A Study on Art Museum's Recommendation Intention from the Perspective of Visitors' Experience Value: Based on Online Review Data

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Abstract: Based on the Theory of Rational Action, this paper analyzes visitors' comments by focusing on the experience, emotions and attitudes of art museum visitors, and predicts visitors' recommendation intention. Using text analysis methods and data analysis related software, the physical examination value, emotional characteristics, recommendation intention and non-recommendation intention of visitors are analyzed from the visitor review data, so as to provide management suggestions for museum operation and supplement new research perspectives for museum research. The results show that emotional factors have a greater impact on the intention to recommend, which exceeds the experience value. The experience value of art museum visitors can be divided into five categories, aesthetic, social, functional, spiritual and fun, among which aesthetic experience has the greatest impact on the intention to recommend; Negative reviews lead to negative emotions and have a greater impact on the intention to disapprove. The management recommendations for art museums are to enhance the aesthetic experience of visitors and reduce the negative emotions of visitors.

1. Introduction

On TripAdvisor, the world's largest travel website, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York has more than 55,000 reviews as of February 2025, more than any other museum in the same area. Of course, as one of the largest art museums in the world, the Metropolitan Museum of Art offers many opportunities for visitors to experience it. As described on the TripAdvisor website, at the most visited museums and attractions in New York City, visitors will experience more than 5,000 years of art from around the world, and the Met is a source of inspiration, insight and understanding for anyone to learn, escape, play, dream, discover and communicate [33]. In the online reviews, 96.25% rated 4-5 (excellent and good), 2.94% rated 3 (average), and 0.82% rated 1-2 (poor and terrible), which indicates that the vast majority of visitors have a good experience, showing word-of-mouth effect and recommendation tendency. However, it is undeniable that the proportion of reviews with a rating of less than 3 points is small, but it represents a poor visitor experience, and it is likely that it is not recommended.

According to the ABC attitude theory, the three components of attitude, cognition, emotion, and behavior constitute the ABC model, which has been widely used in the field of consumer behavior research [36]. Cognition comes from the information processing and perception of the attitude object formed by the visitor through perception and attention after receiving external stimuli, which is the visitor's perceptual experience of the art museum, the emotional component of the attitude is the subjective feeling of the visitor to the attitude object after the cognitive formation, which is manifested as the visitor's scoring and evaluation of the art museum, and the behavioral component of the attitude is a certain behavioral intention or tendency of the visitor under the influence of cognition and emotion, which can be the visitor's recommendation intention after visiting.

This article focuses on which visitors' experiences influence their recommendation intentions. Museums have long been guardians of cultural heritage, providing spaces for people to come into contact with different histories and arts [2]. From the perspective of the function of museums, museums belong to the field of experience characterized by sensation, participation, and aesthetics, among other things [17]. Preserving and exhibiting human culture, history and art, and acting as stewards and disseminators of cultural heritage, museums whose core mission goes beyond conservation and provides visitors with an immersive experience [27]. In the experience economy, art museums are shifting their focus to enhancing the visitor experience in order to increase attendance [40], and the resonance of the museum visitor experience has been on the rise [38], and the visitors' experience and feedback have also become an important reference for improving the museum's services and attracting more visitors [3].

In fact, as a new way of providing value, experience is a kind of co-creation value generated by the interaction between the museum and the visitor, and the experience value of the visitor is the core value of the museum. Based on the theory of experiential value, the experiential value perceived by customers is a kind of spiritual satisfaction from the heart. This experiential value will have an impact on the customer's behavior and attitude later [29]. According to the social exchange theory, the customer will behave in favor of the value provider after obtaining the desired value. Therefore, in theory, museum visitors have an intention to recommend after receiving positive experience value.

How to analyze the value of visitors' experience from their reviews and predict visitors' intention to recommend them is the problem that this article will address. Literature research shows that there are three broad perspectives on the study of museum visitor experience. A Functional Perspective on Museums: Emphasizing the Informal Learning Experience of Museum Visitors [1] [28]. Augmented reality [40], Industry 4.0/5.0 (Anna Cipparrone et al., 2025), and AI and deep learning [14]can enhance the museum experience. Museum Visitor Feedback Perspective: Analyzing the Significance of Museum Visitor Feedback to the Improvement of Museum Services from Museum Visitor Reviews [3]. These studies only analyzed the experience-related issues in terms of the connection between the visitor's experience and the museum, or only studied the impact of the museum's sensory experience (auditory, visual, physical) on their emotions and the impact on the visitor's sense of place [12], but did not address the impact of the visitor's experience on the visitor's behavioral intention. There is still a lack of literature in this area, which is what this paper focuses on and aims to solve.

2. Literature review and Theoretical Foundation

Experience as a subjective feeling has attracted attention since it became the fourth economic provision after products, goods and services. Postmodern society tends to develop experience industries [32], in which symbolic concepts and meanings determine the economic value of commodities [11], and society enters the experience economy [24], which is the first time that the concept of experience economy has been proposed. User experience is the intuitive feeling of a user's interaction with a company and its services and products [8]. As an economic model of experience,

the 4Es (educational, entertainment, escapist, and esthetics) represent the four domains of experience, and this new theory and perspective has been widely studied in subsequent studies in different research areas such as marketing, consumer behavior, hospitality and tourism, digital media, video games, etc. [16].

Experiential value is the value that consumers can create in the process of consumption experience, and it is a new type of customer value that is born due to the change of consumption patterns [18]. The study of experiential value began in the 80s, and with the advent of consumer experience, experiential value was defined as consumers' perceptions, preferences, evaluations, and feelings about products [20]. Unlike perceived value, which is an overall assessment of a product's utility [39], and a tool used by consumers to measure their choices in consumer behavior, experiential value places more emphasis on the consumer's inner process of feeling rather than the result of evaluation. The constituent dimension of experiential value is consistent with the interactive, active and dynamic nature of the experience itself, emphasizing the functional, emotional and social aspects of experiential value, that is, experiential value is composed of three parts: functional value, emotional value and social value [13].

The museum experience has always been a theme in museum studies. In the field of museum visitor research, some literature studies the design and enhancement of museum experience from the perspective of enhancing museum experience, such as the use of modern technological means (virtual reality, industry 4.0/5.0, AI) to enhance the visitor experience, and only a small number of literature deals with the perceptual experience of museum visitors themselves, such as sensory experience, learning experience, and museum visitors' experience expectations [6]. The study of the museum experience adapts to the need for visitor research in the transition of museum functions from collection, research, and exhibition to education and entertainment [34]. The museum experience is an interactive and active experience [14], which is a subjective and dynamic feeling generated by the physical environment of the museum, combined with the personal and social environment. This dynamic experience includes pre-visit, in-visit, and post-visit experiences. At present, the literature on the study of museum visitors' experience by combining the visitor's post-visit experience with the visitor's behavioral intention is not fully developed and almost blank. A clear study of the visitor experience of museums and the intention to recommend them based on the value of the visitors' experience is of practical significance for the management practice of museums.

Museum visitor research deals with who visitors to museums are and why people visit museums [15], as well as basic data on the nature of potential target visitors. This paper is different from this, which focuses on the intention to recommend from the experience of museum visitors.

Recommendation intention is the desire of people to recommend something to others and say something positive, as well as a positive attitude tendency. Research on intention to recommend is often conducted in the field of marketing to focus on post-service consumer behavior, which has the same significance as positive word-of-mouth [19]. Recommendation intent is also used to measure loyalty when studying customer loyalty [21], for example, in the tourism sector, destination loyalty performance is measured by whether a traveler recommends a destination [22]. Recommendation intent is usually behavioral intent after receiving a service, which means that customers are willing to recommend a product or service to others after a positive user experience [4], for example, in the airline industry, passenger recommendation intent is often driven by their satisfaction, which stems from the perceived quality of service during the flight experience [35].

Studies have shown that customer reviews can express the intention to recommend and can serve as a recommendation. Potential consumers look at consumer ratings and read reviews to get an idea of the reviewer's attitude towards the product or service [25]. Research confirms that online reviews and recommendations through referencing are often persuasive [10], which in turn affects downstream variables such as sales [5].

There is no visible research result in the current research literature for the study of the intention of museums to recommend, which may be the innovation of this study. The only literature that examines the effect of the improvement of museum display systems and online systems on recommending museum exhibits to visitors and saving time from the perspective of technological improvement [31][15].

It is of practical significance to study the intention of museum visitors to recommend. Museum visitors are not ordinary visitors, and museums can transform them into active participants in the work of the museum to ensure that their visit is enjoyable, to provide social interaction, and to actively recommend to encourage people to revisit the museum [17].

The Theory of Rational Action (TRA) provides a theoretical framework and explanation for the research in this paper to predict the recommending intention/behavioral tendency of museum visitors after the experience. Rational action theory is a psychological framework used to explain and predict human behavior [9]. This theory, which postulates that an individual's intention to perform a particular behavior is the most direct determinant of whether or not they engage in that behavior, has been widely used in the field of consumer behavior research [10].

According to the TRA theory, a person's behavioral intentions are related to their attitudes and supervisors' norms. TRA hypothesizes that behavior originates from the formation of behavioral intentions, and tries to predict behavioral intentions, and believes that cognition, emotion, and constructive are the three components that make up attitudes [37], and analyzing the components of museum visitors' attitudes can predict their evaluation of the value of museum experiences.

The TRA framework was used to analyze the recommendation intention of museum visitors, and it was necessary to analyze the subjective norms, experience value perception, emotional and emotional states, and behavioral tendencies that they may be subject to [30]. In this study, this paper will ignore the influence of visitors' demographic characteristics on recommendation intention, and simply study the influence of visitor attitude components and the influence of subjective norms. According to the literature, an individual's decision is due to a volitional effort to perform a particular behavior [7], and therefore the individual is rational and motivated in making a decision, and the degree of a museum visitor's intention to recommend is influenced by attitudes and subjective norms, attitudes (an individual's assessment of an individual's favorable or unfavorable behavior for a particular behavior) and subjective norms (perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform an action)[26], Both can affect recommendation intent.

Literature studies show that although TRA theory has made rich achievements in the study of consumer/visitor behavior, it has not yet been developed in the study of museum visitors' behavior intention. This paper studies that the intention of museum visitors to recommend can predict the participation behavior of visitors, which not only makes up for the shortcomings of the existing literature, but also provides a theoretical basis for museums to use visitors' word-of-mouth to create museum experience value.

3. Data Collection and Methods

In this article, considering the huge number of reviews in English, 32, 408 reviews in English accounted for 58.52% of all 55, 378 reviews, which was able to cover the opinions of the majority of visitors. The data saturation principle was taken into account at the time of data acquisition, and the data acquisition was stopped until no new valid data was found. All of the collected review data evenly covered the five levels of website reviews (1-5, terrible/poor/average/good/excellent), and the reviews included different types of visitors (international tourists, locals, families, couples).

In terms of research methodology, this paper uses content analysis to analyze the review text data. Comment data processing uses a variety of data processing technologies and is done online. The data

cleaning was carried out using Python software, which removed irrelevant content, including blank lines, repeated comments, special characters, etc., and unified the format to ensure that each comment contained information such as comment text, language category, rating, etc., and confirmed the accuracy of language classification through language detection. After that, text analysis (keyword extraction, sentiment analysis), experience value extraction (based on Holbrook's experience value model), and recommendation willingness prediction (based on sentiment analysis and topic modeling) were performed.

4. Results

4.1. Experience value analysis

The experience of visitors to the museum is reflected in the reviews it writes. In order to investigate the influence of visitors' experience value perception on recommendation intention, this paper uses automatic topic modeling software to extract experience value. In 1998, Pine and Gilmore proposed four types of experience economy, namely the 4Es model, including educational, entertainment, escapist, and esthetics [24]. In 1999, Morris Holbrook proposed eight dimensions of customer value, including efficiency, excellence, status, esteem, play, aesthetics, ethics, spirituality [20](Morr. Museums are the quintessential product of the experience economy, and the value they offer covers the above classifications. However, the subjective experience of museum visitors can perceive the value of the experience needs to be analyzed through visitor reviews.

In the analysis process, Keyword Matching was used to set the keyword dictionary of experience value (such as "beautiful, stunning" → aesthetic value), and the type of experience value involved in each review was calculated. The most common topics of experience in visitor reviews are identified through LDA/BERTopic. For example, Theme 1: Exhibition Design & Aesthetic Value; Theme 2: Interactive Experience & Game Value; Theme 3: Cultural Education & Functional Values. The analysis found that the core experiential values extracted from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's visitor reviews can be grouped into five dimensions:

> Aesthetic Value → "The architecture was stunning!"
> Social Value → "Great place for family visits."
> Spirituality Value → "I felt deeply connected to history."
> Functional Value → "Very informative and well-organized."
> Play Value → "The interactive exhibits were so much fun!"

Figure 1 shows the classification of experience value extracted from the visitor reviews of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and its proportion is aesthetic value, social value, functional value, play value, and spirituality value in descending order. This result is in line with the positioning of art museums. Aesthetic value is the most important, while play value is not, which also highlights the social and educational function of art museums.
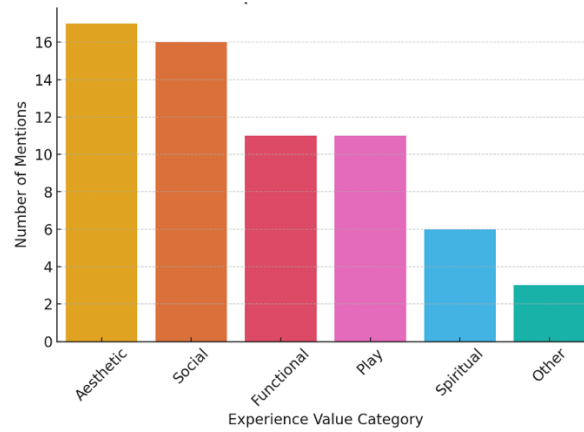
Figure 1. The classification and proportion of art museum experience value extracted from visitors' comments

Table 1 shows the further extracted keywords, which shows the number of times the five experience values are mentioned, shows the details of the experisences specifically mentioned by visitors in the reviews, and leaves clues for the prediction of recommendation intentions.

Table 1 Examples of five key words of experience value in visitor reviews

Experience Value Keywords

	Aesthetic	Social	Spiritual	Functional	Play
1	('art', 646)	('tour', 113)	('inspiring', 11)	('history', 48)	('fun', 30)
2	('exhibit', 265)	('crowd', 82)	('soul', 3)	('learning', 7)	('exciting', 11)
3	('paintings', 104)	('family', 27)	('meaningful', 1)	('informative', 5)	('interactive', 2)
4	('beautiful', 53)	('group', 27)	('connected', 0)	('educational', 4)	('engaging', 1)
5	('gallery', 35)	('friends', 11)	('emotional', 0)	('knowledge', 2)	('entertainment', 1)
6	('stunning', 25)	('interaction', 2)	0	0	0

In terms of aesthetic value, visitors often refer to "art" (646), "exhibit" (265), "paintings" (104), and "beautiful" (53), indicating their high attention to the quality of the exhibits and the visual experience.

In terms of social value, visitors often refer to "tour" (113), "crowd" (82), "family" (27), and "group" (27), indicating the importance of group visiting experience, while crowding can produce negative experiences.

In terms of spirituality value, visitors mentioned "inspiring" (11), "soul" (3), and "meaningful" (1), indicating that there were fewer mentions of spiritual value, indicating that museums may have less emotional resonance or deep cultural experience for visitors, or it may be due to cultural differences

In terms of functional value, visitors mentioned "history" (48), "learning" (7), and "informative" (5), and visitors mentioned history, learning, and information, but the frequency of related words was low, indicating that although art museums have educational functions, they are not the main focus of visitors' discussions.

In terms of play value, visitors mentioned "fun" (30), "exciting" (11), and "interactive" (2), and interactive experiences were less mentioned, indicating that the entertainment and immersive experiences in art museums may be less or less strongly perceived by visitors.

4.2. Sentiment analysis

In this paper, we found that out of the 55, 378 reviews on the TripAdvisor website, 53, 303 (96.25%) were positive reviews (4-5 points), 455 negative reviews (1-2 points) (0.822%), and 1628 neutral reviews (3 points) (2.94%).

Figure 2 shows the sentiment analysis results of visitor reviews, and the sentiment score range is based on the sentiment analysis of TextBlob, with a higher score for positive reviews and a lower score for negative reviews. In sentiment analysis, despite the large number of positive comments, the results show that neutral sentiment accounts for more than positive emotion. This shows that website ratings do not fully and accurately reflect the emotional characteristics of visitors, although the ratings are subjective, they may be comprehensive, while the emotional experience is completely personal and real. Negative emotions account for a very small proportion and are ignored and not displayed in the figure.
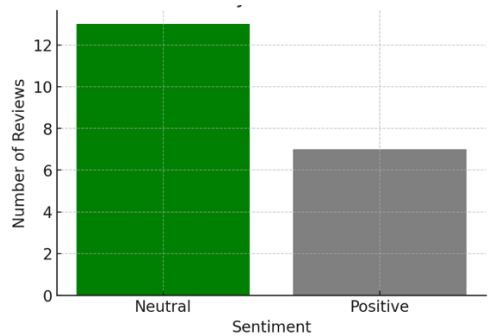

Figure 2. Sentiment analysis distribution of visitor comments

4.3. Recommendation Intention Analysis

For the prediction of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's visitors' recommendation intention, an online machine learning model was used to predict the recommendation probability, with input variables (X): frequency of occurrence of five experience values, sentiment score of reviews, length of reviews, and ratings (1-5). Output Variable (Y): Willingness to Recommend (based on NPS score or review text), the online model chose Logistic Regression for small datasets, Random Forest for nonlinear relationships, and BERT LSTM for large-scale text data.

Due to the small sample size of the test (about 500 visitor reviews in the small database established in this study), the model performed perfectly in predicting visitors' recommendation intentions (a larger dataset is needed to verify its generalization ability). The results of the analysis accurately distinguish between Not Recommended and Recommended, and the model successfully identified all the visitors who were not recommended, and similarly, all the recommended visitors were correctly predicted.

First, compare the effects of cognition and emotion on recommendation intention. The results show that aesthetic value and social value seem to have a greater impact on recommendation intention, visitors with high Sentiment score are more likely to recommend, and play value and spirituality value have less impact on recommendation intention. Visitors experience that cognition and emotion jointly affect attitude and intention to recommend, but the affective component has a greater impact on attitude and intention than the cognitive component. Figure 3 illustrates this point.
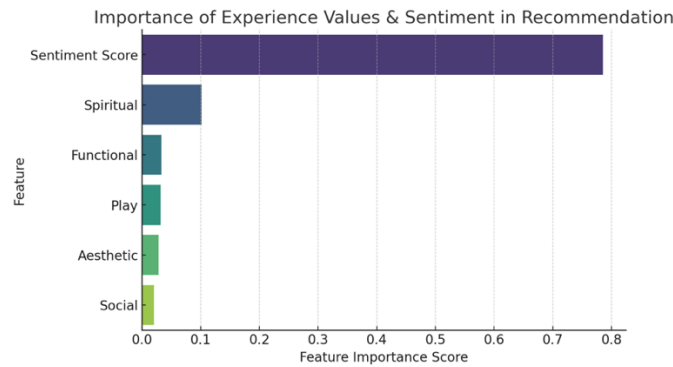
Figure 3. Comparison of the importance of experience value and emotion in recommendation intention

Secondly, the impact of specific factors of experience value on recommendation intention was compared. What factors are most influencing visitors' intention to recommend? Figure 3 shows the extent to which different factors influence visitors' intention to recommend.

In Figure 3, the Sentiment Score has the greatest impact on the feature importance ranking (from highest to lowest), indicating that the emotional state (positive/negative) of visitors is the most critical factor in determining whether they recommend or not. Aesthetic value reflects the visitors' perception of art, exhibitions, and architecture, which highly influences their willingness to recommend. Social value Obviously, interpersonal interaction, tour groups, and family outings, social experience will also affect the word-of-mouth communication of visitors. Functional value has little effect on recommendation intention, although it is mentioned as informative and educational. Spiritual value & play value had the least impact, indicating that visitors focused on visual experience and social experience rather than spiritual resonance or interactive entertainment when recommending.

Again, the analysis of negative reviews and negative experiences. Visitors are more subtle in their descriptions of negative experiences and may not use negative words directly, but rather express their grievances in a gentle way, such as "too many people" instead of "bad experience". After manual screening, negative review keywords were extracted, such as, crowded, expensive, boring, disappointing, bad/poor. Table 2 shows examples of manually filtered negative review keywords. The analysis results show that the more common negative experiences of visitors are environmental and service problems, such as too many people, poor service, and facility problems, and the negative experiences are mainly concentrated in social value and functional value.

Table 2 Examples of keywords for negative comments by visitors

		Review	Sentiment Score	Sentiment	Experience Value	Recommendation	Aesthetic	Social	Spiritual	Functional	Play
1	0	> 8 : 1 2 3 4 5 6	0.0422315613445 6638	Neutral	Aesthetic, Social, Spiritual, Functional, Play	0	1	1	1	1	1
2	1	Overall a pleasanr experience but left feeling a little disappointed with some of the	0.12178855277898 164	Neutral	Aesthetic, Social, Spiritual, Functional, Play	0	1	1	1	1	1
3	2	This museum is enormous. I suggest you decide which things you want to	0.2706311054948 8373	Positive	Aesthetic, Social, Spiritual, Functional, Play	1	1	1	1	1	1
4	3	The Metropolitan Museum of Art is incredible. With a vast collection from around the	0.2357325102253 6404	Positive	Aesthetic, Social, Spiritual, Functional, Play	1	1	1	1	1	1
5	4	A marvelous museum with amazing art installations and clear,	0.2138079163260 9827	Positive	Aesthetic, Social, Spiritual, Functional, Play	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	5	Enormous museum set in 8 buildings. We went on wet Thursday so it was very busy. There	0.15066720709126 788	Neutral	Aesthetic, Social, Functional, Play	0	1	1	0	1	1

Finally, the analysis of intention is not recommended. Visitor reviews that contain keywords related to Not Recommended are manually screened for reasons why visitors are reluctant to visit again, such as poor experience, crowding, unreasonable pricing, and the exhibition is not as expected. Table 3 shows examples of manually filtered deprecated keywords. The analysis results show that specific service factors such as crowding, exhibition quality, and service problems lead to visitors' disapproval, indicating that visitors pay more attention to experience satisfaction. Reviews that visitors don't recommend focus on certain categories of experience value, such as social value and functional value.

Table 3 Examples of unrecommended keywords extracted from visitor comments

		Review	Sentiment Score	Sentiment	Experience Value	Recommendation	Aesthetic	Social	Spiritual	Functional	Play
1	0	▦ > 8 : 1 2 3 4 5 6	0.04223156136456638	Neutral	Aesthetic, Social, Spiritual, Functional, Play	0	1	1	1	1	1
2	1	Overall a oleasanr experince but left feeling a little disappointed with some of the	0.12178855277898164	Neutral	Aesthetic, Social, Spiritual, Functional, Play	0	1	1	1	1	1
3	5	Enormous museum set in 8 buildings. We went on wet Thursday so it was very busy. There	0.15066720709126788	Neutral	Aesthetic, Social, Functional, Play	0	1	1	0	1	1
4	7	The only reason it's 4 and not 5 stars is because of the broad layout that requires a	0.15190349428836267	Neutral	Aesthetic, Social, Spiritual, Functional, Play	0	1	1	1	1	1
5	8	Some of the exhibition halls began to close 20 minutes earlier, and the service	0.12107683982683987	Neutral	Aesthetic, Social	0	1	1	0	0	0

5. Conclusions

The findings of this paper reveal which visitor experience value is the most predictive of recommendation intentions for art museums like the Metropolitan Museum of Art? The answer is that the positioning of the art museum decides. Aesthetic value has the highest correlation, indicating that art museums affect visitors' aesthetic experience in terms of exhibition design, exhibit content, visual impact, and application of virtual technology, which in turn affects their intention to recommend. However, compared with the visitors' emotional experience, the aesthetic value experience has a greater impact on the recommendation intention than the emotional experience, indicating that emotional value has become an important product in the era of experience economy and an important part of customer value.

The management suggestion for the operation of art museums is that the key to improving the recommendation rate of visitors is to improve the aesthetic value of visitors by optimizing the visual experience of the exhibition (such as exhibition design, lighting, and artistic atmosphere), enhance social interaction (such as guided tours, social spaces), make visitors more willing to share experiences, and pay attention to the emotional experience of visitors, and reduce negative emotions (such as solving the problem of congestion and improving service quality).

On the one hand, it is necessary to increase the intention to recommend and strengthen the most important experiential value (e.g., optimizing exhibition design and increasing interactive experience). Museum operators can optimize exhibitions, enhance engagement, and increase visitor satisfaction and word-of-mouth. Marketing strategies can revolve around aesthetic and social experiences, such as encouraging visitors to share photos on social media.

On the other hand, reduce negative reviews. It may seem that the amount of text in a negative review may be small, but a negative review spreads negative emotions and has a greater impact on

the intention to recommend. Reduce negative reviews and address common issues (e.g., crowding, poor facilities, unclear information).

6. Limitations and Further Research

There is no doubt that the research in this paper has limitations. In the research methodology part, this paper has pointed out that ignoring the demographic characteristics of the sample and predicting the recommendation intention of art museum visitors only from the experience value classification and sentiment analysis of reviews is somewhat one-sided, and the influence of variables such as visitors' education, visiting mode, and income on recommendation intention cannot be ignored.

Future research directions should conduct more in-depth quantitative analysis, combine the theoretical framework of planned behavior, construct relevant variables, and quantitatively verify visitors' intention to recommend, so as to reveal the differences between the groups of people who are willing and unwilling to recommend art museum visitors, and even cultural differences.

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