



ADVANCED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AND SMES
(AIJBES)

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FACTORS INFLUENCING JEWELRY PURCHASE INTENTIONS AMONG CONSUMERS

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Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 26.07.2026

Revised date: 16.08.2026

Accepted date: 30.08.2026

Published date: 20.09.2026

To cite this document:

Ahmad, N., Li, M., & Ali, M. F. M. (2026). Factors Influencing Jewelry Purchase Intentions Among Consumers. *Advanced International Journal of Business Entrepreneurship and SMEs*, 8 (29), 1469-1491.

Abstract:

Jewelry inspired by cultural heritage is valued not only for its appearance but also for the meanings associated with the culture from which the design originates. This study examines the relationships between cultural elements in design, consumer perception, social influence, and the intention to purchase jewelry inspired by the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras in Gansu, China. The study draws on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), particularly its concepts of attitude and subjective norm. Consumer perception is considered in relation to attitudinal evaluation, while social influence represents the normative dimension. Cultural elements are examined separately as a design-related factor. Data were collected from 150 respondents in Gansu using convenience sampling. The analysis included descriptive statistics, reliability and normality tests, followed by Pearson's correlation. Among the three factors examined, consumer perception had the strongest relationship with purchase intention ($r = 0.641$, $p < 0.001$). This was followed by social influence ($r = 0.592$, $p < 0.001$) and cultural elements in design ($r = 0.494$, $p < 0.001$). The results suggest that consumers' responses to heritage-inspired jewelry are associated with how they evaluate the product, the social environment surrounding their choices, and the cultural qualities represented in the design. These findings provide further insight into consumer responses to culturally inspired jewelry within the regional context of Gansu.

DOI: 10.35631/AIJBS.829083 **Keywords:**Cultural Design; Consumer Perception; Dunhuang Flying
Apsaras; Jewelry Design; Purchase Intention; Social Influence

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Introduction

Jewelry has been used as a form of personal adornment and expression for centuries, with evidence of its use extending back to ancient civilizations between approximately 3,000 and 400 BC, including those in the Mediterranean region and Iran (Yazdi, 2021). Over time, jewelry has been produced from many materials, ranging from shells, stones, bones, and feathers to precious metals and gemstones such as gold, silver, and diamonds.

Its function and meaning have also changed across different periods and societies. Early jewelry was often relatively simple and functional, while later pieces became increasingly decorative and symbolic. These meanings were closely tied to the societies in which the jewelry was produced and worn. In some ancient cultures, for example, jewelry was associated with protection from illness or evil spirits (Pinckernelle, 2008). During the medieval period, jewelry also became an indication of wealth, status, and authority, particularly among members of the church and other socially prominent groups (Lightbown, 1992). Jewelry, therefore, has long operated as more than an ornamental object; its design can also communicate social and cultural meanings.

This cultural dimension remains relevant to contemporary jewelry. Yet there is still limited empirical understanding of how particular cultural symbols incorporated into jewelry relate to consumers' purchase intentions. Much of the existing work involving Chinese consumers has approached culture at a relatively broad level. Studies have considered, for instance, national pride and cultural confidence in relation to guofeng jewelry (Liu et al., 2025), as well as cultural factors associated with national branding and consumption (Ur Rahman et al., 2023). Such studies are useful for understanding culturally oriented consumption in China, but they provide less evidence about consumers' responses to heritage that has a strong association with a particular region.

This distinction is important in Gansu, where Dunhuang represents a recognizable part of the region's artistic and cultural heritage. The Flying Apsaras motif, in particular, carries historical, religious, and spiritual meanings associated with Dunhuang and its artistic traditions (Shor, 2020; Haiming, 2023). Although the motif continues to appear in contemporary creative products, relatively little empirical attention has been given to whether consumers' evaluations of such culturally specific design elements are associated with their intention to purchase the resulting products. For jewelry designers and businesses operating within culturally distinctive

markets, this is an important issue because consumers may respond differently to a design when its symbolism is closely connected to their regional heritage.

There is also a need to consider how consumers interpret the jewelry itself. Research on jewelry consumption commonly discusses aesthetic qualities, product image, social meaning, and other factors surrounding purchase decisions. Heritage-inspired jewelry introduces another layer to this evaluation because consumers are not responding only to form, material, or appearance. They may also consider whether a design appears culturally meaningful, authentic, distinctive, or representative of a heritage with which they are familiar. Understanding these perceptions is therefore important when examining purchase intention for culturally inspired products.

Purchase decisions are also made within a social environment. Friends, family members, celebrities, social media, and wider social trends can influence consumers' interest in particular products (Dwivedi et al., 2021). In a culturally diverse region such as Gansu, however, social influence may extend beyond broad digital networks. Local traditions, festivals, social groups, and shared cultural references can form part of the setting in which consumers evaluate culturally inspired products. These locally grounded influences have received comparatively less attention in research on jewelry purchase intention.

Previous research has therefore provided useful knowledge about cultural design and consumer purchasing, but the two are often considered separately or at a broad cultural level. Less is known about what happens when a recognizable regional heritage is translated into a contemporary product and evaluated by consumers within that cultural setting. Examining this relationship can contribute to the commercial development of culturally inspired products while also providing insight into how traditional cultural references continue to function within contemporary design and consumption (Armano, 2020).

Against this background, the present study examines jewelry inspired by the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras in Gansu, China. The study investigates whether Cultural Elements in Design, Consumer Perception, and Social Influence are associated with Purchase Intention. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides the theoretical basis for interpreting these relationships. Consumer Perception is considered in relation to the attitudinal dimension of TPB because it reflects how consumers evaluate the aesthetic, symbolic, and cultural qualities of the jewelry. Social Influence is related to subjective norm, as purchase intention may be shaped by peers, social expectations, trends, celebrities, and other influential sources. Cultural Elements in Design are examined separately as a product-specific factor rather than as a direct substitute for a traditional TPB construct. Through this approach, the study considers how cultural characteristics of the product operate alongside consumers' personal evaluations and their social environment in relation to the intention to purchase Dunhuang Flying Apsaras-inspired jewelry.

Literature Review

Cultural Elements in Design

Cultural factors can significantly influence customers' intentions to purchase jewelry (Pyae & Nuangjamnong, 2023). For example, certain jewelry designs can carry deep symbolic significance within the communities where they are worn. Furthermore, it is crucial to assess the influence of cultural rituals and festivals on the propensity to buy jewelry. Certain life

events or celebrations in many countries, such as festivals, marriages, or religious ceremonies, may prompt significant plans to purchase diamonds. These events and celebrations hold a special place in people's lives.

Social conventions may impact what is appropriate or appealing when buying jewelry (Cappellieri et al., 2020). The expectations of their communities or social groups may influence consumers, impacting their purchase intention. This could influence customer behavior, as different economic conditions might affect an individual's purchasing intent (Sohn & Kim, 2020). Among these factors are the financial means to purchase jewelry and the cultural importance of jewelry. However, if consumers consider jewelry a significant investment or a status symbol, it could influence their buying plans.

The presentation and display of jewelry within a specific cultural context can also impact an individual's purchasing decision (Amitabh, 2019). When used in marketing initiatives, cultural symbolism and storytelling can engage consumers and influence their interest and inclination to purchase. Customers' experiences and emotional connections to various facets of jewelry and culture can also impact how much they intend to buy from a particular business (Zahid et al., 2022). For instance, emotional attachments to specific cultural symbols or practices may enhance the desire to buy.

Existing literature must have a universally accepted definition of Chinese cultural elements (Ko et al., 2019). However, this term generally refers to the symbolic and spiritual meanings of objects or artifacts that represent the distinctive characteristics of Chinese cultural heritage. From a symbolic and communicative perspective, Chinese cultural elements, such as the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras, can reflect the spirit of Chinese culture in specific periods and evoke Chinese cultural associations and emotions. Incorporating Chinese cultural elements in product design is a widely acknowledged practice that has garnered substantial attention in the industry. Further scholarly research is needed to analyze the impact of this practice on consumers' purchase intentions.

The design has significantly incorporated cultural elements into products, enhancing their cultural value in the competitive global product market (Zuhroh & Rini, 2024). Therefore, designing a product with local features to emphasize its cultural value is crucial and a critical issue in the design process. Most articles reviewed established that modern-day designers recreate traditional art and culture to capitalize on nostalgia or help consumers create new cultural meaning and form identities (Wu, 2020). This sentiment is further echoed in the research of Yiqian, who articulated that Chinese jewelry markets had lost touch with their cultural heritage. However, ancient paintings, historical events, and artifacts motivated designers (Ramadan & YuWu, 2021; Gere & Rudoe, 2010). According to the literature, modern-day consumers prefer jewelry inspired by traditional artifacts or ancient history (Shabir, 2023; Landsberg, 2022; Wu, 2020; Green, 2019). This means that designs inspired by cultural elements will likely be perceived positively by consumers.

Among the most representative artistic forms is the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras Art. It is one of the various ancient arts found in the Dunhuang Caves (Serdari, 2020). This art signifies the intangible historical art treasures that exist in Chinese art history. Dunhuang is a town in Northwest China, located in Gansu Province. It was a strategic location along the Silk Route that connected the central plains and the western region. It thus served as an essential trade hub, where people from different cultures conducted business together and engaged in cultural

and religious exchanges (Sun, 2022). Buddhism particularly became the predominant religion. As a result, Dunhuang became a regional centre of faith. Buddhists who settled in the region created the Mogao Grottoes, or the Thousand Buddha Grottoes (Yanhai & Shengping, 2022). The caves showcase ancient Chinese artistic expression through painted sculptures, murals, and architectural features. In general, there are over ten genres of art (Dai, 2019). The painted murals, known as Flying Apsaras (Figure 1), reflect local aesthetic ideologies and concepts about celestial beings in the sky. It possesses the potential to preserve these cultural values (Yanhai & Shengping, 2022).

Jewellery designers have recreated the vibrant essence of Dunhuang Flying Apsaras' Art by combining vivid enamels or inlays with gemstones such as lapis lazuli, turquoise, or coral (Haiming, 2023). The rich, jewel-toned tones and vibrant hues set the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras' color scheme apart. The palette's name comes from these distinctive qualities. This color palette inspired the selection of gemstones and materials, reflecting the rich and vivid nature of the art form (Cartechini et al., 2021). The designs will accurately capture the essence of Dunhuang Flying Apsaras' artwork. The outcome is very remarkable when these components are combined. Richardson (2023) proposed that ancient jewelry design incorporated aesthetics to convey beauty while recognizing the arts' influence on design. The effect of Dunhuang Flying Apsaras Arts and culture in jewelry design is continually observed in the modern age. Modern jewelry designers are drawn to Dunhuang not only for aesthetic reasons but also due to its cultural significance.

The design of Dunhuang-inspired jewelry is rooted in the systematic reconstruction of the Yingluo (traditional necklace) and the iconic Flying Apsaras motifs from the Sui and Tang Dynasty murals (Huang et al., 2024). Unlike purely ornamental pieces, this jewelry functions as a contemporary pragmatic reinterpretation that translates the aesthetic qualities of the murals, particularly their distinctive 'line and shape' architecture, into wearable art. By balancing historical symbolic extraction with contemporary design language, these pieces serve as carriers of cultural and religious emotions, preserving the intangible heritage of the Mogao Grottoes through innovative material applications and visual transformations.

Another design, called Fly Apsaras Dancing, draws inspiration from the Fly Apsaras Murals in the Dunhuang Caves, as documented by Haiming (2023). It aims to capture the art's imagery and aesthetic qualities by incorporating abstract form-shaping, formal expression with white space, careful material selection, and the elegant unity of oriental meaning. By combining these elements, the jewelry design aims to evoke viewers' aesthetic associations, provide aesthetic pleasure, and explore a unique path for the development of contemporary Chinese jewelry art that both inherits and promotes Chinese culture.

These jewelry pieces demonstrate the fusion of cultures, symbolism, material selection, and innovative craftsmanship in art-inspired jewelry. It confirms that exploring diverse traditions to create unique and meaningful designs is possible. While art-inspired jewelry has gained significant attention in recent years, there is a need for a deeper understanding of its influence on consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. This analysis could shed light on the potential benefits and drawbacks of incorporating cultural elements into jewelry design, helping designers and marketers create more effective strategies to appeal to consumers.



Figure 1: Dunhuang Flying Apsaras Art

Source: Mei & Ahmad (2023)

Perception in Jewelry Design

Perception is the cognitive process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting stimuli to understand the environment (Xie et al., 2023). It's a matter of personal perspective, as everyone experiences stimuli uniquely influenced by their own background and expectations. The stimuli that affect perception can be categorized into three types: stimulus factors, individual factors, and situational variables. Stimulus factors include the physical characteristics of the stimuli, such as their intensity, size, and contrast. Individual factors refer to the characteristics of the perceiver, such as motivation, personality, and learning. Situational variables include the context in which the stimuli are presented, such as the presence of other stimuli or the perceiver's current mood, as determined by their external environment (Hess et al., 2020; Xie et al., 2023).

From a jewelry design perspective, physical stimuli could be associated with product design attributes, mainly what consumers believe the product could represent (Wu, 2020). Individual factors are primarily related to social image factors but could also apply to social influence (Das & Sabbir, 2019; Rauthmann & Sherman, 2021; Jaggi & Bahl, 2019). Situational factors primarily relate to social influences. Perception significantly influences consumer behavior (Shabir, 2023; Das & Sabbir, 2019); it plays a vital role in consumer behavior as consumers interpret and draw different inferences about product quality, price, popularity, and assortment size based on other stimuli modes. Whether a consumer purchases a product can be determined by subjective beliefs rather than product attributes (Hess et al., 2020).

When forming ideas, many people tend to look to others' opinions for guidance; this practice is referred to as "social proof". People are more likely to grant the design legitimacy when they see others wearing or admiring a piece of jewelry (Hu, 2024). This may be seen as endorsing the design. This indicates that consumers are more likely to consider purchasing the same item because they think the style is trendy or well-liked. Consequently, the likelihood that someone may consider buying the same style is increased.

The literature on consumer perception generally acknowledges the social dimensions of aesthetic experience in terms of visual appeal, perceived product quality, and brand image. However, less attention has been given to the culturally embodied meanings elicited by heritage-inspired designs. This omission limits understanding of how consumers interpret cultural authenticity, symbolic value, and aesthetic meaning when evaluating culturally inspired products. Within the present study, perception therefore represents consumers' evaluations of the cultural significance, uniqueness, perceived value, elegance, and beauty associated with Dunhuang Flying Apsaras-inspired jewelry. Examining this perceptual dimension is important because subjective evaluations of product attributes may be closely associated with consumers' subsequent purchase intentions.

Social Influence

Social influence is conceptually related to the subjective-norm component of the TPB, which refers to perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a particular behavior. It is influenced by an individual's beliefs regarding whether people important to them think they should engage in the behavior.

Celebrities have a significant impact on purchasing decisions, particularly regarding high fashion and upscale goods (Moraes et al., 2019). If a celebrity is seen wearing or supporting a particular jewelry design, their fans may become interested in obtaining matching or comparable jewelry. A buyer's decision to buy jewelry may be influenced by a well-known person who has worn or been seen wearing it. Consequently, the item's perceived value and attractiveness could increase.

Buying decisions may be significantly influenced by recommendations from colleagues, family, or friends (Mehyar et al., 2020). Positive comments or suggestions from a reliable source regarding a particular jewelry design might give the receiver greater credibility and self-assurance; for example, when someone receives praise or suggestions from trustworthy people for a specific jewelry design. As people tend to share the same values and value the opinions and experiences of those close to them, social influence can impact people's purchase intentions.

Social media platforms are now potent tools that can influence consumer behavior (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Influencers and Internet forums dedicated solely to jewelry-related subjects can provide guidance, various concepts, and firsthand accounts. The visual format of social media allows shoppers to see how various jewelry designs look on real individuals. This might stimulate their interest and influence their decision to buy or not. Additionally, social networking platforms typically offer direct connections to product websites, making it much easier for buyers to implement their strategies.

Social and cultural norms already in place in society significantly impact consumer behavior because they serve as an example of this kind of behavior (De Mooij, 2019). Jewelry holds great symbolic value in some communities and can be interpreted as a symbol of wealth, position, or even cultural identity; this is accurate for several communities. Wearing patterns may be interpreted as a way to show one's belonging to a group or to follow societal standards. This interpretation is possible because of the confusion surrounding these two ideas. The norms of a culture or social circle can significantly impact a person's desire to purchase, especially if that person is trying to fit in with the expectations and ideals of that culture or social circle.

Although previous studies shed light on social influence, they address global phenomena such as social networks and peer influences but fail to consider localized social networks, festivals, and traditions, which are crucial decision-making factors in the culturally diverse province of Gansu.

Theoretical Underpinnings and Hypotheses Development

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) suggests that behavioral intention mainly depends on attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. This intention then influences actual behavior (Ajzen, 1991; La Barbera & Ajzen, 2020). The theory has been extensively used to analyze purchase intent and other behavioral intentions in fields like psychology, consumer behavior, health, and marketing (Askarshahi et al., 2019; Aziz et al., 2019; Batooli et al., 2022).

This study uses TPB as a guiding framework, not merely as direct equivalents for the traditional TPB constructs. Consumer Perception is linked to TPB's attitudinal component since it captures consumers' cognitive and psychological assessments of the jewelry, such as its aesthetic appeal, cultural importance, uniqueness, elegance, and perceived worth. A more favorable evaluation of these characteristics is expected to be associated with a stronger intention to purchase culturally inspired jewelry. Social Influence aligns closely with the subjective norm dimension of TPB, as recommendations, peer opinions, social expectations, celebrities, and digital communities may shape consumers' perceptions of whether purchasing a particular product is socially desirable or acceptable.

Cultural Elements in Design are treated as a context-specific design factor within the present research model rather than as a direct operationalization of perceived behavioral control. The construct represents consumers' evaluations of culturally embedded product characteristics, including visual appeal, uniqueness, authenticity, cultural significance, and the preservation and continuation of traditional values. Such characteristics are particularly relevant to heritage-based products because culturally meaningful design may contribute to consumers' evaluation of a product and its desirability. This positioning allows the research to retain the explanatory value of TPB while recognizing that culture-specific product attributes may operate alongside established psychological and social determinants of purchase intention.

Accordingly, the present study proposes a direct-association model wherein Cultural Elements in Design, Consumer Perception, and Social Influence are examined as distinct factors associated with Purchase Intention. This contextualized application aligns with prior research demonstrating the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in elucidating purchase intention within traditional cultural contexts (Zong et al., 2023). The model therefore examines whether culturally meaningful design characteristics, favorable consumer evaluations, and social influences are positively related to consumers' intentions to purchase Dunhuang Flying Apsaras-inspired jewelry. Based on these theoretical arguments, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Cultural elements in design are positively associated with the intention to purchase jewelry in Gansu, China.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Perception is positively associated with the intention to purchase jewelry in Gansu, China.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Social influence is positively associated with the intention to purchase jewelry in Gansu, China.

Based on the above assumptions and related research on the TPB purchase intention, Figure 2 explains the internal relationship between design inspired by cultural elements, perception, social influence and customer purchase intention.

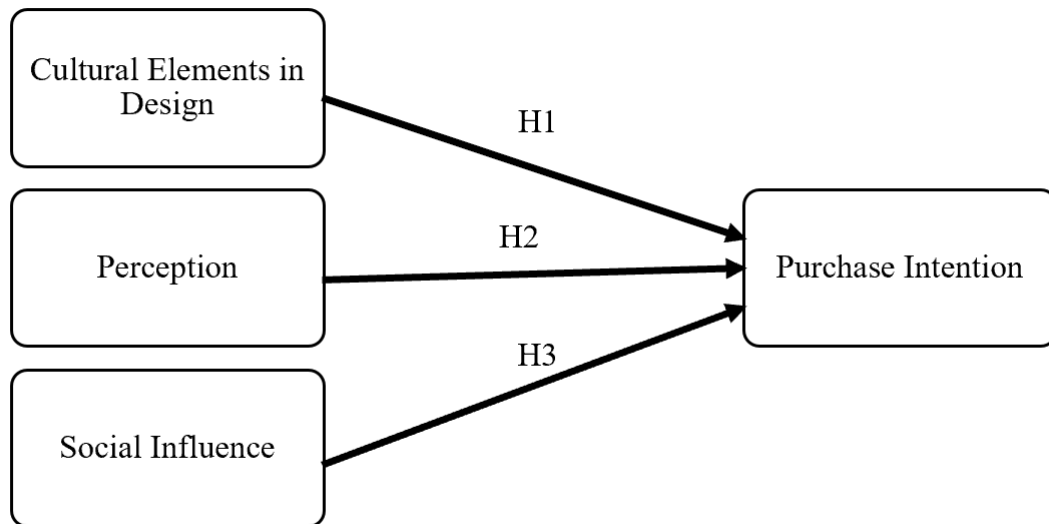


Figure 2: Proposed Research Model of Factors Associated with Jewelry Purchase Intention

Research Methodology

Survey Instrument

The questionnaire contained 20 items covering four constructs: Cultural Elements in Design, Perception, Social Influence, and Purchase Intention. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale. The items were adapted from existing instruments but modified to suit the context of jewelry inspired by the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras. Social Influence items were adapted from Chen et al. (2018), while the Perception items were based on Chaisuriyathavikun and Punnakitakashem (2016). The latter study also informed the measurement of Cultural Elements in Design and Purchase Intention. Wording was adjusted where necessary so that the items reflected the cultural setting of Gansu and the visual and symbolic characteristics of the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras. The complete set of items is presented in Table 1.

Before the main survey, six experts reviewed the questionnaire for content validity. The procedure followed Yusoff (2019), including an assessment of the relevance of individual items and calculation of the Content Validity Index (CVI). With six experts, an I-CVI of at least 0.83 was taken as acceptable. The assessment yielded an I-CVI of 0.85 and an S-CVI of 0.85, indicating sufficient agreement among the experts for the instrument to proceed to the next stage.

Table 1: Constructs Used

Constructs (Items)		References
Cultural Elements in Design	Jewelry inspired by the artwork of the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras is visually captivating and artistically lovely, in my opinion.	Chaisuriyathavikun and Punnakitikashem (2016)
	I think jewelry designs inspired by the artwork of the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras are unique and set apart from other jewelry styles.	
	Jewelry that draws inspiration from the artwork of Dunhuang Flying Apsaras is, in my opinion, genuine and captures the artwork's spirit.	
	Jewelry inspired by the artwork of the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras is culturally significant and symbolizes a central aspect of Chinese history and culture.	
	Designs for jewelry influenced by the artwork of the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras uphold and advance traditional cultural values.	
	Jewelry creation that incorporates the artwork of the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras helps preserve the traditional cultural heritage.	
	The use of Dunhuang Flying Apsaras Art in jewelry designs is a way to appreciate and celebrate ancient cultural art forms.	
	The jewelry design of the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras contributes to understanding the myths and customs of ancient culture in the modern world.	
Perception	The artwork of the Flying Apsaras of Dunhuang is considered to have cultural significance in jewelry designs.	
	The perceived worth of jewelry increases when the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras Art is incorporated into the design.	
	Designs for jewelry that use the artwork of the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras are considered unique and unusual.	
	The jewelry design of Dunhuang Flying Apsaras gives a feeling of elegance and beauty.	
Social Influence	I am more likely to purchase jewelry inspired by the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras Art if I see other people wearing it.	Chen et al. (2018)
	I am more likely to trust jewelry inspired by the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras Art if I know that it is popular among other people.	
	I am more likely to purchase jewelry inspired by the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras Art if I see it being advertised by celebrities or other influential people.	
	I am more likely to purchase jewelry inspired by the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras Art if it is featured in fashion magazines or other media outlets.	
Purchase Intention	My likely purchase will be jewelry influenced by the artwork of the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras.	

	I decided to buy jewelry inspired by the artwork of Dunhuang Flying Apsaras because of its attractive appearance.	
	My choice to buy the jewelry was influenced by the distinctiveness of the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras artwork compared with other jewelry designs.	
	I am prepared to pay more for pieces that draw inspiration from the artwork of the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras because the jewelry is genuine and well-made.	

A pilot study was then used to check the internal consistency of the four scales. Cronbach's alpha was 0.937 for Cultural Elements in Design, 0.868 for Perception, 0.880 for Social Influence, and 0.892 for Purchase Intention. All four values exceeded 0.70 and were considered satisfactory for the main analysis.

Data Collection

Participants were recruited from individuals affiliated with the Art and Design Program at the College of Art and Design, Nanchang Institute of Technology in Gansu Province, China. Institutional records indicated an accessible population of 234 individuals who met the socioeconomic criteria established for the study. These included individuals categorized as elite or wealthy, with the latter associated with reported monthly income above RMB30,000. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample-size guideline, approximately 148 participants were required for a population of this size. A total of 150 completed questionnaires were eventually included.

The survey took place during the COVID-19 Omicron period in 2022. Restrictions on physical movement made face-to-face probability sampling difficult, so convenience sampling was used and the questionnaire was distributed online through WeChat. No missing responses were found in either the demographic or Likert-scale data. Because respondents came from a single institutional setting and were recruited through non-probability sampling, the sample should not be regarded as representative of the wider population of Gansu Province.

Results and Discussions

Data Analysis

The 150 complete questionnaires were first checked for missing data and response completeness. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the respondents, followed by Pearson's correlation to examine the relationships between Cultural Elements in Design, Perception, Social Influence, and Purchase Intention.

Skewness and kurtosis were examined before conducting the correlation analysis. Following Hair et al. (2017), values between -1.0 and $+1.0$ were treated as acceptable for the analysis. Skewness ranged from -0.815 to -0.151 , while kurtosis ranged from -0.177 to 0.997 . As all values fell within this range, Pearson's correlation was subsequently performed.

Table 2: Normality Test

	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Cultural Elements in Design	−0.151	0.198	−0.177	0.394
Perception	−0.815	0.198	0.997	0.394
Social Influence	−0.722	0.198	−0.002	0.394
Purchase Intention	−0.466	0.198	0.131	0.394

Respondent Characteristics

The demographic makeup of the 150 respondents included 63 females and 87 males (see Table 3). Participants fell into various age groups, with the largest segment aged 30–39 at 32.0%, followed by those aged 20–29 at 26.7%, 40–49 at 19.3%, 19-year-olds at 12.7%, and individuals aged 50 and above at 9.3%. This distribution reflects input from respondents at different adulthood stages. Prior research indicates that age can influence consumer preferences, digital jewelry needs, and reactions to both traditional and modern design elements (Fortmann, Heuten and Boll, 2015; Zhong & Moon, 2020). However, since this study did not perform inferential testing of purchase intentions across age groups, these demographic figures should be seen as descriptive characteristics rather than indicators of age-related differences in preferences for culturally inspired jewelry.

The sample comprised 58.7% male and 41.3% female respondents. While this shows the gender makeup of the participants, it doesn't imply that either gender has a greater purchase intention for culturally inspired jewelry. Prior research indicates that gender can influence purchasing decisions and attitudes toward fashion and luxury items, although these effects can vary depending on the product and market context (Yang et al., 2022). Additionally, studies have emphasized the role of gender and age in shaping perceptions of luxury fashion brands and consumer reactions to branded products (Ajitha & Sivakumar, 2019). Therefore, the current gender distribution provides useful context, but further analysis is needed to determine if there are significant differences in purchase intent between males and females.

Previous studies have highlighted interesting gender-related differences in how people engage with fashion, luxury items, and branded products (Yang et al., 2022; Ho et al., 2022). However, the present study did not test gender as a moderate or explanatory variable. Therefore, these studies are used only to contextualize the sample's demographic composition, not to infer gender-based differences in jewelry purchase intention.

The education levels among the respondents showed a nice variety. Most of them were undergraduates, making up 39.3% of the group, followed by junior college students at 34.0%. High school or vocational students comprised 16.7%, while those with master's or PhD degrees represented 10.0%. Previous research has considered educational background as a demographic characteristic that may be relevant to jewelry purchasing decisions (Munde & Kaur, 2024). In the present study, however, educational level was included as a demographic

characteristic rather than tested as an explanatory variable. Consequently, the distribution should not be interpreted as evidence that one educational group demonstrates stronger purchase intention than another.

Overall, the demographic details show that our sample includes a diverse group of respondents, representing various genders, ages, and educational backgrounds. These characteristics facilitate a more comprehensive understanding and interpretation of the study findings. Previous research has highlighted the relevance of age, gender, education, and generational differences in consumer responses to jewelry, luxury products, and culturally oriented purchasing decisions (Ajitha & Sivakumar, 2019; Zhong & Moon, 2020; Munde & Kaur, 2024; Eka et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the present study does not directly test differences across demographic groups; therefore, no conclusions are drawn regarding whether any demographic group exhibits significantly higher or lower purchase intentions.

Table 3: Demographic

Category	Demographic	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58.7
	Female	41.3
Age	19	12.7
	20–29	26.7
	30–39	32
	40–49	19.3
	50–above	9.3
Educational Level	High school	16.7
	Junior college	34
	Undergraduate	39.3
	Master's and PhD degrees	10

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation was used to test H1–H3. As reported in Table 4, each of the three variables had a significant positive relationship with Purchase Intention. Perception recorded the highest correlation with Purchase Intention ($r = 0.641$, $p < 0.001$). Social Influence was also positively related to Purchase Intention ($r = 0.592$, $p < 0.001$), followed by Cultural Elements in Design ($r = 0.494$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, H1, H2 and H3 were supported.

The coefficients represent bivariate relationships. They show that respondents who gave higher ratings to these factors also tended to report greater purchase intention, but they do not establish that one variable caused another. Likewise, the relative size of the correlations should not be interpreted as showing the independent predictive contribution of each factor because the variables were not entered simultaneously into a multivariate model.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation

Correlations					
		Social Influence	Perception	Cultural Elements in Design	Purchase Intention
Cultural Elements in Design	Pearson Correlation, r			1	.494**
	Sig.				.000
	N			150	150
Perception	Pearson Correlation, r		1	.624**	.641**
	Sig.			.000	.000
	N		150	150	150
Social Influence	Pearson Correlation, r	1	.631**	.611**	.592**
	Sig.		.000	.000	.000
	N	150	150	150	150
Purchase Intention	Pearson Correlation, r				1
	Sig.				
	N				150

As shown in Table 4, all three factors were significantly and positively associated with Purchase Intention. Perception demonstrated the strongest bivariate relationship with Purchase Intention ($r = 0.641$, $p < 0.001$), followed by Social Influence ($r = 0.592$, $p < 0.001$) and Cultural Elements in Design ($r = 0.494$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that respondents who reported more favorable perceptions of Dunhuang Flying Apsaras-inspired jewelry also tended to report stronger purchase intentions. Similarly, higher levels of social influence and more favorable evaluations of cultural elements in design were associated with higher purchase intention. The results therefore provide correlational support for H1, H2, and H3. However, because the analysis is bivariate and cross-sectional, the coefficients should not be interpreted as evidence of causal influence or as estimates of the independent predictive contribution of each variable.

Discussion

The findings as shown in Table 5, provide support for H1 by demonstrating a significant positive relationship between Cultural Elements in Design and Purchase Intention ($r = 0.494$, $p < 0.001$). This association suggests that respondents who evaluated Dunhuang Flying Apsaras-inspired jewelry more positively in terms of its visual appeal, uniqueness, authenticity, cultural significance, and heritage value also tended to report stronger intentions to purchase such jewelry. Rather than indicating that cultural design characteristics directly cause purchase intention, the result demonstrates that culturally meaningful product attributes are positively associated with consumers stated purchasing intentions. This finding reinforces the relevance of cultural symbolism in contemporary product evaluation and suggests that heritage-derived design can function not merely as decoration but as a meaningful component of consumers' responses to culturally inspired jewelry.

Table 5: Correlation Result for Cultural Elements in Design and Purchase Intention

Hypothesized relationship	r	p-value	Result
H1: Cultural elements in design are positively associated with the intention to purchase jewelry in Gansu, China.	0.494	0.000	Supported

The results also support H2, with Perception showing the strongest positive correlation with Purchase Intention among the three factors examined ($r = 0.641$, $p < 0.001$) (Table 6). This finding indicates that respondents who evaluated Dunhuang Flying Apsaras-inspired jewelry more favorably with respect to cultural significance, perceived value, uniqueness, elegance, and beauty were more likely to report stronger purchase intentions. From a TPB-informed perspective, this relationship is relevant to the attitudinal dimension of behavioral intention because consumers' evaluations of a product contribute to the desirability attached to performing a purchase-related behavior. Importantly, the present result establishes a strong bivariate association but does not demonstrate that Perception is necessarily the strongest independent predictor when the other variables are controlled simultaneously.

Table 6: Correlation Result for Perception and Purchase Intention

Hypothesized relationship	r	p-value	Decision
H2: Perception is positively associated with the intention to purchase jewelry in Gansu, China.	0.641	0.000	Supported

H3 is similarly supported by the significant positive relationship between Social Influence and Purchase Intention ($r = 0.592$, $p < 0.001$) (Table 7). This finding indicates that respondents who reported stronger exposure to peer behavior, product popularity, celebrity endorsement, and media visibility also tended to report stronger purchase intentions toward Dunhuang Flying Apsaras-inspired jewelry. The result is consistent with the subjective-norm dimension of TPB, in which perceptions of socially relevant others can be associated with behavioral intention. In the present cultural context, the relationship also suggests that culturally inspired jewelry may acquire additional social meaning when it is endorsed, worn, or valued by relevant reference groups. Nevertheless, the correlational design does not establish that social influence directly causes higher purchase intention.

Table 7: Correlation Result for Social Influence and Purchase Intention

Hypothesized relationship	r	p-value	Decision
H3: Social influence is positively associated with the intention to purchase jewelry in Gansu, China.	0.592	0.000	Supported

Conclusion

This study explored how Cultural Elements in Design, Perception, and Social Influence relate to Purchase Intention for jewelry inspired by the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras in Gansu, China.

Results show that all three factors are significantly and positively linked to Purchase Intention. Perception had the strongest correlation with Purchase Intention, Social Influence, and finally Cultural Elements in Design. These outcomes suggest that consumers' judgments about aesthetic and cultural value, social influences, and culturally embedded product features play important roles in shaping their intent to buy heritage-inspired jewelry. While not claiming causal relationships, the findings provide empirical evidence that cultural product design, along with consumer psychological and social evaluations, are closely interconnected in this context. The findings provide practical guidance for jewelry designers and industry stakeholders aiming to incorporate cultural heritage into modern products. Specifically, Dunhuang-inspired motifs can serve not just as decorations but as design elements that express cultural significance, authenticity, historical importance, and regional identity. These strategies can help differentiate products and foster ongoing engagement with cultural heritage.

Design Strategies

Designers should incorporate cultural elements into jewelry designs to increase purchase intent. The designers should thoroughly analyze the artwork of Dunhuang Flying Apsaras to fully understand its artistic and symbolic implications. Designers should incorporate unique Dunhuang Art motifs into their designs to ensure that the pieces are decorative and artistic. Designers should also market the cultural and historical aspects of the designs through narratives in marketing materials. Furthermore, designers must ensure that their designs align with specific cultural elements and foster the advancement of traditional Chinese culture. Moreover, designers should position jewelry as a way of appreciating and continuing the traditions of our history to evoke the patriotism and duty of consumers.

Practical Strategies

The industry should promote cultural heritage by launching advertisements highlighting the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras Art in jewelry and its cultural relevance to enhance jewelry purchase intention. The industry should use social influence to encourage culturally inspired designs, leveraging celebrities and other recommendable personalities to resonate with the target market. It could quickly adopt strategies to ensure that the industry gains buyers' trust and appeal and ensure that these designs are most visible in fashion magazines and other popular media. The sector should enhance perceived value by communicating to consumers how incorporating Dunhuang Art enhances the value and class of the jewelry. The industry should uphold tradition by positioning these designs not only as trendy icons but also as a means to preserve and perpetuate Chinese cultural property.

Strategies for Policymakers

The government should set up rules to promote a friendly environment within jewelry manufacturing industries, with a special focus on incorporating Dunhuang Flying Apsaras Art within fashion jewelry. Studies in styled and culturally significant design should also be encouraged, with the majority offering research grants or tax credits for projects incorporating culturally stylish design. As a result, it is critical to work with cultural organizations to establish the credibility of these designs. Policymakers must raise consumer awareness of these designs through various awareness campaigns to expand the market for jewelry inspired by cultural traditions. Including these elements in fashion and tourism development also improves cultural awareness and promotes the international marketing of the local jewelry business.

Theoretical Implications

The findings contribute to the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior within the context of culturally inspired consumer products. TPB proposes that behavioral intentions are closely related to individuals' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the present study, Perception provides an attitude-related perspective by capturing respondents' evaluations of the aesthetic, symbolic, and cultural qualities of Dunhuang Flying Apsaras-inspired jewelry, while Social Influence reflects a subjective-norm-related dimension through the role of peers, popularity, celebrities, and media exposure.

The significant relationship between Perception and Purchase Intention ($r = 0.641$, $p < 0.001$) demonstrates the relevance of consumers' evaluative responses to culturally inspired products. Similarly, the significant relationship between Social Influence and Purchase Intention supports the relevance of social and normative considerations in understanding purchase-related intention. These findings are consistent with the central premise of TPB that psychological evaluations and perceived social expectations are relevant to behavioral intention.

Importantly, Cultural Elements in Design should be understood in this study as a context-specific product-design construct rather than as a direct substitute for perceived behavioral control. Its positive relationship with Purchase Intention indicates that culturally embedded product attributes may operate alongside established TPB-related psychological and social factors. This provides a basis for further theoretical development in which culturally meaningful product characteristics are examined as antecedents of consumer attitudes or perceptions within heritage-oriented consumption contexts. Future research may therefore investigate more complex relationships among cultural design characteristics, consumer perception, social influence, perceived behavioral control, and purchase intention through structural models.

Practical Implications

The implications of this study's results for Gansu and related jewelry markets can be summarized as follows: culture, perception, and social factors should be incorporated into marketing and product placement approaches.

First, cultural designs, such as Dunhuang Flying Apsaras, should be used in jewelry design to create a sense of pride associated with culture among jewelry users. Involving local artists and cultural institutions can also achieve authenticity, aiding in the preservation of cultures. The same holds for designers.

Second, marketing communication should focus on esthetic and cultural appeal to improve the evaluation of jewelry. Illustrations within advertisements that reveal the time, place, origin, or indications of the work can go a long way in captivating consumers' sensibilities and making them appreciate the products.

Third, the use of social influence must be incorporated into the mix. The jewelry manufacturers can then engage popular influencers, celebrities, or other respected personalities to advertise the jewelry via WeChat. Positive feedback from current customers can strengthen social proof, while effective digital marketing can attract younger, tech-savvy consumers.

Finally, brands should focus on key cultural events, such as marriage or festivals, and develop a line that aligns with those events. This increases a company's attractiveness and consumers' satisfaction with its products, consequently improving loyalty among communities that prioritize cultural designs.

This study examined the relationships between culturally meaningful design characteristics, consumer perceptions, social influences, and jewelry purchase intention in Gansu, China. The findings indicate that culturally embedded motifs are positively associated with purchase intention, while Perception demonstrated the strongest bivariate relationship among the factors examined. Social Influence was also significantly associated with Purchase Intention, highlighting the relevance of social approval and reference groups in culturally oriented consumption. Collectively, these findings may assist designers and jewelry businesses in developing culturally appropriate products and communication strategies while maintaining sensitivity to Gansu's cultural heritage. However, because the study is based on cross-sectional correlational data, the practical recommendations should be interpreted as evidence-informed possibilities rather than established causal interventions.

Limitations and Future Research

Similar to other research, this study has a notable limitation: the use of convenience sampling, which was practical during the COVID-19 lockdown but may limit the sample's representativeness. Data were gathered from an institution in Gansu, focusing on employed individuals with stable socioeconomic status. While this aligns with the goal of exploring high-income consumer behavior, it may not reflect the region's full diversity. The sample of 150 respondents, based on established guidelines, is sufficient for exploratory work, but because participants came from a single location, caution is warranted when generalizing. Future work could improve representativeness by using probability sampling across multiple districts.

This study centered on jewelry inspired by the Dunhuang Flying Apsaras, a significant cultural motif in Gansu. While providing depth, this focus limits the analysis's cultural diversity. Future research could examine additional local and national cultural symbols to better understand broader consumer reactions to heritage-based designs.

Theoretically, the study was based on TPB but did not measure all three components using their original definitions. Perception was treated as an attitude measure, Social Influence as subjective norm, and Cultural Elements in Design as a product-specific context factor rather than perceived behavioral control. Thus, the model should be viewed as an informed, contextual adaptation of TPB, not a full test of it. Future studies could directly assess attitude, norm, and control with standard TPB scales, adding Cultural Elements as an external factor. The analysis focused on direct relationships but overlooked possible indirect effects. For example, Cultural Elements might shape perceptions of culturally inspired jewelry, thereby indirectly influencing purchase intention. Future models could incorporate structural equation modeling (SEM) to explore these pathways, providing a more precise understanding of how design features affect consumer responses.

This study measured purchase intention rather than actual buying behavior. While intentions predict actions, various external factors can influence actual purchases. Longitudinal studies or behavioral tracking could shed light on how intentions translate into real purchases.

Despite these limitations, the research offers valuable insights into how cultural identity influences consumer behavior among high-income groups in Gansu. These findings lay the groundwork for future research and practical strategies for designers and businesses targeting culturally inspired jewelry markets.

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper. All authors have contributed to this work and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission to the Advanced International Journal of Business, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (AIJBES).

Ethics Statement: This study involved human participants through questionnaire-based data collection. Formal ethical approval was not required under the applicable institutional requirements for this type of non-interventional survey research. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose of the study prior to completing the questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and no personally identifying information was reported in the study. The research was conducted in accordance with accepted principles of research integrity, confidentiality, and ethical scholarly practice.

Author Contribution Statement: All authors contributed significantly to the development of this manuscript. Nooraziah Ahmad was responsible for the conceptualization, methodology, and overall supervision of the study. Li Mei handled data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results. Mohd Firdaus Mahamad Ali contributed to the literature review, drafting, and critical revision of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript prior to submission.

Acknowledgement The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the College of Art and Design, Nanchang Institute of Technology, Gansu, China, and all the academic experts and respondents who contributed to the successful completion of this study.

Funding Statement This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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