

# FEMALE VISITORS' BEHAVIORAL INTENTION AT THE SHANGHAI COMIC EXHIBITION: AN APPLICATION OF COGNITIVE APPRAISAL THEORY

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper studies the influence mechanism of embodied experience on revisit intention from the female perspective. Through a field investigation and online surveys, researchers collected 247 valid questionnaires from female visitors to the Shanghai comic exhibition. Factor analyses and Structure Equation Modeling were conducted, and results revealed that physical experience, situational experience, and perceptual experience have significantly positive effects on exhibition satisfaction and revisit intention. A bootstrap analysis found that exhibition satisfaction has a significant mediating effect between embodied experience and revisit intention. These findings contribute to cognitive appraisal theory and also improve our understanding of female experiences in the exhibition industry. This study sheds some light on the development of the cultural exhibition industry and the female exhibition experience research. For instance, improving female visitors' embodied experience would increase their revisit intention. This study also has implications for exhibition organizers in terms of better cultural exhibition planning and effective management.*

## INTRODUCTION

Since the introduction of Japanese animation, the comic exhibition industry has been growing dramatically, and the direct economic output of comic culture in China reached approximately 200 million CNY in 2020 (Chen, 2021). Taking the Shanghai comic exhibition as an example, in 2021 there were 88 special areas and streets with more than 3000 booths and 322.5 million RMB business transactions, the largest number to date (<https://thwiki.cc/COMICUP>). Although the exhibition industry has brought substantial profits, academic research on the cultural exhibition industry is still rare, and scholars have mainly focused on exhibition service quality and experience (Yi, Fu, Jin, & Okumus, 2018).

Female consumers play an important role in cultural activities and their behaviors are different than males; however, there is little research focusing on the female experience (Figuroa-Domecq et al., 2015). Cultural consumption is an important part of urban life and could enhance female self-identity (Clarke, Previte, & Chien, 2021). In the exhibition industry, there are women-only exhibitions, and it is necessary to examine female visitors' revisit intention to improve their experience. Therefore, this study emphasizes female visitors' desire to consume in comic culture and the impacts of their exhibition experiences on future behavior.

Participants' sensory immersion experience is the core value of such cultural exhibition as experience could affect visitors' psychological state and behavioral intention (Granot, Alejandro, & Russell, 2014). In cultural exhibitions, satisfied visitors are more likely to revisit, so organizers

try to satisfy visitors and to keep their loyalty to the cultural event. Therefore, understanding how to improve visitors' satisfaction is important for exhibition organizers. Previous research has found that exhibition attributes are factors that influence visitors' satisfaction and loyalty (Liu et al., 2020). However, the path of influence of these factors on women's evaluation is not clear.

Cognitive appraisal theory emphasizes the importance of cognition in the process of forming evaluation. Between external stimuli and visitors' evaluation, cognition plays a key role and could explain the influence mechanism of external factors on individuals. Furthermore, in cognitive appraisal theory, embodied experience as the reflective of the cognitive could be seen as the part of the cognition. Physical body is important as it is the direct recipient of external stimuli and the carrier of feeling and emotion. Meanwhile, according to cognitive appraisal theory, cognition is the basis of evaluation and emotion. Therefore, embodied experience is an appropriate way to analyze the visitors' experiences and related psychological state in the exhibition and their following behavioral intention, as embodied experience refers to the importance of the body in the process of cognition.

Embodied experience concerns the process of visitors' interaction between the surrounding environment and their bodies (Wilson & Golonka, 2013). Therefore, exhibition organizers need to be aware of visitors' needs, understand their specific feelings, and enable them to have an enjoyable experience that will encourage future participation. However, in the research area of exhibitions, there is rare systematic research of how embodied experiences influence visitors' future behavioral intentions. This paper attempts to study the influence of embodied experience on revisit intention of female, and whether and how exhibition satisfaction as a mediator affects revisit intentions for female visitors. The objectives of this study are to: (1) explore the impacts of embodied experience on visitors' revisit intention and exhibition satisfaction; (2) examine the relationship between exhibition satisfaction and revisit intention; and (3) analyze the mediating effects of exhibition satisfaction between embodied experience and revisit intention. This study will contribute to the concept of embodied experience, and also provide some theoretical and practical implications for cognitive appraisal theory and female visitors' behavioral intention to cultural exhibition.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Cultural Exhibition and Female Visitors*

Cultural exhibition as an activity is a part of visitors' cultural life. Having positive experiences is essential in increasing their satisfaction and loyalty (Yeongbae, Sang-Min, & Dae-Kwan, 2014). Visitors are the core component of any cultural exhibition, and their satisfaction and revisit intention determine the amounts of future visitors, which is important for exhibition organizers. Previous studies have focused on the economy impacts, visitors' motivations, and exhibition technology. There is little research on exhibition experiences of females. The female's behavioral intention in creative activities, evaluation, and overall satisfaction within their experience differs from males (Remoaldo, Ghanian, & Alves, 2020). It has been suggested that female visitors' experiences are affected by their gender identity (Nisha & Cheung, 2022). For example, the desire for enjoyment is higher for female visitors than for male visitors (Movahed, Ghasemi, & Gholamalifard, 2020).

### *Revisit Intention*

Since Copeland (1923) first applied customer loyalty in the business field, researchers have established a strong connection between loyalty and repeated purchases (Cronin Jr, Brady, & Hult, 2000). As repeated purchases are a sign of behavioral loyalty, repeated purchase intention can also be seen as the loyalty as well as the indicator of loyalty (Ajzen, 1991).

Previous research has indicated that numerous factors affect revisit intention. For example, Zhang, Wu, and Buhalis (2018) discovered that a memorable travel experience has a positive relationship with revisit intention. Furthermore, customers' cognition, perception, and related psychological state with respect to products (Vada, Prentice, & Hsiao, 2019) and their experience (Yoon & Park, 2018) are all important factors which affect the customers' revisit intention. Therefore, it is necessary to take the impacts of cognition, emotion, and attitude on revisit intention into consideration. This study defines revisit intention as visitors' willingness to attend future exhibitions. It occurs after the initial attendance of the exhibition while still under the influence of psychological characteristics such as cognition, emotion, and attitudes.

### *Cognitive Appraisal Theory*

Cognitive appraisal theory treats cognition and appraisal as the determinants of emotion and behavior since they are the connections between external stimuli and the human psychological state (Rogers, 1975). People will have different reactions and emotions on the basis of their evaluations of the stimuli (Hosany, 2012). Therefore, cognition and appraisal are important factors in the process of adaption to different environments (Wu, 2018). Cognitive appraisal theory recognizes the importance of cognition and appraisal in the formation of emotion, and supports that emotion, as a psychological state, can evoke different reactions (Choi & Choi, 2019). Then, with antecedents of behavior in cognitive appraisal theory and as a theoretical foundation and research framework in many fields, cognitive appraisal theory can illustrate human behavior and emotion, which has been used widely in fields such as psychology (Pietrzak, Lohr, Jahn, & Hauke, 2018) and business (Ouyang, Gursoy, & Sharma, 2017).

Cognitive appraisal theory stresses the importance of cognition and appraisal in the formation of emotion, and holds that emotion as a psychological state can evoke different reactions (Choi & Choi, 2019). The embodied experience recognizes the importance of the physical body in relation to the environment during the experience (Dempsey & Shani, 2013). This embodied experience has an influence on cognition, feeling, and behavior (Seifert, Davids, Hauw, & McGann, 2020). As an essential part of cognitive appraisal theory, embodied experience is the reflection of external stimuli, which has impacts on individuals' perception and behavioral intention.

### *Embodied Experience*

Embodied experience stresses the importance of the physical body in the process of understanding the world. Embodiment supports the idea that cognition is based on the physical body, as well as emphasizes the interaction between the individual and the environment, which involves both sensory experiences and physical sensations (Anderson, 2003). In addition, embodied experiences are widely used in various fields (Lam, 2020). From a narrow perspective, embodied experience mainly emphasizes the effect of the physical body on the cognitive process (Clark, 1999), neglecting the fact that embodied experience is situational. Therefore, the embodied experience should be defined in a broader sense, referring to the experience of interactions with the environment under the influence of emotional factors based on the physical body (Dempsey & Shani, 2013).

Anderson (2003) summarized previous research and pointed out that embodied experience is grounded in physical experience and situational experience. Lachaud (2013) argued that the cognitive process occurs only in the context of the body and the environment, as they shape and change cognition. In the meantime, cognition is an activity which is influenced by interactions between the physical body and the environment. Therefore, the constitutive dimension of embodied experience includes environment, physical body, and activity, and these dimensions interact and develop together. Anderson, Richardson, and Chemero (2012) supported the idea that the forming and changing of emotion relates to the activities of the physical body, as well as with its mind. People's emotion is connected with their physical experience and emerges from the evaluation of their physiological changes (Seth, 2013). As situation is constructed by the interaction between the physical body and the external environment, emotion is an important factor in affecting physical experience, just as the physical body is important in helping to coordinate life activities (Anderson, 2003). In total, physical experience, situational experience, and perceptual experience reflect embodied experience and are all important dimensions of embodied experience. In addition, scholars have found that embodied movements enhance creativity performance, which suggests that embodied experience has impacts on individuals' psychology, evaluation, and judgments (Frith, Miller, & Loprinzi, 2020).

Physical experience is one dimension of the embodied experience, emphasizing the importance of the physical body in cognition. Previous findings indicated that individuals in a good shape are more likely to have positive emotions and attitudes towards event (Poushneh, 2021). Research of wine tourism found that an enjoyable sensory experience could evoke purchase intention (Wen & Leung, 2021), which suggests that physical experience has direct effects on behavioral intention. Movahed et al. (2020) found that female visitors' enjoyment in culinary education tours have positive impacts on their satisfaction and engagement. Ye (2014) pointed out that the more pleasure gained from physical experience, the higher is exhibition satisfaction, and the more likely this is to stimulate revisit intention. Thus, two hypotheses are proposed:

**H1a:** *Physical experience positively influences exhibition satisfaction.*

**H1b:** *Physical experience positively influences revisit intention.*

As a dimension of embodied experience, situational experience refers to the interactions between situations and physical bodies (Wilson, 2002). Embodied experience focuses not only on the effects of physical bodies, but also on the effects of interactions between physical bodies, environment, and the psychological influence. In psychology, there is a consensus view that the interaction between situation and interpersonal characteristic has impacts on personal behavior (Blum et al., 2018). Situation determines the individuals' way of action, reflecting individuals' thoughts and cognition (Pietrzak et al., 2018). In a cultural exhibition, situational experience is related with interpersonal relationship, service quality, content of exhibition, and the interaction with other visitors as well as exhibitors, which all affect visitors' situational experience and then influence their psychology along with behavior (Wang & Xia, 2018). Remoaldo et al. (2020) was the first to investigate differences in satisfaction ratings of situational experiences between males and females. She found that female participants were more satisfied with their experience and more likely to revisit, compared to male participants. Therefore, situational experience in an exhibition could increase satisfaction and revisit intention:

**H2a:** *Situational experience positively influences exhibition satisfaction.*

**H2b:** *Situational experience positively influences revisit intention.*

Perceptual experience is also called emotional experience, as emotions and feelings are important in forming perceptual experience and influencing people's travel experience (Zhang et al., 2018). Cognition is formed in interactions between emotional factors and the environment based on the physical body, and participation in physical activities may change emotion (Seth, 2013). Emotional experience and evaluation will affect individuals' behaviors, as residents' emotion and evaluation determine their supportive behaviors (Ouyang et al., 2017). Visitors' perception of the quality of experience will influence their satisfaction and revisit intention, which means the perceptual experience is an important determinant of satisfaction and revisit intention (Jin, Lee, & Lee, 2015). Frijda (2005) found that perceptual experience could make the emotional experience more reasonable for different individuals and groups, and a favorable emotional experience positively influences satisfaction and revisit intention during the exhibition. In exhibition, participants' emotion is aroused by all the elements of the exhibition (Geoffrey, 2015). Thus, the more positive the emotions, the likelihood that participants evaluate the exhibition favorably increases. By extension, exhibition satisfaction could positively impact revisit intention. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H3a:** *Perceptual experience positively influences exhibition satisfaction.*

**H3b:** *Perceptual experience positively influences revisit intention.*

Satisfaction refers to customers' judgments on whether products or services can meet their needs (Anderson & Sullivan, 1993). Customer satisfaction is not only the basis of a company's development, but also affects the company's long-term profit (Larsen & Wright, 2020). Oliver (1980) argued that customer satisfaction is related to expectation; customer satisfaction is higher as more expectations are fulfilled. In the field of event management, satisfaction refers to the main predictor for visitors' future behavioral intentions (Vassiliadis, Mombeuil, & Fotiadis, 2021). The perception of male and female on exhibition is different, Kim, Ko, and Park (2013) examined the gender differences of basketball game spectators and found that females have more sensitive event quality perceptions. Findings suggest that event satisfaction refers to the difference between expectation and feeling and is the evaluation after experiencing, which has impacts on willingness to revisit (Zouni, Markogiannaki, & Georgaki, 2020). In this research, exhibition satisfaction is defined as the evaluation of the exhibition based on the difference between the expectation and the perception after attending the cultural exhibition. It is likely that exhibition satisfaction comes from the visitors' perception of exhibition values and has an impact on their willingness to revisit (Ozer & Gultekin, 2015). Thus, exhibition satisfaction is a predictor of visitors' future behavioral intention and also the post-evaluation of the event. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H4:** *Exhibition satisfaction positively influences revisit intention.*

According to cognitive appraisal theory, cognition is the determinant of appraisal, and then individuals will react based on appraisal and cognition. In this way, appraisal plays a mediating

role between cognition and reaction. Therefore, according to cognitive appraisal theory, exhibition satisfaction may play a mediating role between embodied experience and revisit intention. Embodied experience has impacts on individuals' behavior, psychological state, and the perception of things, thereby affecting their satisfaction (Ali, Kim, Li, & Jeon, 2018). Researchers suggest that satisfaction has a direct impact on intention, suggesting that people' willingness to revisit is likely to change with their satisfaction (Zouni et al., 2020). It means that satisfaction has a mediating effect between revisit intention and experience (Brown, Smith, & Assaker, 2016). Khoo (2020) conducted a post-hoc multi-group analysis and found that the satisfaction of female consumers in the KTV industry has significantly more impacts on the relationship of experience and intention. In other words, visitors' embodied experience affects their perception of the exhibition (i.e., exhibition satisfaction), which further determines their revisit intention. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

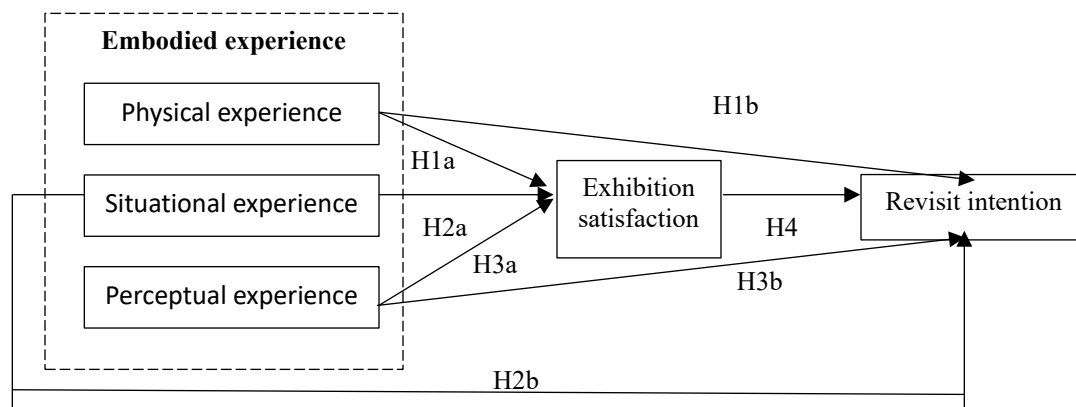
**H5a:** *Exhibition satisfaction has a mediating effect between physical experience and revisit intention.*

**H5b:** *Exhibition satisfaction has a mediating effect between situational experience and revisit intention.*

**H5c:** *Exhibition satisfaction has a mediating effect between perceptual experience and revisit intention.*

Based on the analyses above, five groups of hypotheses including 10 sub-hypotheses were listed in the conceptual model (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** The conceptual model



## METHOD

### Sampling

The Shanghai comic is the largest comic exhibition in China. Since 2008, the exhibition has been held annually in the Shanghai New International Center and usually lasts two days with an entrance fee about \$10. The samples this study selected were visitors to the 27th Shanghai comic

exhibition on January 1-2, 2021. During the exhibition, two investigators randomly approached 255 female visitors online in order to reduce the risk of infection from COVID-19. In an attempt to guarantee the quality of the sampling, only those respondents with IP addresses inside the exhibition hall were considered. Furthermore, any incomplete survey was considered invalid, and those completed in less than 3 minutes which below the average were also dropped from the database. There were 247 samples which met the sampling quality requirement and were coded and used for preliminary data analyses. This represented a 96.86 percent response rate. The number of general questionnaires in the SEM is 10-15 times that of the questionnaire items. As there are 20 items in the original survey, 247 samples are appropriate for this research (Hair et al., 2017).

The demographic characteristics of the samples are shown in Table 1. It is worth noting that the majority (85%) of comic exhibition visitors between 19 and 29 represent a strong sense of identity with comic culture. Thus, the minority age cohorts (9% under 18 and 6% above 30) would not affect the result significantly.

**Table 1**  
Descriptive statistics

Variable		Rates	%
Gender	Female	247	100
	<18	22	8.91
Age	19-29	210	85.02
	≥30	15	6.07
	high school and below	34	13.77
Education	vocational school	26	10.53
	Undergraduate	74	29.96
	graduate and above	113	45.75
	Freelancers	70	28.34
Profession	Students	84	34.01
	corporate staff	73	29.55
	Others	20	8.10
Personal income per month	<2000	36	14.57
	2000-4999	107	43.32
	5000-7999	64	25.91
	>8000	40	16.19
Experience	≤1 times	15	6.07
	2 times	96	38.87
	3 times	80	32.39
	≥4 times	56	22.67

*Measurement Scale*

Based on the research framework of embodied experience, this study divides embodied experience into physical experience, situational experience, and perceptual experience. Physical experience (PYE) includes sensory experience and activity experience. Situational experience (SIE) includes the atmosphere, the design of the exhibition venue, interaction with other visitors, and the

service quality. Perceptual experience (PEE) includes feelings of relaxation, unforgettable and beautiful memories, forgetting daily worries, and impressive activities. These three categories used to measure exhibition satisfaction (EXS) were adapted from Jin et al. (2015). Revisit intention (REI) refers to the findings of Souiden, Ladhari, and Chiadmi (2017). As shown in Table 1, demographic variables include sex, age, profession, personal income, educational level, and past exhibition experience.

## RESULTS

Researchers employed a four-step approach to analyze the conceptual model and the hypothesized relationship between embodied experience, exhibition satisfaction, and behavioral intention using a combination of SPSS 21.0 and AMOS 21.0. First, aspects were divided into different dimensions using a confirmatory factor analysis. Second, reliability and validity of all the factors was tested using confirmatory factor analysis. Third, the structural equation modeling was adopted to examine the hypotheses between the latent variables. A bootstrap analysis was used to test the mediating effect of exhibition satisfaction. Last, multi-layer linear regressions were conducted to test the robustness of the empirical findings.

### *Exploratory Factor Analysis*

Researchers used Harman's single factor score to test for common method bias, since the data were collected from the same source. Through exploratory factors, the eigenvalue was set as 1. Without rotation processing, the variance explained by the first factor was 38.40%, which is less than the threshold value of 50%. Thus, researchers were reasonably assured that common method bias does not affect the data in this study (Carson, 2007; Rindfleisch, Malter, Ganesan, & Moorman, 2008). Exploratory factor analysis was based on a randomly selected subsample of 120 respondents. The KMO is .88 ( $p < .001$ ), suggesting a good fit of the data for factor analyses. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was applied to examine reliability and conformity. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of the questionnaire is .92, indicating that the reliability of the samples is high. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values of all factors are ranging from .61 to .88 ( $> .60$ ), indicating a good construct reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Principal component analysis was used to investigate the correlation between the latent variables. Two physical experience aspects (i.e., "The facilities in this exhibition are convenient" and "I have bought souvenirs") and one situational experience aspect (i.e., "I could interact with favorite authors and friends") were removed due to their heavy cross loading; the loading difference across the two factors was less than 0.10. The resulting questionnaire contained 17 aspects.

### *Confirmatory Factor Analysis*

As Hair et al. (2017) suggested, acceptable goodness-of-fit indices include the Chi-squared/degrees of freedom ( $X^2/DF$ )  $< 3.000$ , the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)  $< .080$ , the comparative fit index (CFI)  $> .900$ , the normed fit index (NFI)  $> .900$ , the incremental fit index (IFI)  $> .900$ , the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)  $> .900$ , and the parsimonious normed fit index (PNFI)  $> .500$ . The model fit indices in this study are within acceptable arrange ( $X^2/DF=1.848$ , RMSEA=.059, CFI=.954, NFI=.905, IFI=.954, TLI=.942, and PNFI=.726).

The composite reliability estimates of all constructs exceed .800 ( $> .700$ ), indicating that the measures are reliable (Bacon, Sauer, & Young, 1995). The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values which exceed .700 indicate high internal consistency, and average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged from .558



to .674, which exceed the threshold value of .500 for high convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Results show that the construct items accounted for greater than 50% of the variance for each latent factor. All standardized factors loading were above the threshold value of .500 ( $p < .001$ ), indicating good construct validity (see Table 2).

**Table 2**  
Descriptive statistics and CFA results

Dimension and items	St FL	SE	Cronbach's $\alpha$	CR
<b>Physical experience (PYE)</b>			.811	.837
The logo guidelines in this exhibition are clear.	.818	.050		
The layout of this exhibition is satisfactory.	.803	.058		
The surroundings do not affect my experience.	.730	.069		
The environment does not affect my revisit.	.641	.067		
<b>Situational experience (SIE)</b>			.802	.791
I can feel the nice comic atmosphere.	.763	.058		
The design of the exhibition hall is unique.	.757	.061		
The exhibition service quality is good.	.720	.056		
<b>Perceptual experience (PEE)</b>			.813	.859
This exhibition makes me feel relaxed.	.635	.065		
This exhibition has given me beautiful memories.	.863	.052		
This exhibition makes me forget my daily worries.	.865	.061		
The activities in this exhibition are unforgettable.	.729	.059		
<b>Exhibition satisfaction (EXS)</b>			.865	.800
I am glad I visited the exhibition.	.816	.062		
It was a good decision to visit the exhibition.	.696	.051		
I was satisfied with my experience at the event.	.754	.053		
<b>Revisit intention (REI)</b>			.883	.860
I would revisit based on this experience.	.719	.050		
I would consider Shanghai as a future destination.	.891	.055		
I would like to revisit Shanghai.	.844	.045		

Notes: SE=standard error, St FL=standard factor loading, and CR=composite reliability.

To evaluate the discriminant validity, this research utilized a comparison of the square roots of average variance extracted (AVE) with the inter-construct correlation between variables. Fornell and Larcker (1981) posited that all the square roots of AVE values were greater than the inter-construct correlations between variables and each construct was different from the others, indicating the constructs have a good discriminant validity. Table 3 shows that the AVE values of the five constructs (physical experience, situational experience, perceptual experience, exhibition satisfaction, and revisit intention) were all greater than the values of inter-construct correlations, indicating a good discriminant validity.

**Table 3**  
Discriminant Validity Matrix

	PYE	SIE	PEE	EXS	REI
Physical experience (PYE)	<b>.752</b>				
Situational experience (SIE)	.606	<b>.742</b>			
Perceptual experience (PEE)	.517	.633	<b>.779</b>		
Exhibition satisfaction (EXS)	.519	.610	.653	<b>.757</b>	
Revisit intention (REI)	.602	.625	.667	.670	<b>.821</b>

Notes: The off-diagonal elements are inter-construct correlations.

### Structural Equations Modeling

Based on the results of the CFA model, structural equation modeling was employed to test the hypotheses discussed previously. The goodness-of-fit indices were used to evaluate how well the structural models fit the data:  $X^2/DF=1.881$ ,  $RMSEA=.056$ ,  $CFI=.947$ ,  $NFI=.925$ ,  $IFI=.953$ ,  $TLI=.946$ , and  $PNFI=.901$ , all suggesting satisfying goodness-of-fit parameters (Hair et al., 2017).

**Table 4**  
Empirical results for the structural equation model

Hypothesis	Estimate	Standard error	t-statistic	P	Result
H1a: PYE→EXS	.410	.087	4.695	***	Not rejected
H1b: PYE→REI	.334	.065	2.810	**	Not rejected
H2a: SIE →EXS	.547	.160	2.798	**	Not rejected
H2b: SIE →REI	.216	.167	2.459	*	Not rejected
H3a: PEE→EXS	.765	.153	5.005	***	Not rejected
H3b: PEE→REI	.252	.107	2.581	*	Not rejected
H4: EXS →REI	.885	.223	8.965	***	Not rejected

*Notes:* PYE=physical experience, EXS=exhibition satisfaction, SIE=situational experience, PEE=perceptual experience, and REI=revisit intention. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $<0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 4 presents the SEM results. Physical experience positively influences exhibition satisfaction ( $\beta = .410$ ,  $t = 4.695$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and revisit intention ( $\beta = .334$ ,  $t = 2.810$ ,  $p < .01$ ); H1a and H1b are not rejected. Situational experience positively influences exhibition satisfaction ( $\beta = .547$ ,  $t = 2.798$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and revisit intention ( $\beta = .216$ ,  $t = 2.459$ ,  $p < .05$ ), so H2a and H2b are not rejected. Furthermore, perceptual experience positively influences exhibition satisfaction ( $\beta = .765$ ,  $t = 5.005$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and revisit intention ( $\beta = .252$ ,  $t = 2.581$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and thus H3a and H3b fail to reject. Last, exhibition satisfaction positively influences revisit intention ( $\beta = .885$ ,  $t = 8.965$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and thus H4 fails to reject.

### Mediating Effects

This study applied Bootstrapping to test the mediating effects. The Bootstrap estimates of the direct and indirect effects were based on 2000 Bootstrap samples in order to obtain 95% confidence intervals (MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007). As shown in Table 5, the standardized mediating effect of exhibition satisfaction between embodied experience and revisit intention is .130, between physical experience and revisit intention is .207, between situational experience and revisit intention is .171, and between perceptual experience and revisit intention is .063. All the results do not contain 0, so the mediating effect of exhibition satisfaction is statistically significant, which mean that hypotheses (H5, H5a, H5b, and H5c) fail to reject.

### Robustness Check

To test the robustness of the models above, researchers conducted a multi-layer linear regression analysis. According to the differences of experience, the visitors were divided into two sub-samples: 111 visitors who had less exhibition experience ( $\leq 2$  times), and 136 with more exhibition experience ( $\geq 3$  times). Table 6 shows that the results of regression and mediation tests

among the variables are statistically significant and robust.

**Table 5**  
Mediating effect test

Dependent variable	Mediating variable	Independent variable	Effect	LLCI	ULCI	Result
REI	EXS	EMC	.130	.078	.182	Not rejected
		PYE	.207	.158	.256	Not rejected
		SIE	.171	.085	.256	Not rejected
		PEE	.063	.005	.121	Not rejected

*Notes:* EMC=embodied experience, PYE=physical experience, SIE=situational experience, PEE=perceptual experience, EXS= exhibition satisfaction, REI=revisit intention, LLCI=lower limit confidence interval, and ULCI=upper limit confidence interval.

**Table 6**  
Multi-layer linear regression analysis results

Hypothesis	Less experienced sub-sample			More experienced sub-sample		
	Estimate	S.E.	P	Estimate	S.E.	P
H1a: PYE→EXS	.486	.080	***	.472	.096	***
H1b: PYE→REI	.350	.083	***	.301	.082	***
H2a: SIE →EXS	.544	.092	***	.617	.092	***
H2b: SIE →REI	.412	.096	***	.500	.079	***
H3a: PEE→EXS	.764	.051	***	.732	.064	***
H3b: PEE→REI	.637	.058	***	.632	.058	***
H4: EXS →REI	.714	.059	***	.619	.058	***
H5a: PYE→EXS→REI	.346	.053	***	.290	.052	***
H5b: SIE→EXS→REI	.377	.076	***	.309	.062	***
H5c: PEE→EXS→REI	.416	.094	***	.247	.079	***
No. of observations		111			136	

*Notes:* PYE=physical experience, EXS=exhibition satisfaction, SIE=situational experience, PEE= perceptual experience, and REI=revisit intention.

## DISCUSSION

From the perspective of female visitors, this study examined the relationship among embodied experience, exhibition satisfaction, and revisit intention. The results indicate that the embodied experience is essential for the exhibition satisfaction of female visitors. Findings also verified the structure of embodied experience, exhibition satisfaction, and revisit intention, as well as the relationships between them.

First, this study constructed a research framework of embodied experience including physical experience, situational experience, and perceptual experience. Empirical results show that physical experience, situational experience, and perceptual experience can represent embodied experience. This reflects the forming process of the embodied experience. In a cultural exhibition, the intuitive experience of the body forms the first layer of the physical experience. Visitors then have a better

understanding of the exhibition on the basis of interactions with the environment and/or other visitors. The final perceptual experience is formed by the physical experience, situational experience, the content of the exhibition, etc. A comfortable physical experience and physical state are likely to arouse positive feelings. Thus, the better the physical experiences, the higher the satisfaction and intention to visit future exhibitions (Vassiliadis et al., 2021). Thus, H1a and H1b fail to rejected.

The findings indicate positive relationships between situational experiences, exhibition satisfaction, and revisit intention. Social context and culture shape visitor cognition, the way of interacting with the surroundings, and behavioral intention. Meanwhile, visitors' cognition also affects their evaluation and behavior, indicating that situation is an important factor in forming visitors' evaluation and behavior. According to cognitive appraisal theory, individual emotions and attitudes will be affected by cognition. Therefore, a pleasant experience evokes positive emotions and attitudes towards the surroundings, which increases exhibition satisfaction. The better female visitors feel about the on-site atmosphere of the cultural exhibition, and the more interactions they have with other visitors, and the higher is their exhibition satisfaction, which increases the likelihood of visiting future exhibitions. So H2a and H2b fail to rejected.

Perceptual experience is related to individuals' emotion and psychology, and has a close connection with cognition. This study found that perceptual experience has positive effects on exhibition satisfaction (H3a) and revisit intention (H3b), indicating that perceptual experience is formed by the interaction of physical experience and situational experience (Zhang et al., 2018). Emotion is connected with physical experience and emerges from the evaluation of the physiological changes (Seth, 2013). As cognitive appraisal theory indicates, positive emotion evokes a positive evaluation and attitude, which leads to a favorable behavior. Therefore, if female visitors gain a better perceptual experience of the comic exhibition, then they would have a higher satisfaction and a higher probability to revisit the exhibition.

Exhibition satisfaction is the visitors' evaluation of the exhibition based on the differences between their expectation and the actual experience of exhibitions (Zouni et al., 2020). If visitors have higher evaluation on the initial exhibition, they are more likely to visit future exhibitions, which is consistent with previous findings (Vassiliadis et al., 2021). So, visitors' exhibition satisfaction has positive effects on revisit intention, and H4 was not rejected. The research found that embodied experience affects revisit intention through exhibition satisfaction, verifying the findings of Brown et al. (2016). These findings are consistent with cognitive appraisal theory that the cognition evokes visitors' feelings and evaluation, and thus has different reactions (Rogers, 1975). Thus, the mediating effects (H5a, H5b, H5c, and H5d) fail to rejected.

## CONCLUSION

### *Theoretical Contributions*

This study constructed a conceptual framework of embodied experience, exhibition satisfaction, and revisit intention from the perspective of female visitors. Previous research made the assumption that males and females have the same needs. This study expands the current body of literature by focusing specifically on females' feelings and experiences in cultural exhibitions. Most of the research in embodied experiences have been based on qualitative analyses. In contrast, this study adopted quantitative methods to assess the embodied experience and found that female visitors' physical experience, situational experience and perceptual experience are correlated with and affect each other.

Although the relationship between cognition and satisfaction has been confirmed, studies on

the relationship between embodied experience and satisfaction are still rare. Embodied experience was developed from cognitive science and has not been discussed in the cultural exhibition field. This study revealed the mechanism of embodied experience by constructing embodied experience on physical experience, situational experience, and perceptual experience, contributing to the understanding of effects of stimuli on visitors in exhibitions. Consistent with Wen and Leung's (2021) finding that individuals' sensory experience has impacts on individuals' evaluation and further behavior intention, this study took embodied experience as one of the main factors that affect individuals' evaluation and behavior, which contributes to the application scope of embodied experience and sheds light on female visitors' behavioral intention to cultural events.

Cognitive appraisal theory states that people's evaluation affects their emotion, which then affects their behavioral intention (Rogers, 1975). The present study sheds some light on the application of cognitive appraisal theory in the field of cultural events from the perspective of female experience. This research connected cognitive appraisal theory with embodied experience and examined the mechanism of the embodied experience to specify the antecedent variables of cognitive appraisal theory. Based on cognitive appraisal theory, this study constructed a conceptual model of behavioral intention and further verified the model using female visitors' behavior in the comic cultural exhibition. Thus, this research advances both the application process of cognitive appraisal theory and studies on female behavioral intention in cultural exhibitions.

### *Managerial Implications*

As embodied experience plays an important role in satisfying and attracting visitors, exhibition organizers need to pay attention to the embodied experience to meet visitors' needs as the exhibition industry continues to expand. Insights into the influence mechanism of embodied experience on revisit intention can provide an informed and effective means for exhibition organizers to better understand female consumer behavior in the cultural exhibition industry. Visiting the exhibition is a time-consuming and physically demanding activity, so it is important for female visitors to have good physical state to retain positive emotions and attitudes towards the cultural event. Thus, cozy areas in the exhibition may reduce unnecessary buffer zones between different rooms and help female visitors refresh physically. Organizers may redesign the exhibition and optimize the layout of the venue to improve visitors' physical experience.

Meanwhile, exhibition organizers could design the exhibition hall in line with the theme, provide female visitors with convenient connections between different rooms, and retain the exhibition atmosphere, in order to stimulate visitors' positive cognition, provide them favorable situational experience and attract them to future exhibitions (El-Adly & Eid, 2016). Organizers could also enhance visitors' situational experience by improving the exhibition environment. The design need be unique and reflect the characteristics of the theme, so the atmosphere and space of exhibitions could meet the characteristics of different exhibitors. The adoption of interpretation systems could enhance exhibition atmosphere, help visitors to understand the exhibition context better, and improve their situational experience. What's more, interpersonal environment is essentially attractive for an exhibition, including the main stakeholders of exhibitors and visitors. It is necessary for exhibition organizers to provide more convenience for communications between exhibitors and visitors (Ding & Hung, 2021).

Considering that the effects of perceptual experience are the greatest among embodied experience, it is necessary for exhibition organizers to ensure that female visitors experience positive emotions during the comic cultural exhibition. For instance, female visitors prefer relaxing and theme-related content in cultural exhibitions, so interactive activities may reflect the cultural

theme of comic exhibitions, remain female visitors' positive embodied experience, increase their satisfaction, as well as behavioral intention to future cultural events (Yi et al., 2018). It would be better for organizers to design more interaction between visitors and exhibitors on and off the stage to enhance the lively atmosphere during the exhibition. Through physical and psychological interactions, visitors' overall satisfaction and behavioral intention would increase.

#### *Limitations and Future Research*

This study is based on an investigation of the Shanghai comic exhibition from the female visitors' perspective. However, there are some data limitations. As a case study, sampling bias may occur given that the respondents interested in the comic culture of this study are young females, primarily between 19 and 29 years. This study collected data in a single exhibition during the New Year holiday, which may also cause sample bias. Thus, future studies could include different age cohorts and multiple cultural exhibitions in order to diversify the samples from general cultural events. This study used the revisit intention as the dependent variable; however, it is unknown to what extent revisit intention can be transformed into the actual revisit behavior. So, revisit intention is a component of actual revisit behavior, but it cannot fully represent visitors' actual behavior in the future. Therefore, longitudinal surveys could be adopted in future studies to examine the influential mechanism between embodied experiences and actual revisit intention.

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