

Development Strategy of Cultural and Creative Product Design for Generation Z Consumers Based on the Design Participatory Design Philosophy

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Abstract: To enrich the cultural and tourism industry, promoting in-depth innovation and integration of culture and tourism has led to the developing of a series of cultural and creative tourism products with cultural connotations and visual impact. These products aim to attract more consumers to engage in interactive experiences by closely integrating the tourism, cultural and creative industries. Cultural and creative industries produce cultural and tourism integration products. These products' design and development strategy should focus on consumer participatory design. This approach has gained attention in the industry. The market is mainly composed of Generation Z, who are young consumers. Many traditional cultural brands have started considering this generation's consumption needs and behavioral characteristics. They have adjusted their product design, development, and marketing strategies to meet these needs. The cultural and creative product output has also adapted to the market changes and met consumers' needs through continuous innovation. Therefore, when faced with changing aesthetic requirements, the design of cultural and creative products should emphasize their cultural connotation and heritage and focus on product quality and consumers' emotional experience.

1. Introduction

As carriers of culture and history, cultural and creative products should be inherited, developed, and innovated to meet better the needs of contemporary society and cultural development trends. Cultural and creative products can have innovative designs and functions, providing consumers unique and interesting interactive experiences. Traditional cultural and creative products often have rich cultural connotations and historical backgrounds. However, many products on the market have a single application of cultural elements and a uniform design approach. They are marketed towards a vague audience with unclear and inaccurate positioning, resulting in a serious homogenization of the products. Generation Z consumers have high aesthetic demands for products and value personalization and uniqueness. Therefore, they have higher expectations and requirements for innovating cultural and creative products.

This study investigates the needs and preferences of Generation Z consumers for cultural and

creative products. The aim is to provide a reference basis for subsequent design and development. The study uses research methods such as questionnaires and interviews to collect data and information. The questionnaire survey focuses on Generation Z consumers' consumption habits, needs, and preferences for cultural and creative products. Interviews were conducted with designers and developers of cultural and creative products to analyze current design concepts, trends, production processes, and challenges from a creative perspective.

2. Conceptual definition

2.1. Z Generation

Generation Z refers to the cohort born between 1995 and 2009. They were born into the information age and have been heavily influenced by digital technology, including instant messaging and smartphones. They are often referred to as the 'Network Generation' and the 'Internet Generation'. The rise of the Internet and the information age has led to Generation Z becoming the dominant consumer group globally [1]. Due to their deeper familiarity and understanding of the Internet, they are exposed to a wider range of knowledge and have a greater understanding and tolerance of new concepts than the traditional consumer population.

2.2. Cultural and Creative Products

Cultural and creative products are derived from cultural and creative industries that combine cultural elements, creative design, artistry, functionality, and innovation. Cultural and creative products aim to uniquely present the connotation and value of culture, allowing consumers to appreciate and experience the charm of culture and art. Cultural and creative products include artworks, souvenirs related to culture and tourism, office supplies, and household articles. High-quality cultural and creative products not only showcase a culture's diversity and unique characteristics but also cater to consumers' aesthetic preferences and purchasing intentions.

2.3. Participatory Design Philosophy

Participatory design philosophy emphasizes equal participation, collaboration, communication, user needs, sustainability, diversity, innovation, feedback, iteration, and social impact. It aims to enable equal participation and collaboration between users, stakeholders, designers, and developers in the product development process to achieve better design outcomes. Participatory design is a collaborative approach to design [2]. This paper refers to the active involvement of all design stakeholders in the design process. This approach enables design developers to better understand user needs and expectations, resulting in a design solution that better meets the target consumer's needs and ensures that the outcome meets their requirements.

3. Analysis of Consumer Demand among Generation Z

The cultural and creative products available in the market partially meet consumers' needs. However, there are still issues regarding quality, creativity, and interactive engagement. To identify the shortcomings of cultural and creative products for Generation Z, the researcher conducted a questionnaire in 2023. The respondents, with an average age of 23, were from the Generation Z group. The questionnaire was distributed online. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed, of which 149 were completed, resulting in a recovery rate of 99%. Additionally, five professional cultural and creative product developers were interviewed offline and over the phone for 30 minutes to discuss

the current problems and difficulties faced by cultural and creative products from the design to the development stage. The following conclusions were drawn after summarising and analysing the results of the questionnaires and interviews.

The first characteristic that Generation Z consumers seek in products is personalization and uniqueness. They desire products that reflect their personality and unique interests. Additionally, they value emotional experiences and prefer designs that connect emotionally with the product. This emotional connection allows them to gain satisfaction and resonance through cultural and creative products. For instance, products with emotional expression, story background, or character roles. Secondly, Generation Z consumers value the interaction and social aspects of products. They desire products that can be shared and enjoyed with others.

Additionally, they seek products that are culturally and creatively integrated with current fashion trends. Brand reputation is also important, as they prefer products from well-known and reputable brands. Generation Z consumers are interested in traditional culture and value cultural and creative products that reflect and preserve traditional elements.

Additionally, they prioritize environmental friendliness and sustainability when choosing products. As they mature, individuals face increasing environmental challenges and resource constraints. Consequently, they prioritize environmental protection and sustainable development when purchasing products (as shown in Figure 1).

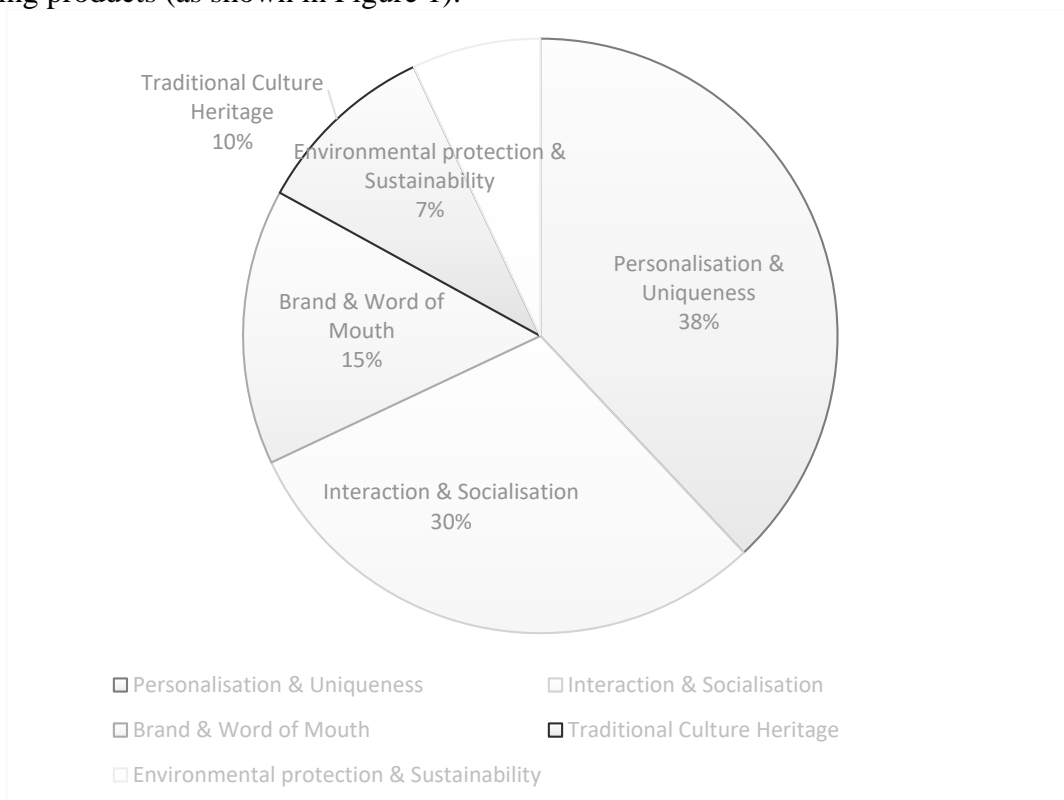


Figure 1: What is the most sought-after feature when purchasing cultural and creative products?

4. Current Situation and Problems of Cultural and Creative Product Design

4.1. Cultural and Creative Product Design

In recent years, the market demand for cultural and creative products has continued to grow, and consumer interest in cultural and creative products has been increasing. The sales of the cultural and

creative products market have increased year by year, indicating strong market potential. The design style, material and production process, branding, and marketing strategy have all contributed to the success of cultural and creative product design. The market demand for cultural and creative product design has grown significantly, with major brands, designers, and manufacturers launching unique and creative products to meet consumer demand. These products serve as commodities, cultural expressions, and heritage.

4.2. Problems in the Design of Cultural and Creative Products

Currently, cultural and creative products on the market often lack novelty and uniqueness. Research has identified several issues with current cultural and creative products, including outdated design concepts, a lack of innovative thinking, insufficient exploration of cultural connotations, underutilization of traditional elements, and a lack of diverse designs. Generation Z consumers are generally dissatisfied with current cultural and creative products, particularly in design creativity and cultural content (as shown in Figure 2).

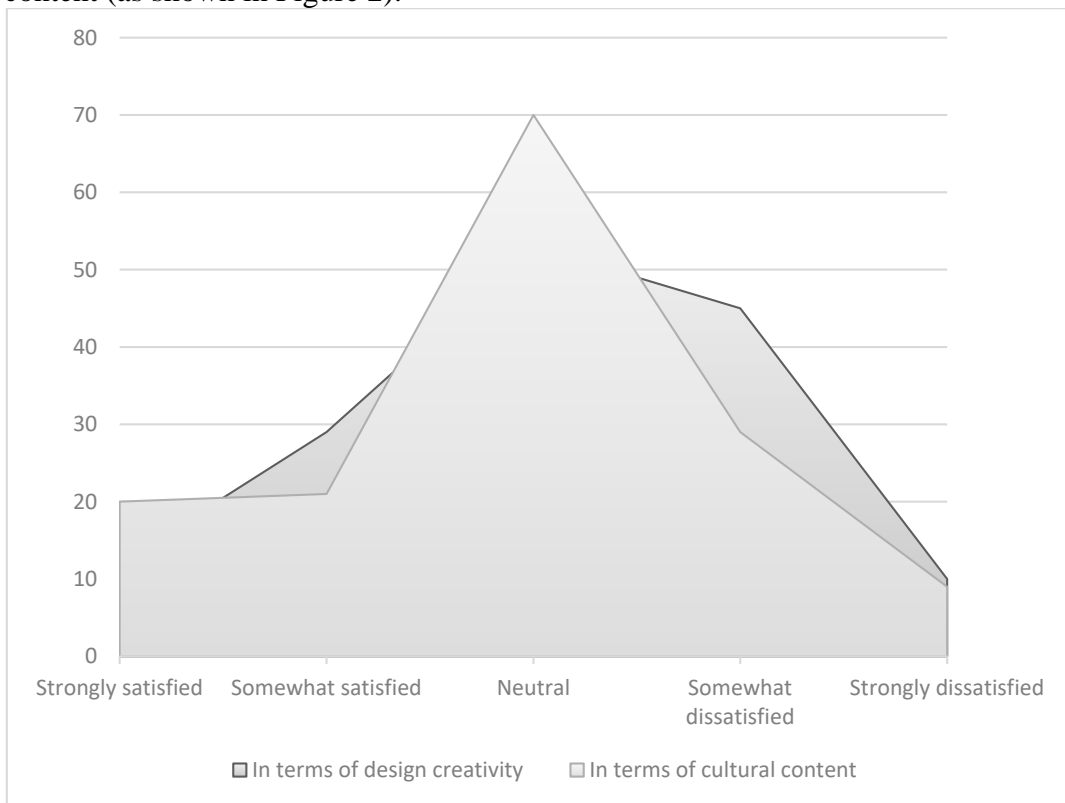


Figure 2: User satisfaction with current cultural and creative products in terms of design creativity and cultural content.

Many cultural and creative products currently available on the market lack innovation in their development, resulting in a lack of uniqueness and differentiation. These products rely heavily on existing design elements and technologies and cannot break through the limitations of traditional thinking to stand out in the market. However, many cultural and creative product designs still adhere to outdated design concepts and fail to consider the needs and preferences of modern consumers. This has resulted in a repetitive and unimaginative design style. The designs of these products are too conservative, lacking novelty and fashion sense, and cannot attract the attention of young consumers.

Some cultural and creative products on the market lack cultural value and significance because they do not delve deep enough into the cultural connotation in their design. They may copy traditional

cultural elements without an in-depth understanding and exploration of the content. The use of traditional cultural elements in product design lacks coordination and integration with the design style due to a lack of consideration and innovation on the part of design developers. In product design, traditional cultural elements are often added without being organically combined with modern design. This results in a lack of wholeness and unity in the design, which fails to evoke users' emotional resonance and cultural identity.

The main issue with current Generation Z cultural and creative products is the lack of innovation and uniqueness.

Many designs rely too heavily on traditional patterns and styles, making it difficult to stand out in the market. Currently, many cultural and creative product designs are mere replicas or adaptations of existing cultural elements, failing to satisfy Generation Z's desire for individuality and personalization. As a result, cultural and creative products have become increasingly homogeneous, offering limited options for Gen Z consumers.

Secondly, in-depth research and understanding of cultural and creative product design are lacking. It requires multi-disciplinary knowledge and skills, including design, art, culture, and economy. The lack of interdisciplinary collaboration among design developers has contributed to the monotony and restrictions in product design. After extracting the essence of traditional culture, the design and development stage often fails to flexibly and skilfully incorporate traditional cultural elements into the products. Designing and creating products with unique national cultural characteristics and contemporary features is also challenging.

Additionally, design developers lack in-depth research and understanding of the cultural background and historical connotation. In this case, the cultural elements are only superficially interpreted and presented without truly reflecting the cultural connotations and spiritual values they represent. As a result, Generation Z consumers cannot have a deep cultural experience and emotional resonance when purchasing and using these products [3-8].

5. Direction of Development of Cultural and Creative Products

5.1. Target Consumer Centred

Design developers use the target consumer centered design methodology to analyze consumers' basic information, emotions, dreams, and needs in their daily lives and work. They then translate these factors into specific elements of product design and services to provide customized solutions that meet the personalized needs of different consumers. This approach results in the design of user-friendly cultural and creative products that meet users' needs. At the same time, cultural and creative products integrate emotions and stories to engage users better and stimulate their desire to purchase.

5.2. Strengthen Cultural Connotation

The design of cultural and creative products should prioritize excavating and preserving cultural connotations. Traditional cultural elements can be incorporated into modern designs by thoroughly exploring regional, historical, and folk cultures. For instance, cultural symbols and traditional aesthetic elements can be incorporated, along with modern design concepts and techniques, to enhance the cultural significance and value of the products. This can create cultural and creative products that possess a unique charm, attracting the attention and admiration of more Z-generation consumers.

5.3. Innovative Design Concepts

Scientific and technological innovations are constantly emerging, providing more technical means for cultural and creative product development. Additionally, the concept of participatory design is integrated into cultural and creative products, with a focus on user experience and interactivity. For instance, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), 3D printing, intelligent interaction, and other technological methods can provide an immersive experience and personalized customization. This allows young people to participate in design and enjoy the process while improving the interactivity and appeal of the products. Furthermore, it can bring more innovation and breakthroughs in cultural and creative products. The production process should prioritize environmental protection and sustainability by selecting eco-friendly materials and processes to minimize waste and resource consumption [9-11].

5.4. Diversified Marketing Strategy

Generation Z consumers exhibit unique values and consumption behaviors. They pay particular attention to personalized and diversified consumption experiences. To meet the diverse needs of Generation Z consumers and enhance brand awareness and reputation, enterprises must continuously innovate marketing tactics, strengthen brand stories, provide customized products, utilize social media, cross-discipline cooperation, and employ technological means such as big data and artificial intelligence. Our business model integrates online and offline channels to create a comprehensive product ecosystem and provide a holistic product experience. We aim to increase awareness and sales of cultural and creative products through diverse marketing strategies, such as social media, short videos, live broadcasting, and cross-border collaborations with renowned brands and IPs.

6. Conclusion

Generation Z consumers, who grew up in the Internet and digital era, place a high value on product uniqueness and personalization and seek distinctive consumption experiences. Cultural and creative products, which possess cultural connotations and creative elements, are well-suited to meeting the needs of these consumers for freshness and personalization. Simultaneously, the significance of local and traditional culture is growing among Generation Z consumers. Cultural and creative products that integrate traditional cultural elements and modern design concepts can evoke cultural resonance and emotional identity in Generation Z consumers. Participatory design has numerous applications in the development of cultural and creative products. Designers and developers must select and adjust these products according to user needs. Cultural and creative products are commodities with practical value and vehicles for cultural dissemination. Therefore, companies should aim to establish an objective connection with consumers, allowing them to appreciate the cultural value of the product during the purchase and use process. The future cultural and creative products are expected to balance cultural connotation, creative innovation, and diversified marketing to meet the needs and expectations of Generation Z consumers. This should be achieved through objective evaluations and clear, concise language with a logical flow of information. Technical term abbreviations should be explained when first used, and a formal register should be maintained. The text should be free from grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors. The content of the improved text must be as close as possible to the source text, and any additional aspects must be avoided.

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