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BRAND ALLIANCES, CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT, AND PURCHASE INTENTION FOR CHINESE MUSEUM PRODUCTS

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Abstract

The rapid growth of cultural and creative industries is increasingly driving museums to seek innovative revenue streams, particularly through brand-crossover alliances and e-commerce. This study investigates how brand crossover alliances affect consumers' purchase intentions for museum cultural and creative products at Henan Provincial Museums in China, focusing on the mediating role of customer engagement behavior. Utilizing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), data were collected from 307 students at higher vocational colleges in Yunnan Province, who are being trained for cross-border e-commerce. Findings indicate that cross-over joint complementarity significantly influences purchase intention. Although brand identity consistency and partnership association did not directly affect purchase intention, they were crucial in fostering customer engagement behavior. This engagement, in turn, significantly predicted purchase intention, confirming its full mediating role between brand alliance factors and consumer willingness to buy. These insights highlight that while consistency and strong partnerships initially reduce psychological barriers and capture attention, actual purchase is driven by the perceived value derived from complementary alliance aspects and mediated by active customer engagement. The study provides actionable recommendations for enhancing cultural intelligence training for cross-border live-streaming talents and optimizing alliance strategies to boost sales of museum cultural and creative products in the growing Chinese market.

Keywords: Brand Cross-Over Alliance, Customer Engagement, Purchase Intention, Museum Cultural Products, Cross-Border E-commerce

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Introduction

The rise of cultural and creative industries in the context of economic globalization has significantly influenced modern museums, driving them to shift toward public education services while seeking financial sustainability. Many museums worldwide face funding shortages due to reduced government support and free admission policies, which limit ticket revenue. To address this, museums are increasingly developing cultural and creative products, transforming historical artifacts into modern consumer goods. These products not only generate economic benefits but also enhance public engagement with cultural heritage (Jiang & Pashkevych, 2023). Internationally, museums like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the British Museum have successfully integrated cultural and creative products into their revenue streams, with some deriving over 50% of their income from such sales. In contrast, Chinese museums, which largely rely on government funding, are still in the early stages of developing competitive cultural and creative industries. While institutions like the Palace Museum have achieved commercial success, smaller museums struggle with product homogeneity and lack of innovation (Shutao et al., 2020).

The growing demand for cultural consumption, particularly among young consumers, has spurred museums to adopt innovative marketing strategies, including cross-brand collaborations and digital sales channels. However, regional museums, such as those in Henan Province, face challenges like low product awareness, weak cultural integration, and insufficient market positioning. Despite Henan's rich cultural resources and large consumer base, its museum products lack distinct regional characteristics and fail to fully capitalize on tourism potential (Baoyan et al., 2017; Yuangngoen et al., 2025). This study explores how brand cross-over alliances can enhance the appeal of Henan's Museum products by analyzing consumer behavior and purchase intentions. By leveraging collaborations with well-known brands, museums can improve product design, expand market reach, and boost revenue. The findings aim to provide actionable strategies for Henan's museums to strengthen their cultural and creative industries, ensuring long-term sustainability in the competitive cultural market.

Literature Reviews

Brand Cross-over Alliance

Aaker (2012) states that Brand Cross-Over Alliances adopt a strategy in which two or more brands from different industries or fields collaborate to combine their respective advantages and resources to jointly launch new products, services, or marketing activities to achieve brand value-added and market expansion. This kind of cooperation usually aims to attract consumers and enhance brand influence through innovation and differentiation. Cross-industry cooperation involves brands from different industries or fields, which achieve innovation and differentiation through resource sharing, that is, combining their respective brand assets, technology, channels, and other resources, to launch unique products or services to attract consumers, thereby achieving the purpose of brand value-added, including enhancing brand image, expanding market share, or successfully entering new markets.

Brand Cross-Over Alliances

In brand cross-over alliances, brand identity consistency is a key dimension, referring to the degree to which cooperating brands maintain consistency in brand identity, core values, image, and positioning in cross-border cooperation. This consistency helps to ensure that consumers will not be confused about the cooperating brands, while enhancing the credibility and synergy of the brand alliance. Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) emphasized the importance of brand identity in brand management and noted that maintaining brand identity consistency in brand cooperation is key to ensuring that brand assets are not diluted. Simonin & Ruth (1998) explored the impact of brand identity consistency on consumer attitudes in brand alliances. She

found that consistency helps reduce cognitive conflicts and enhances the credibility of brand alliances.

Cross-over Joint Complementary

Cross-over Joint Complementary is a key dimension of brand cross-border alliances, enabling synergy by integrating the strengths of cooperative brands. Fang (2025) noted that complementarity not only helps brands overcome their own limitations but also creates new market opportunities and competitive advantages.

Partnership Association

Partnership Association is a formal or informal collaborative relationship established between cooperative brands in brand cross-border alliances. Its core elements include common goals, division of roles, trust and commitment, resource sharing, risk sharing, and communication and coordination. Gulati (1998) and Lin et al. (2025) demonstrate that a strong partnership can enhance alliance stability and synergy, and is an important guarantee of the success of brand cross-border alliances.

Customer Engagement Behavior

van Doorn et al. (2010) and Żymkowska et al. (2017) show that customer engagement behavior involves active participation in brand interactions beyond transactional behavior, encompassing multiple dimensions such as behavior, emotion, cognition, and social interaction. Consumer engagement behavior is an important foundation for brands to establish long-term relationships with consumers and has a significant impact on brand loyalty and brand performance.

Consumer Purchase Intention

Ajzen et al. (2018) define intention as the subjective likelihood that an individual will perform a certain behavior. Purchase Intent is the subjective probability or likelihood that consumers will purchase a specific brand. Peña-García et al. (2020) indicate that purchase intention is usually understood as a positive, affirmative psychological state of consumers towards a product, making them willing to invest a certain amount of time and energy in purchasing it. The conceptual framework was developed based on the Brand Cross-over Alliance Theory, the Customer Engagement Behavior Theory, and the Consumer Purchase Intention Concept. Under the above model, there are 8 variables to test relationships. Ma et al. (2023) reveal that high-profile brands have a positive impact on consumers, thereby prompting consumers to have a strong willingness to buy. Based on the study of the luxury fit. Jiang et al. (2023) used sporting goods as an example and argued that product scarcity appeal plays a significant role in increasing consumers' willingness to purchase. Based on this, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Brand cross-over alliance has a significant impact on Customer engagement behavior.

H1a: Brand identity consistency has a significant impact on Customer engagement behavior.

H1b: Cross-over joint complementary has a significant impact on Customer engagement behavior.

H1c: Partnership association has a significant impact on Customer engagement behavior.

H2: Customer engagement behavior has a significant impact on Consumer purchase intention.

H3: Brand cross-over alliance has a significant impact on consumer purchase intention.

H3a: Brand identity consistency significantly affects consumer purchase intention.

H3b: Cross-over joint complementary has a significant impact on consumer purchase intention.

H3c: Partnership association has a significant impact on consumer purchase intention.

H4: Customer engagement behavior mediates the relationship between brand cross-over alliance factors and consumer purchase intention.

The concept in this study is presented in Figure 1.

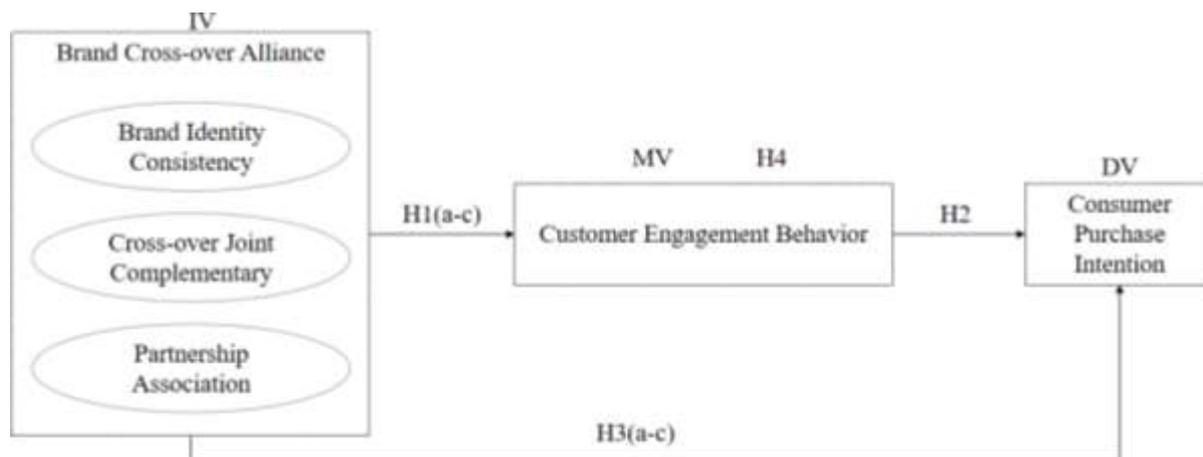


Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

Research Methodology

This research is a quantitative study of the relationship between brand crossover alliances and consumer purchase intention, using a semi-structured questionnaire to collect data from tourists visiting cultural museums in Henan province, employing purposive simple random sampling. Since the specific total number is unknown, the Cochran (1940) method is used to calculate the minimum sample size. Where n is the required sample size, P is the proportion (here, 0.5), and z is the confidence level (from the z-score table). When confidence is 95%, $z = 1.96$, and E is an acceptable error, we use 5% (0.05). According to this formula, the final result is 384. However, to improve the computation, the author increased the sample size by 20 per cent to 462. To ensure the data collection process for this study is scientific, effective, and ethical, multiple methods will be used. The following are specific data collection methods. The questionnaires were distributed via the online platform Wenjuanxing. This study used the PLS-SEM algorithm in SmartPLS 4.0 to analyze the measurement model thoroughly.

Research Results

After the questionnaires were distributed, collected, and checked, only 387 questionnaires were valid and met the minimum requirement. There are five key variables involved in this study: BIC, CJC, PA, CEB, and CPI. Since the model includes many variables, especially latent variables, its structure is relatively complex. The study used indicators such as Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) to assess the model's convergent validity comprehensively. Specifically, when the values of Cronbach's alpha coefficient and composite reliability are both greater than 0.7, and the AVE is greater than 0.5, it can be confidently concluded that the measurement model exhibits good convergent validity. In addition, to further verify the discriminant validity of the variables, we conducted a detailed evaluation using the criteria and cross-loadings. Following the criteria of Fornell & Larcker (1981), if the square root of the AVE of a variable is greater than the correlation coefficient between it and other variables, then the variable is considered to have discriminant validity. On the other hand, from the perspective of cross-loadings, if a variable loads significantly higher on its main latent variable than on other latent variables, this can also provide strong evidence of discriminant validity.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis aims to evaluate the consistency and stability of a measurement tool or system to ensure it consistently produces the same results under different conditions. Its core is to determine the measurement error and evaluate the tool's reliability (Table 1).

Table 1 Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho a)
BIC	0.895	0.896
CEB	0.924	0.925
CJC	0.916	0.916
CPI	0.893	0.893
PA	0.921	0.922

According to the research results of George & Mallery (2019), the higher the α value, the better the internal consistency; $\alpha \geq 0.9$ indicates excellent, 0.8-0.9 indicates good, 0.7-0.8 is acceptable, 0.6-0.7 generally needs improvement, and $\alpha < 0.6$ indicates poor internal consistency, and the scale needs to be redesigned. In this study, the results of Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability are shown in Table 1. All results were greater than 0.8, showing good internal consistency.

Convergent Validity

According to Bagozzi et al. (1991), convergent validity refers to the degree of consistency of multiple measurements of the same concept. Specifically, if two or more measurements of the same construct are valid, these measurements should show a high degree of consistency. In this study, we used AVEs to assess the construct's convergent validity. Fornell & Larcker (1981) suggested that the threshold of AVE is 0.5, which means that if the AVE value of a construct is greater than 0.5, the construct shows good convergent validity. The following table presents the Brand Identity. The average variance extracted (AVE) of Consistency (BIC), Cross-over Joint Complementary (CJC), and Partnership Association (PA) were used to assess their convergent validity (Table 2).

Table 2 Convergent Validity

	Average variance extracted (AVE)
BIC	0.706
CEB	0.768
CJC	0.748
CPI	0.824
PA	0.717

Brand Identity: The AVE value of Consistency (BIC) is 0.706, the AVE value of Cross-over Joint Complementary (CJC) is 0.748, the AVE value of Partnership Association (PA) is 0.717, the AVE value of CEB is 0.768, and the AVE value of CPI is 0.824. The above data are all greater than 0.5, indicating that all the structures involved in this study exhibit good convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity

The core concept of discriminant validity was proposed by Campbell & Fiske (1959), and subsequent scholars, such as Henseler et al. (2015), further refined its evaluation methods. Discriminant validity refers to a measurement tool's ability to effectively distinguish among constructs, ensuring that the measured content is unrelated to other constructs. It is usually evaluated by comparing the correlation coefficients between constructs or using statistical methods (such as the Fornell-Larcker standard). This paper uses the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings to assess the discriminant validity of the indicators under study. The following is a detailed analysis of the obtained data. The analysis of the collected data according to the Fornell-Lacker criteria showed that the five indicators, BIC, CEB, CJC, CPI, and PA, all showed good discriminative effectiveness when measuring their corresponding constructs. However, it should also be noted that there are differences in the discriminative

effectiveness values across indicators, which may be related to measurement conditions, sample characteristics, or the nature of the indicators themselves. In future studies, the reasons for these differences can be further explored, and corresponding measures can be taken to optimize the measurement tools and improve the accuracy of discriminative effectiveness (Table 3).

Table 3 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BIC	CEB	CJC	CPI	PA
BIC	0.840				
CEB	0.795	0.876			
CJC	0.801	0.864	0.865		
CPI	0.749	0.861	0.903	0.908	
PA	0.725	0.799	0.790	0.726	0.847

Structural Model Analysis

This section will examine the structural model, including collinearity statistics (VIF) analysis, hypothesis testing results, and model explanatory power (Table 4).

Table 4 Collinearity Statistics (VIF) - Inner Model

	VIF
H1a: BIC -> CEB	2.978
H1b: CJC -> CEB	3.753
H1c: PA -> CEB	2.836
H2: CEB -> CPI	4.969
H3a: BIC -> CPI	3.220
H3b: CJC -> CPI	4.920
H3c: PA -> CPI	3.163

When discussing the discriminant power of this study, the analysis of cross-loadings is indispensable, as it directly relates to the independence and explanatory power of the model variables. The following is an in-depth analysis of the correlation statistics (VIF) table based on the kernel model.

The study lists several parameter combinations and their corresponding variance inflation factor (VIF) values. VIF is a key indicator to measure the severity of multicollinearity. It is generally believed that a VIF value greater than 5 indicates a serious multicollinearity problem that may compromise the model's stability and interpretability.

The research data show that the VIF value for BIC to CEB (BIC -> CEB) is 2.978, indicating that although there is a moderate correlation between the two, the multicollinearity problem is not serious. Similarly, the VIF values of BIC to CPI (BIC -> CPI), PA to CEB (PA -> CEB), and PA to CPI (PA -> CPI) are all lower than 5, 3.220, 2.836, and 3.163, respectively, which also indicates that the multicollinearity between these parameter combinations is within an acceptable range.

However, when the VIF values of CEB to CPI (CEB -> CPI), CJC to CEB (CJC -> CEB), and CJC to CPI (CJC -> CPI) were examined, they were found to be 4.969, 3.753, and 4.920, respectively, all of which did not reach the commonly considered severe multicollinearity threshold of 5. However, the relationship between CEB and CPI had the highest VIF, suggesting that the discriminatory power between the two may have been partially affected.

Hypothesis Results of Direct Relationships

When discussing the hypothesis verification results in this study, special attention was paid to the path coefficient and its corresponding P value, which served as a key indicator of discriminant validity (Table 5).

Table 5 Direct Relationships

	Original sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard deviation	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
H1a: BIC -> CEB	0.221	0.220	0.051	4.288	0.000
H1b: CJC -> CEB	0.485	0.481	0.062	7.857	0.000
H1c: PA -> CEB	0.257	0.260	0.054	4.756	0.000
H2: CEB -> CPI	0.355	0.356	0.058	6.122	0.000
H3a: BIC -> CPI	-0.011	-0.012	0.035	0.327	0.744
H3b: CJC -> CPI	0.663	0.663	0.058	11.341	0.000
H3c: PA -> CPI	-0.073	-0.074	0.043	1.691	0.091

In the path from BIC to CEB (BIC -> CEB), the average path coefficients of the original sample and the standard sample are 0.221 and 0.220, respectively, indicating that there is a certain positive correlation between Brand identity consciousness and customer engagement behavior. The t-statistic for this path is 4.288, and the P-value is 0.000, indicating statistical significance and further confirming the relationship. Hypothesis H1a: Brand identity consistency has a significant impact on Customer engagement behavior is established. The study also found that the path coefficient from CJC to CEB (CJC -> CEB) was 0.485 and was statistically significant. Hypothesis H1b: Cross-over joint complementary h has a significant impact on customer engagement behavior is established.

Finally, the path coefficients from PA to CEB (PA -> CEB) are also high (0.257 and 0.260) and reach the statistical significance level, thereby establishing hypothesis H1c: Partnership association has a significant impact on Customer engagement behavior. The path coefficient from CEB to CPI (CEB -> CPI) was high (0.355 and 0.356), with a T statistic of 6.122 and a P value of 0.000, indicating a strong positive correlation. Hypothesis H2: Customer engagement behavior has a significant impact on Consumer purchase intention. However, along the BIC-to-CPI path (BIC -> CPI), the path coefficient is close to zero (-0.011 and -0.012), the t-statistic is small (0.327), and the P value is as high as 0.744, which does not reach the statistical significance level. Hypothesis H3a: Brand identity confidence has a significant impact on consumer purchase intention and is rejected. The study found that the path coefficient from CJC to CPI (CJC -> CPI) was 0.663 and was statistically significant. Hypothesis H3b: The cross-over joint complementarity has a significant impact on consumer purchase intention. The path coefficient from PA to CPI (PA -> CPI) is low (-0.073 and -0.074) and has a large P value (0.091), which did not reach statistical significance. Hypothesis H3c: Partnership association has a significant impact on consumer purchase intention is rejected.

In summary, the analysis of the path coefficients and their corresponding P-values indicates that the research data support Hypothesis H1: Brand Cross-over Alliance has a significant impact on Customer engagement behavior, and Hypothesis H2: Customer engagement behavior has a significant impact on Consumer purchase intention. However, only one hypothesis among H3 Brand Cross-over Alliance was supported, indicating that only one hypothesis among H3 Brand Cross-over Alliance had a significant impact on Consumer purchase intention.

Mediation Assessment (Indirect Relationships)

This section primarily demonstrates the mediating role of consumer fit behavior in the relationship between brand cross-over alliance and consumer purchase intention. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Indirect Relationships

	Original sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard deviation	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
H4: BIC -> CEB -> CPI	0.078	0.079	0.023	3.383	0.001
H4: CJC -> CEB -> CPI	0.172	0.171	0.034	5.112	0.000
H4: PA-> CEB -> CPI	0.091	0.093	0.026	3.523	0.000

From Table 6, we can see the indirect path coefficients from BIC, CJC, and PA to CPI. The path coefficient from BIC to CPI has a mean of 0.078 in the original sample. It increases slightly to 0.079 in the standard sample, with a standard deviation of 0.023, indicating some stability across samples. The T statistic is 3.383, indicating that the effect is statistically significant. In addition, the P value is extremely small (0.001), which further supports the hypothesis that the indirect relationship between BIC and CPI is significant.

For the path coefficient from CJC to CPI, the Mean in the original sample is 0.172, and in the standard sample it is 0.171, with a standard deviation of 0.034. The t-statistics are as high as 5.112, indicating a strong and significant indirect relationship between CJC and CPI. The P-value is close to 0 (0.000), further strengthening this conclusion. Similarly, the indirect path coefficient from PA to CPI was significant. The original sample mean value is 0.091, the standard sample Mean is 0.093, and the standard deviation is 0.026. The T-value is 3.523. The P value is also extremely small (0.000), further verifying the significance of the relationship between PA and CPI. Therefore, based on the comprehensive analysis of path coefficients, T statistics, and P values, we conclude that CEB's mediating effect between BIC, CJC, PA, and CPI is significant. These findings provide strong support for the research hypothesis H4: Customer engagement behavior mediates the relationship between brand cross-over alliance factors and consumer purchase intention.

Explanatory Power

This paper uses Adjusted R² (Adjusted R-squared) to measure the proportion of data variability explained by the model. The higher the R², the stronger the explanatory power (Table 7).

Table 7 Explanatory Power

	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared
CEB	0.799	0.797
CPI	0.843	0.841

Here, the R-squared of CEB is 0.797, while that of CPI is 0.841. Data from Table 7 show that the model, constructed from the perspective of Brand Cross-over Alliance, to predict consumers' willingness to purchase museum cultural and creative products has achieved good results. This study developed a comprehensive model of the impact of brand cross-over alliances on consumer purchase intention, using consumer engagement behavior as a mediating variable. In this study, H3a (Brand identity consciousness has a significant impact on consumer purchase intention) and H3c (Partnership association has a significant impact on consumer purchase intention) were not verified, but the other hypotheses were established.

Conclusion and Discussion

The results of this study show that a brand crossover alliance has an indirect impact on consumers' willingness to purchase museum cultural and creative products. Brand cross-over alliance includes three dimensions, including brand identity consistency, cross-over joint complementary, and partnership association, while consumer matching behavior plays a mediating role in it. The findings, first, verified that the three dimensions of brand cross-over alliance, which are brand identity consistency, cross-over joint complementarity, and partnership association, have a significant impact on consumer fit behavior. The findings are consistent with the idea that Chinese local brands not only effectively enhance their brand image and popularity through cross-border co-branding activities but also have a significant positive impact on consumers' compatible behavior. This is also consistent with Lu (2017), who found that museum co-branded cultural and creative products are more likely to attract consumers' attention. Among them, brand identity consistency has a significant positive impact on customer fit behavior, consistent with Xiao & Lee (2014), who found that cultural differences between two brands significantly affect brand alliance and that brand identity consistency can enhance customers' attitudes and loyalty toward the co-brand. This study confirms the direct impact of brand identity consistency on customer engagement behavior. Findings on cross-over joint complementarity have a significant positive impact on customer fit behavior; they are consistent with Guitart & Hervet (2017), who argue that cross-over joint complementarity helps customers establish brand awareness and provides them with product and service experience by utilizing scenario-based communication methods to present marketing information effectively. This study further confirms that cross-over joint complementarity is an influencing factor of customer fit behavior. Next, the partnership association has a significant positive impact on customer fit behavior, consistent with Lu (2017), suggesting that partnership association can promote customers' understanding of domestic brands and their associations with other brands with which they have not yet cooperated. Next, this study's findings confirm that customer fit behavior has a significant positive impact on purchasing behavior. The findings are consistent with Benegas & Zanfardini (2025), who found that customer engagement is an important factor in improving customer loyalty and purchasing behavior. The findings also verify that value creation becomes an important driving force for interaction between the two parties, further strengthening interactive activities between customers and the focal brand, enhancing customers' emotional investment in the focal enterprise, and generating positive behavioral intentions towards it.

In addition, this study confirmed that cross-over joint complementarity has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention. This conclusion is consistent with Jiménez-Marín et al. (2019), who found that sensory marketing in cross-over joint complementary affects customers' feelings, judgments, cognition, and purchasing behavior. The assumptions that brand identity consistency has a significant impact on consumer purchase intention and partnership association has a significant impact on consumer purchase intention did not hold. This is consistent with Lu (2017), who found that brand identity conception and partnership association positively affect consumer purchase intention. For museum cultural and creative products, co-branding with well-known cultural and creative enterprises can improve the quality and reputation of products, but because museum cultural and creative products are still too new for consumers, Brand identity conception and Partnership association are not fully reflected in museum cultural and creative products (Ngamcharoen et al., 2025). In addition, the data are collected through simple random sampling, and their representativeness may be weak, so that no conclusions can be supported.

This study examined the interaction between spiritual leadership, team communication quality, and team performance, with team cohesion as a mediating variable. The results of the study indicate that both spiritual leadership and communication quality have significant direct and

indirect effects on team performance, mediated by enhanced cohesion. These findings underscore the crucial role of relational mechanisms in shaping collective outcomes, offering innovative empirical insights into team functioning in collectivist organizational contexts. The findings from this study validate the hypothesized model and clarify the pathways through which leadership and communication processes affect team outcomes. The study offers new knowledge by integrating spiritual leadership and communication quality into a unified framework and verifying the dual mediating role of team cohesion. This area has received limited empirical attention, particularly in the context of Chinese state-owned enterprises. Theoretically, the study contributes by integrating spiritual leadership and communication quality within a unified framework and empirically validating the dual mediating role of team cohesion. The findings address a notable gap in the literature by integrating leadership and communication constructs as relational antecedents of team effectiveness. Furthermore, the findings enrich existing theories by demonstrating the robustness of spiritual leadership theory in the state-owned enterprise (SOE) context, where 79% of the sample was drawn from Chinese state-owned banks. This extends the cultural applicability of spiritually grounded leadership and highlights its potential in hierarchically structured organizations where formal authority is emphasized but relational influence remains critical. For practice, organizations should prioritize programs that cultivate spiritual and relational competencies, such as articulating shared values and fostering trust, as these skills strengthen team alignment and purpose. Training modules focusing on vision-driven communication, such as aligning messages with organizational values, may enhance cohesion. In addition, structured communication protocols, such as standardized feedback mechanisms, can improve clarity and operational efficiency.

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