guide in hotel.	□□□□□
The exhibition of Taiwanese puppet show art and the service guide in hotel offers an understanding of puppet art.	□□□□□
Taiwanese puppet show culture can be made sustainable by the exhibition of Taiwanese puppet art and the service guide in hotel.	□□□□□
I am satisfied with the experience of the art that is created by the hotel service guide.	□□□□□
I am satisfied with hotel puppet culture art design and guide service strategy.	□□□□□
I am satisfied with the hotel strategy of puppet art visual design	□□□□□
I am satisfied with the hotel puppet show art design and the interactive experience of puppet cultural exploration.	□□□□□
Overall marketing benefits can be improved by incorporating Taiwanese puppet culture into a hotel.	□□□□□
I feel joyful and get curious about hotel puppet culture design and its perceived spatial atmosphere.	□□□□□
I feel joyful and curious about the experience of hotel culture.	□□□□□
Puppet art atmospheric design can bring customers into a space of cultural art.	□□□□□
Customers would like to visit hotel again because of the Taiwanese puppet atmospheric design.	□□□□□

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