

# BRIDGING TRADITION AND INNOVATION: THE ROLE OF PINGXIANG NUO MASKS IN ANIMATION CHARACTER DESIGN



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## ABSTRACT

The lack of integration and cultural representation in Pingxiang Nuo masks can reduce the aesthetic appeal of the audience, which is a challenge for the industry. The dysconnectivity of the audience with no emotions toward Pingxiang Nuo mask characters is problematic for the industry on a large scale. The purpose of this research is to measure the impact of Pingxiang Nuo mask funny role and positive supporting role on cultural expressiveness with mediating impact of artist qualification. The study is designed to provide comprehensive insight into contributing more value to the culture's expressiveness. This study used a purposive sampling method to collect the data. This method was significant for sampling as students, teachers, professionals and audience of art design was population. A sample of 325 individuals, including students, teachers, professionals, and art design audiences, was collected. Smart PLS 4 was used for conducting statistical analysis with partial least square–structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings of this research contribute to the literature that the impact of Pingxiang Nuo masks funny role and a positive supporting role on cultural expressiveness is accepted. The study also confirmed that the effect of the Pingxiang Nuo influences the mediating role of artist qualification mask funny role and the positive supporting role of cultural expressiveness. The study asserts that the qualification of the artist is essential and significantly contributes to cultural expressiveness with the help of Pingxiang Nuo masks. In China, it is required to improve the cultural expressiveness with the help of Pingxiang Nuo mask that is required for cultural and historical representations.

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## INTRODUCTION

Chinese animation industry has seen rapid growth in the market during this decade (S. He & Duan, 2023). There is also a notable challenge in creating expressive and culturally authentic characters that attract national and international audiences. Similarly, the traditional Chinese masks have a significant contribution to culture and historical expressiveness, whereas Pingxiang Nuo masks have a leading role (Wang et al., 2021). The expressive and cultural presentation of these masks in local festivals also influences different audiences with the representation of different characters (Murphy et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the application of these masks in the practical arena, considering moderation animation, is still unnoticed (Chen, 2022). Therefore, this research is designed to bridge a gap by exploring the way distinct features of Pingxiang Nuo masks can be used for facial modeling to boost cultural expressiveness.

The Pingxiang Nuo masks portray the narrative value of culture to the audience based on the expressive power of different characters (Yu, 2021). In Pingxiang Nuo masks, there is representation of heroic to humorous characters which is a significant factor to convey the story and emotions of public. The industry related to Pingxiang Nuo masks has been growing over time. However, there is a need for further work on cultural expressiveness, which can be based on the character design and quality of the artist (Lee et al., 2021). Whereas the lack of integration and cultural representation in Pingxiang Nuo masks can reduce the aesthetic appeal of the audience which is a challenge for industry (Xu & Sun, 2021). The dysconnectivity of the audience with no emotions toward Pingxiang Nuo mask characters is problematic for the industry on

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a large scale (S. He & Duan, 2023). To address this issue, the current research is designed to explore the importance of Pingxiang Nuo masks in improving animation character design and boosting cultural appeal to the audience.

In literature, there is debate among scholars reporting the importance of animation character design and its connection with cultural expressiveness. However, there is less debate on the influence of Chinese traditional masks such as Pingxiang Nuo masks (L. Liu et al., 2020). The previous studies in literature have paid attention to the cultural symbols and artistic expression, but the unique characteristics of Pingxiang Nuo masks are unheeded by the scholars (Yu, 2021). Therefore, a comprehensive debate on this phenomenon is important for signifying the literature by providing newly developed relationships in the literature.

Similarly, the existing studies in literature debated the use of traditional and cultural masks, but the role of artist quality and way of expression was unnoticed (L. Li, 2020). Previous studies have highlighted that traditional masks have a significant impact on cultural expression through the intervention of the artist (Y. Liu, 2022). However, this debate in the context of Pingxiang Nuo masks is less reported because the literature is still in the infancy stage (S. He & Duan, 2023). Therefore, a structural relationship-based investigation among these relationships is widely recommended to investigate, which can advance the literature. The study also recommended the development of future research on the Pingxiang Nuo mask's impact on cultural representation (G. Li, 2021).

This research is conducted with the objective of measuring the impact of Pingxiang Nuo's mask funny role and positive supporting role on cultural expressiveness while mediating the impact of artist qualification. The study is designed to provide comprehensive insight into contributing more value to the culture's expressiveness. A sample of 325 individuals, including students, teachers, professionals, and art design audiences, was collected. Smart PLS 4 was used for conducting statistical analysis with partial least square–structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings of this research contribute to the literature that the impact of Pingxiang Nuo masks funny role and a positive supporting role on cultural expressiveness is accepted. The study also confirmed that the mediating role of artist qualification is accepted between the impact of Pingxiang Nuo mask funny role and the positive supporting role on cultural expressiveness. Cultural expression in China can be improved with the Pingxiang Nuo mask's funny role and positive supporting role while utilizing a qualified artist. The rest of the study is divided into the review of literature, methodology, findings, discussion of results, and implications. Future directions are also reported in the concluding section of this paper.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Pingxiang Nuo Masks Funny Role**

Pingxiang Nuo masks are famous for representing different characters, including funny roles for entertainment (Xu & Sun, 2021). The funny role expressed by these masks is supported by exaggerated facial expressions and different choices of color, which evoke laughter in the audience (L. Liu et al., 2020). Furthermore, Pingxiang Nuo mask masks present a comical representation of the characters, which is significant and playful in storytelling (S. He & Duan, 2023). The audience is emotionally attached to the characters represented by the masks, which can improve the social commentaries (Chen, 2022). The playful design of masks is also attractive to the audience as this intervention shapes the storytelling narrative.

### **Pingxiang Nuo Masks Positive Supporting Role**

Pingxiang Nuo mask also demonstrates a positive supporting role (Y. Liu, 2022). It is a representation of traditional symbols that are useful for the feature development expression of different colors. The choice and representation of protagonists representing loyalty and wisdom are helpful in evoking a positive support role (Yu, 2021). The cultural representation and courage advocated by these traditional masks is a way forward for spectators to observe them with definite meanings (G. Li, 2021). The audience can get inspiration from positive supporting roles advanced by these masks, which have rich cultural values and symbols of bravery.

### **Artist Qualification**

The qualification and skills of the artists are important in cultural representation (Wang et al., 2021). The aesthetic beauty of the artistic approach and the quality of the art must be adequately represented by the artist. It is a significant factor in contributing to cultural values with the help of traditional features (L. Li, 2020). The representation of Pingxiang Nuo masks in different cultural festivals is challenging for artists to translate their emotions and values into new features (G. Li, 2021). The combination of artistic value and cultural sensitivity develops a sense of commitment to authenticity in original art.

### **Cultural Expressiveness**

Cultural expressiveness refers to the ability of characters to showcase any narrative, whether it is based on historical representations or emotional values (Meng, 2023). The authentic expression of art and culture by the characters is a significant factor that strongly connects audiences with the characters (Liao & Dai, 2020). The deeper emotions of the audience are improved with aesthetic expression and the richness of cultural values (Press, 2021). Furthermore, the narrative quality and expressive cultural values are promoted through cultural expression, which provides a sense of attachment to the audience that is related to culture (Lee et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the better understanding of culture improves the expressiveness with employing a quality artist for it.

### **Hypotheses Development**

The funny role represented by different characters is significant in impacting the audience (Deng et al., 2023). The role of traditional masks is important in comic expression. The texture, color and design of masks representing the comic value has significant influence on the personality of audience (X. He & Sornyai, 2023). The audience is connected to the cultural

association represented by any mask. Therefore, the funny role of the masks has some value for the audience, which is necessary for artists to represent (Wu & Boonsrianun, 2023). It is also recommended that the spectators support the artists and the comic representation of the public with funny masks. The role highlighted by the characters have significant value to influence the public perception of artistic value. It is valuable in the representation of culture, which has a significant impact on the audience. The expression of culture with artistic value boosts the funny character representation for the public (Chang, 2020). However, the participation of audiences in cultural festivals is also improved based on the value of funny roles. Meanwhile, when the characters are less focused on representing an artistic value with significant culture, it can be problematic to boost the cultural values (Bai & Nam, 2022). Hence, significant work to improve the impression on audiences is required with the representation of funny characters.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *There is a relationship between Pingxiang Nuo Mask's funny role and artist qualification.*

**H<sub>2</sub>:** *There is a relationship between Pingxiang Nuo masks funny role and cultural expressiveness.*

The positive supporting role based on characters and historical figures improves the qualification of artists (Guo et al., 2024). When the audience is supportive, it becomes easy for the artist to represent a culture. The value given to cultural expression is necessary for a positive and supportive role. Furthermore, the traditional characters represented by masks have a lasting impact on the audience, which is significant to their growth (Richards & King, 2022). However, the qualification of artists is also necessary to strengthen a culture and understanding of values. Furthermore, when a valuable insight represents the characters, the confidence of the audience is boosted (Luo & Lau, 2020). The spectators are impressed by the characters when their cultural values are expressed in them. Besides, the representation of bold characters, which were symbolically associated with strength, is a significant factor in the influence to improve artistic value (Lee et al., 2021). Therefore, a straightforward, expressive approach with masks is helpful in associating the public with culture. Similarly, a message to strengthen the positive image is supported by the cultural values advocated for this purpose (D. Li, 2021). Hence, the audience supports cultural values and cultural association representation through masks.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** *There is a relationship between the positive supporting role of Pingxiang Nuo masks and artist qualifications.*

**H<sub>4</sub>:** *There is a relationship between the positive supporting role of Pingxiang Nuo masks and cultural expressiveness.*

The role of the artist is important in cultural representation (Murphy et al., 2021). When the artist are qualified, they showcase the culture importantly which helps the audience to understand the phenomena and culture of improvement (Shi & Nicolas, 2023). Furthermore, the quality of education and skills of the artist are significant in representing the culture. The representation of any culture by the artists is possible when they have the skills and techniques to represent the culture (Bai & Nam, 2022). Many artists who are highly qualified to represent a culture should be given the chance to deal with cultural expression (Richards & King, 2022). The more value added to cultural representations by artists can improve the overall behavior for cultural understanding (Chang, 2020). Therefore, a strategic improvement in cultural representation is possible with the conscious involvement of the artists.

**H<sub>5</sub>:** *There is a relationship between artist qualification and cultural expressiveness.*

The qualification of the artist is a significant factor in representing a culture (Chen, 2022). In traditional events of any country, the role of artist quality is necessary to influence the public (Deng et al., 2023). It is recommended that traditional values are represented when artists are skilled. The funny role or comic representation by the characters is helpful in evoking the emotions of the audience (Liao & Dai, 2020). Furthermore, the use of masks in cultural representations is also significant in providing more value to the audience while they understand the cultural and associational meanings (Press, 2021). Therefore, the role of artist is considered as significant which can improve the value of artist with cultural representation and showing funny characters.

**H<sub>6</sub>:** *There is a mediating role of artist qualification between Pingxiang Nuo mask funny role and artist qualification.*

The positive and supporting characters represented by different artists are also influencing the audience (Richards & King, 2022). When the audience is introduced to significant characters, a sense of influence full of motivation is developed (Wu & Boonsrianun, 2023). It is recommended that artists who represent cultural art should focus significantly on improving cultural values. The association of culture is helpful for the artists to engage the audience with their role, which has a positive impact on spectators (Bai & Nam, 2022). The use of masks in representing the character which strengthens the value of spectators have a significant influence on audience working (Press, 2021). Therefore, it is recommended that qualified artists should be hired for cultural representation of characters to show the strict influence of cultural values.

**H<sub>7</sub>:** *There is a mediating role of artist qualification between Pingxiang Nuo Mask's positive supporting role and artist qualification.*

Figure 1 shows the model of this research. It describes the relationship between variables investigated in this study and clearly explains the direct and mediating relationships.

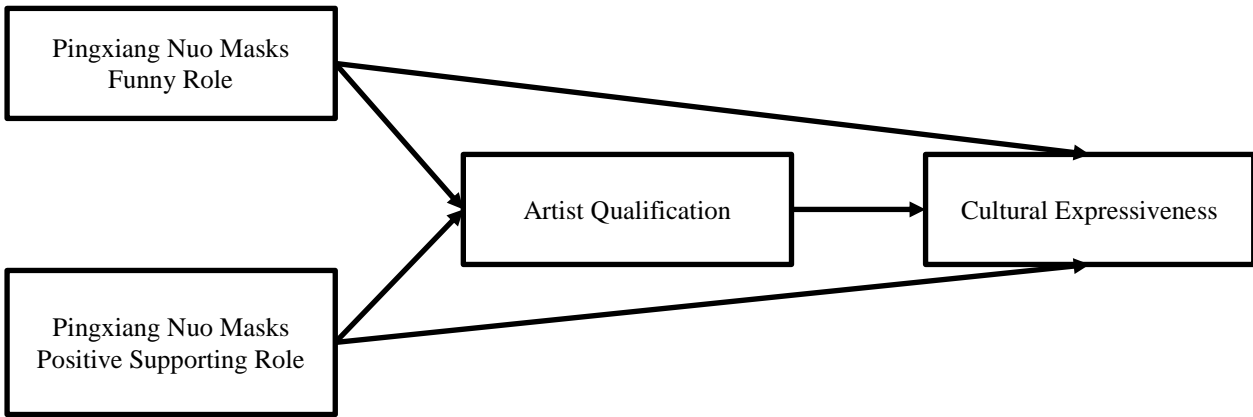


Figure 1. Research Framework

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Design and Instruments

There are different designs to conduct research and contribute to knowledge. Similarly, this research was based on quantitative data as structural relationships between variables were observed. In quantitative data, both secondary and primary resources are used in different research. However, this study was considered a primary source because the population of the study was students, teachers, professionals, and the audience of art design. A survey-based method was considered suitable for collecting the data for this research. The scale items for this research were developed and carefully considered. A comprehensive process of scale development, as recommended by Munshi (2014), was used for this purpose. A pool of scale items was developed in the first stage. Secondly, the language of scale items was reviewed by the group of experts. It was ensured that all scale items reflected the operationalization of variables. The experts tested the face and content validity of the developed scale. It was ensured that all scale items were significant to collect the data after reviewing and modifying the language. Furthermore, the study used a sample of 68 participants from the same population to conduct a pilot study. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis findings were performed to analyze the results. The reliability of scale items was ensured with a pilot study. The scale items are reported in Appendix A.

### Data Collection Method and Analysis

This study used a purposive sampling method to collect the data. This method was significant for sampling as students, teachers, professionals and audience of art design was population. In social sciences, a sample of more than 300 participants is acceptable and used in many studies. Therefore, the study distributed 600 questionnaires to the participants in Jiangxi Province, China. The respondents were requested to provide significant information for this research. A sample of 337 respondents was collected, but some of them were deleted during the initial screening. Therefore, 325 responses were finalized for this research to analyze the relationship between the variables of this study. This study used Smart PLS 4 to analyze the data. Measurement model assessment, structural model assessment, and predictive relevance findings were used in this research.

## RESULTS

### Demographics

The study collected data from students, teachers, professionals, and audiences of art design. There were 60 participants in the age group of 18-25 years, while 156 participants were in the 26-30 age group. Meanwhile, there were 73 participants in the age group of 31-35 years, whereas 36 participants were in the age group above 35 years. The male participants were 147, and 178 were female participants in this research. 42 respondents of the study were students, while 43 were teachers. The professional participants were 129, and there were 111 respondents from the animation audience. The education level of 60 participants was diploma, 203 were undergraduate, and 62 were postgraduate. Table 1 denotes the detailed data of respondents.

Table 1. Demographic

Variables	Level	Participants	Total	Percentage
Age	18-25 Years	60	325	19%
	26-30 Years	156	325	48%
	31-35 Years	73	325	23%
	Above 35 Years	36	325	11%
Gender	Male	147	325	45%
	Female	178	325	55%
Your Status	Student majoring in art design	42	325	13%

	Teachers majoring in art design	43	325	13%
	Professionals in the Pingxiang Nuo culture and animation industry	129	325	40%
	Animation Audience	111	325	34%
Education	Diploma	60	325	19%
	Undergraduate	203	325	63%
	Postgraduate	62	325	19%

**Measurement Model Assessment**

The analysis of this research was performed based on different steps. The normality of data is checked at the first stage. The data was inserted into Smart PLS 4, and the mean value and standard deviation were checked. Furthermore, the findings of skewness and kurtosis were tested to measure the normality of distribution. Skewness and kurtosis between -3 and +3 are accepted as significant (Royston, 1992). The reported data in Table 2 confirmed that all values of skewness and kurtosis were in the significant threshold. Therefore, the normality of data was significantly achieved.

Table 2. Data Normality

No.	Observed Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Excess kurtosis	Skewness
1	PNMFR_1	3.338	1.141	-0.974	-0.091
2	PNMFR_2	3.262	1.159	-1.011	0.001
3	PNMFR_3	3.28	1.197	-1.158	-0.035
4	PNMFR_4	3.382	1.178	-1.23	-0.106
5	PNMFR_5	3.378	1.193	-1.119	-0.163
6	PNMFR_6	3.323	1.199	-1.275	-0.008
7	PNMSR_1	3.348	1.163	-1.151	-0.046
8	PNMSR_2	3.323	1.133	-1.101	-0.022
9	PNMSR_3	3.372	1.171	-1.127	-0.077
10	PNMSR_4	3.375	1.145	-1.166	-0.093
11	PNMSR_5	3.366	1.197	-1.162	-0.109
12	AQ_1	3.335	1.156	-1.126	-0.021
13	AQ_2	3.449	1.107	-1.032	-0.192
14	AQ_3	3.434	1.202	-1.196	-0.148
15	AQ_4	3.474	1.162	-1.034	-0.249
16	AQ_5	3.48	1.181	-1.317	-0.11
17	CE_1	3.348	1.134	-1.131	-0.039
18	CE_2	3.335	1.159	-1.137	-0.096
19	CE_3	3.332	1.161	-1.092	-0.14
20	CE_4	3.412	1.188	-1.113	-0.211
21	CE_5	3.317	1.172	-1.09	-0.096

PLS Algorithm calculations were performed to measure the reliability and validity of data. The factor loadings were tested at the initial stage. The factor loading value above 0.70 is considered significant for the reliability of items loaded on a construct (J. Hair et al., 2022). The findings reported in Figure 2 and Table 3 confirmed that all values were above the recommended threshold. Therefore, the reliability of the scale items was significantly achieved. Hence, the data was considered appropriate for further analysis.

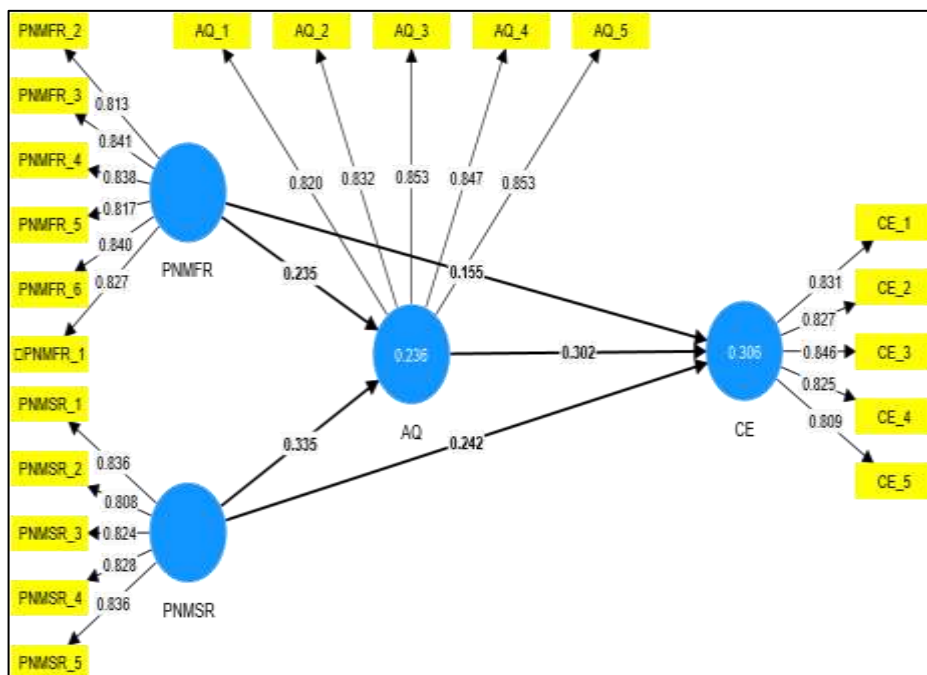


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Table 3. Factor Loadings

Items	AQ	CE	PNMFR	PNMSR
AQ_1	0.82			
AQ_2	0.832			
AQ_3	0.853			
AQ_4	0.847			
AQ_5	0.853			
CE_1		0.831		
CE_2		0.827		
CE_3		0.846		
CE_4		0.825		
CE_5		0.809		
PNMFR_1			0.827	
PNMFR_2			0.813	
PNMFR_3			0.841	
PNMFR_4			0.838	
PNMFR_5			0.817	
PNMFR_6			0.84	
PNMSR_1				0.836
PNMSR_2				0.808
PNMSR_3				0.824
PNMSR_4				0.828
PNMSR_5				0.836

The findings of convergent validity were checked to measure the validity and reliability of data. The findings of average variance extracted > 0.50 were tested to measure the significant variance in the data (J. Hair et al., 2022). Furthermore, the findings of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability > 0.70 were tested for reliability and validity of data (J. Hair et al., 2022). The results confirmed that all data was valid and achieved a significant threshold. Hence, the data was considered valid for further analysis (see Table 4).

Table 4. Convergent Validity

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
AQ	0.897	0.924	0.707
CE	0.885	0.916	0.685
PNMFR	0.909	0.93	0.688
PNMSR	0.884	0.915	0.683

The data's discriminant validity was tested to measure discrimination and collinearity issues. The findings of discriminant validity were measured with the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) method. HTMT values below 0.85 are accepted as significant for significant discriminant validity in data (J. Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2009). The results reported in Table 5 confirmed that HTMT was significant, and there were no collinearity issues in the data.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity

Variable	AQ	CE	PNMFR	PNMSR
AQ				
CE	0.523			
PNMFR	0.419	0.416		
PNMSR	0.488	0.498	0.484	

The findings of the variance inflation factor were measured to identify the common method bias in the data. It is necessary to identify when the data of any research is collected from a single source. The findings of the variance inflation factor should be less than 3.3 for an acceptable threshold (J. F. Hair et al., 2011). The data reported in Table 6 confirmed that the variance inflation factor was significant. Therefore, there was no bias in the data.

Table 6. Variance Inflation Factor

Variable	AQ	CE
AQ		1.309
CE		
PNMFR	1.231	1.303
PNMSR	1.231	1.378

### Structural Model Assessment

The findings of PLS Bootstrapping were performed to measure the relationship between variables. The recommended threshold  $t > 1.96$  was considered for the accepted hypothesis (J. Hair et al., 2022). According to findings of H1, there is a significant relationship between Pingxiang Nuo mask funny role and artist qualification. Furthermore, H2 results disclosed

that there is a significant relationship between Pingxiang Nuo's funny mask role and cultural expressiveness. The study found that H3 is significant, and there is a significant relationship between the positive supporting role of Pingxiang Nuo masks and artist qualification. The results of H4 confirmed that there is a relationship between the positive supporting role of Pingxiang Nuo masks and cultural expressiveness. Finally, the study reports that H5 is accepted, and there is a significant relationship between artist qualification and cultural expressiveness. The results are reported in Figure 3 and Table 7.

Table 7. Direct Relationship

Direct Relationships	Original sample	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
AQ -> CE	0.302	0.051	5.909	0
PNMFR -> AQ	0.235	0.049	4.762	0
PNMFR -> CE	0.155	0.056	2.758	0.006
PNMSR -> AQ	0.335	0.051	6.606	0
PNMSR -> CE	0.242	0.058	4.186	0

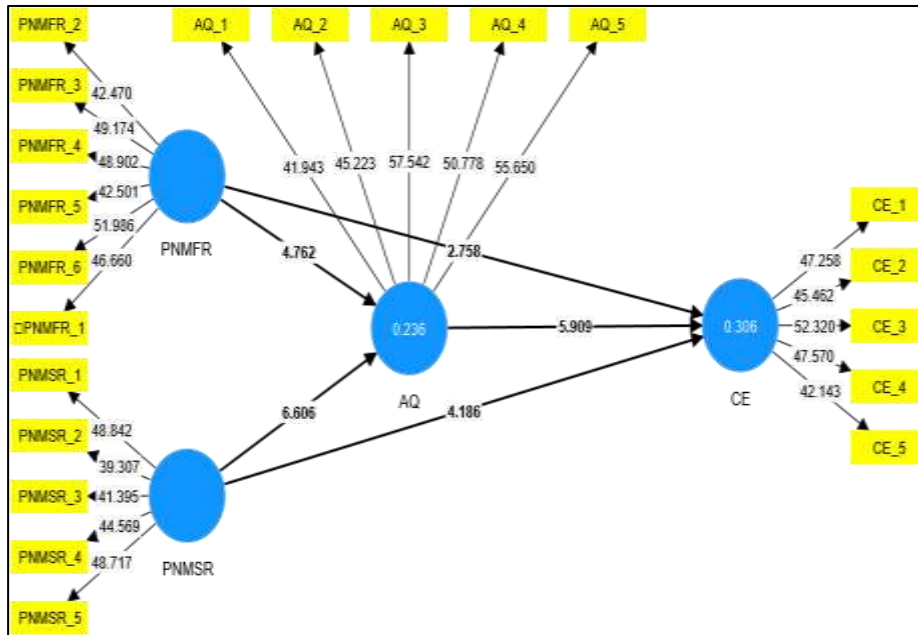


Figure 3. Structural Model

Similarly, indirect or mediating relationships were tested. According to H6 results, there is a significant mediating role of artist qualification between Pingxiang Nuo Mask's funny role and artist qualification. Moreover, H7 findings report that there is a significant mediating role of artist qualification between Pingxiang Nuo mask's positive supporting role and artist qualification. The results of indirect relationships are reported in Table 8.

Table 8. Indirect Relationships

Mediating Relationships	Original sample	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
PNMFR -> AQ -> CE	0.071	0.019	3.695	0
PNMSR -> AQ -> CE	0.101	0.024	4.267	0

**Predictive Relevance**

Finally, this study checked the findings of predictive relevance. It was checked to measure the predictive power of the independent variables toward the dependent variables. PLS Blindfolding analysis was performed for this purpose. A Q2 > 0 value is used to measure predictive relevance 34. The findings of predictive relevance reported in Table 9 and Figure 4 confirm that the Q2 value for this research model was above the recommended threshold. Therefore, it is established that the model of this research has significant predictive power.

Table 9. Predictive Relevance

Variables	SSO	SSE	Q <sup>2</sup> (=1-SSE/SSO)
AQ	1625	1360.088	0.163
CE	1625	1288.439	0.207
PNMFR	1950	1950	0
PNMSR	1625	1625	0

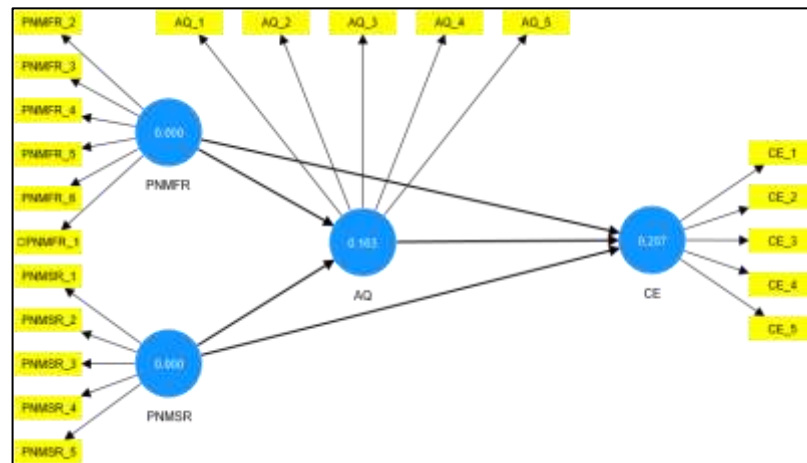


Figure 4. Predictive Relevance

### DISCUSSIONS

The study used quantitative data to measure the relationship between variables. According to findings of H1, there is a significant relationship between Pingxiang Nuo mask funny role and artist qualification. Furthermore, H2 results disclosed that there is a significant relationship between Pingxiang Nuo's funny mask role and cultural expressiveness. These relationships are compared with previous studies in the literature. According to Deng et al. (2023), the role that is highlighted by the characters has significant value in significantly affecting how the general audience perceives the value of artistic expression. It has an important role in the portrayal of culture, which has a significant impact on the audience. According to Chang (2020), increasing the portrayal of humorous characters in the public eye is facilitated by the production of a culture that possesses artistic worth. The value of comedic roles, on the other hand, has been shown to increase audience involvement in cultural festivals due to its positive impact, according to L. Li (2020) states that the characters are less focused on reflecting an artistic value that is significant to culture, so it can be challenging to increase cultural values. According to Press (2021), there is a tremendous influence on the audience as a result of the humorous roles that various individuals represent. When it comes to comic expressiveness, traditional masks play a significant role. According to He and Sornyai (2023), a large amount of impact is exerted on the personality of the audience by the texture, color, and design of the masks that convey the comedy value. There is a connection between the audience and the cultural association that is represented by any one mask. According to Meng (2023), the humorous function of the masks, therefore, carries with it a certain amount of value for the audience, which is something that artists are required to convey. Besides, it is advised that the spectators show their support for the artists and comic portrayals of the public by wearing humorous masks. Consequently, there is a large amount of effort that has to be done in order to improve the impression that audiences have with the representation of amusing characters.

The study found that H3 is significant, and there is a significant relationship between the positive supporting role of Pingxiang Nuo masks and artist qualification. The results of H4 confirmed that there is a relationship between the positive supporting role of Pingxiang Nuo masks and cultural expressiveness. According to Luo and Lau (2020), the characters leave an impression on the audience when they are able to convey the cultural values that are being expressed. According to Bai and Nam (2022), the depiction of courageous individuals who were symbolically associated with strength is a significant aspect that contributes to the influence that is used to boost artistic value. According to Yu (2021), when it comes to masks, it is helpful to use a straightforward, expressive approach in order to identify the public with culture. As a similar point of reference, the cultural values that are pushed for this reason lend support to a message that is intended to strengthen the positive image. These relationships are compared with previous studies in the literature. According to S. He and Duan (2023), an artist can improve their qualifications by playing a supporting role that is based on historical figures and significant individuals. It is much simpler for an artist to portray a culture when the audience is on board with their creative endeavors. According to D. Li (2021), cultural expression is essential for playing a role that is both supportive and beneficial. In addition, the traditional figures that are portrayed by masks have an impression that is long-lasting on the audience, which is vital to their development. According to G. Li (2021), to strengthen culture and gain a better knowledge of values, it is also vital to have artists who have the required qualifications. Additionally, the audience's confidence is strengthened when a valuable insight within the story represents the characters. To sum up, the audience is also in favor of the portrayal of cultural values and cultural associations through the use of masks.

The study reports that H5 is accepted, and there is a significant relationship between artist qualification and cultural expressiveness. This relationship is compared with previous studies in the literature. According to J. Li and Yu (2023) state that in the process of cultural representation, the involvement of the artist is significant. In situations where the artists are qualified, they are able to present the culture in a significant way, which assists the audience in comprehending the phenomenon and the culture of improvement. According to Y. Liu (2022), the level of knowledge and expertise possessed by the artist is of great importance when it comes to accurately representing the culture. According to Wu and Boonsrianun (2023), if an artist possesses the abilities and techniques necessary to portray a culture accurately, then they are able to represent any civilization successfully. According to Liao and Dai (2020), a large number of artists who are highly qualified to reflect a culture ought to be provided with the opportunity to work with cultural expressions. According to L. Liu et al.



(2020), increasing the amount of value that artists add to cultural representations has the potential to improve overall behavior for cultural understanding. Thus, with the artists' active participation, it is possible to achieve a strategic improvement in the way cultural representation is carried out.

Similarly, the indirect or mediating relationships were tested. According to the results of H6, there is a significant mediating role of artist qualification between Pingxiang Nuo mask funny role and artist qualification. This relationship is compared with previous studies in the literature. The qualifications of an artist are an important consideration when it comes to representing a culture. In order to exert an influence on the general audience, the artist's quality is essential in traditional events held in any country. According to Xu and Sun (2021), when artists are accomplished, it is recommended that they represent traditional ideals in their respective works. In addition, the utilization of masks in cultural representations is also crucial since it offers additional value to the audience while simultaneously allowing them to comprehend the cultural and associational meanings present. According to Guo et al. (2024), the role of the artist is regarded as being significant, which has the potential to enhance the worth of the artist by displaying humorous characters and providing cultural representation.

Moreover, H7 findings report that there is a significant mediating role of artist qualification between Pingxiang Nuo mask positive supporting role and artist qualification. This relationship is compared with previous studies in the literature. According to Wang et al. (2021), it is strongly suggested that artists who represent cultural art should place a large amount of emphasis on enhancing cultural values. According to Chen (2022), it is beneficial for artists to have the association of culture since it helps them to engage the audience with their role, which in turn has a positive impact on spectators. According to Shi and Nicolas (2023), the usage of masks in the process of expressing the character boosts the value of the spectators, which, in turn, has a significant impact on the performing abilities of the audience. Consequently, it is recommended that qualified artists be employed for the purpose of culturally representing characters in order to demonstrate the level of influence that is strictly associated with cultural values.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research is conducted with the objective of measuring the impact of Pingxiang Nuo's mask funny role and positive supporting role on cultural expressiveness while mediating the impact of artist qualification. The study is designed to provide comprehensive insight into contributing more value to the culture's expressiveness. Furthermore, the results of this research contribute to the literature that the impact of Pingxiang Nuo masks funny role and a positive supporting role on cultural expressiveness is accepted. The study also confirmed that the mediating role of artist qualification is accepted between the impact of Pingxiang Nuo mask funny role and the positive supporting role on cultural expressiveness. Like every study, this research also has some theoretical and practical implications. Firstly, it contributes to the knowledge that Pingxiang Nuo Masks have a significant impact on cultural expressiveness and artist qualification. These relationships were not reported empirically in the previous studies. Therefore, this research makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge. Furthermore, this research advances the body of knowledge by reporting that Pingxiang Nuo Masks' positive supporting role is a significant antecedent for artist qualification and cultural expressiveness. Nevertheless, this relationship was missing in the previous studies. Therefore, this research makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge as it addresses the inconsistencies reported in the literature. In addition, this research reports the mediating role of artist qualification. On the one hand, the study contributes to knowledge that artist qualification significantly mediates between Pingxiang Nuo mask funny role and artist qualification. On the other hand, the study provides new insights into the literature that show that artist qualification significantly and positively mediates between Pingxiang Nuo mask's positive role and artist qualification.

The study has some recommendations for practitioners as it reports that cultural expressiveness is improved by Pingxiang Nuo mask including funny role and positive role. However, the study asserts that the qualification of the artist is important and significantly contributes to cultural expressiveness with the help of Pingxiang Nuo masks. In China, it is required to improve the cultural expressiveness with the help of Pingxiang Nuo mask that is required for cultural and historical representations. The practitioners can benefit from this research by incorporating the artist's qualification for cultural expressiveness.

There are some limitations of this research and researchers in future should focus to work on these limitations. Firstly, this research collected cross-sectional data, which is limited to providing a more detailed analysis of relationships between variables. Therefore, future studies are recommended to collect longitudinal data as collected data at different times provides a holistic approach for analysis. Secondly, the study used quantitative data, which is also limited to collecting data on the self-administrated questionnaire. Therefore, future studies should collect data using qualitative methods, which can serve to improve the literature. Another use of qualitative data is to interview the respondents, who provide detailed information about the factors.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Scale Items

Variables	Items
Artist Qualification	The artist possesses extensive knowledge of traditional Pingxiang Nuo masks.
	The artist has demonstrated exceptional skill in crafting Pingxiang Nuo masks.
	The artist has a formal education or training in traditional mask-making.
	The artist's experience in creating Pingxiang Nuo masks spans several years.
	The artist is widely recognized and respected within the Nuo mask-making community.
Cultural Expressiveness	The Pingxiang Nuo masks effectively convey the cultural heritage of the Nuo tradition.
	The masks reflect the unique artistic style associated with Pingxiang Nuo culture.
	The expressive features of the masks enhance their cultural significance.
	The masks are instrumental in preserving and promoting Pingxiang Nuo cultural practices.
Pingxiang Nuo Masks - Funny Role	The use of masks in performances enriches the cultural experience of the audience.
	The mask's design successfully embodies the humorous elements of the character.
	The funny role masks add an element of comedy to Nuo's performances.
	The humorous features of the masks are easily recognizable and appreciated by the audience.
	The funny role masks are integral in balancing the overall tone of the performance.
Pingxiang Nuo Masks - Positive Supporting Role	The artist's interpretation of the funny role enhances the comedic aspect of the mask.
	The mask's design successfully embodies the humorous elements of the character.
	The mask's design clearly represents the positive supporting character.
	The positive supporting role masks effectively complement the main characters in performances.
	The features of the masks convey the virtuous attributes of the supporting role.
	The positive supporting role masks contribute significantly to the narrative of Nuo's performances.
	The artist's depiction of the positive supporting role is well-received by audiences.

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