

Design and Development Research of Tourism-based Cultural and Creative Products

Lingling Hu

School of Design, Xiamen University of Technology, Xiamen, 361204, China

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Abstract: This paper explores the design and development strategies of tourism-based cultural and creative products, providing useful reference and thinking for designers in related fields to clarify their design ideas. Through research on the current situation and problems in the design and development of tourism-based cultural and creative products, the paper analyzes the relationship between human beings, material objects, and cultural factors. It proposes three levels of design strategies, including practical design, emotional design, and innovative design, and employs theoretical analysis methods supplemented with case studies to analyze these three levels. Finally, design practice is used to demonstrate the effectiveness of these strategies. Tourism-based cultural and creative products are designed and developed by “processing” regional cultural resources in combination with modern lifestyles. These products incorporate cultural elements while maintaining an appropriate aesthetic appeal and functional usefulness in everyday life. The design of cultural and creative products not only satisfies people’s emotional needs but also cleverly and vividly integrates cultural content into the design, creating a communication bridge between people and culture. By focusing on the core concept of cultural content, innovative design is implemented from three aspects: product modeling, features and usage, and digital technology. This can increase the value of cultural and creative products and better meet the lifestyle and needs of modern people.

1. Introduction

Cultural and creative products, commonly referred to as “wenchuang” in Chinese, represent an extension of traditional culture into modern times. The diffusion of cultural and creative products enhances the identification, appeal, and impact of Chinese cultural heritage ^[1]. The essence of cultural and creative products encompasses the intrinsic “spirit” and the extrinsic “form”. The “spirit” embodies the core cultural values, while the “form” pertains to the tangible external attributes, henceforth interleaving to forge cultural and creative products ^[2]. Tourism-based cultural and creative products, by scrutinizing features such as regional culture, folk culture, and human landscapes, utilize innovative design approaches to convert cultural components into tangible merchandise. The product usage and experience aid in perceiving the associated cultural information, fulfilling the objectives of transmitting and innovating culture. These products embody the general merchandise attributes, coupled with cultural characteristics such as regional peculiarities, humanistic traits, and folk customs. Cultural and creative products delineate a quintessential blend of practicality, aesthetics, and cultural significance. With the swift development of modern civilization and cultural industries, conventional tourism mementos inadequately cater to the requirements of both the market and people. Consequently, the design and development of tourism-based cultural and creative products necessitates an elevated approach to fulfill the cultural inheritance and resource utilization objectives. Therefore, elucidating the relationship among human beings, material objects, and cultural factors within the framework of design processes relevant to the tourism-based cultural and creative products, exploring the most feasible design strategies to accommodate modern requisites, and proposing relevant ideas and techniques to subserve an effective design research of tourism-based cultural and creative products represents vital aspects of the conversion of cultural and creative industries.

2. Current State of Tourism-based Cultural and Creative Product Design

The essence of tourism lies in exploring the ethnic history, lifestyle, customs, literary arts, architectural features, and attire of diverse regions to experience distinct differences in daily practices. From the perspective of the creative industry, tourism products are captivating artifacts that exhibit human creative activities and should lean towards creating future cultural heritages. Hence, the basic foundation of creative tourism is to create products that entice tourists in the future [3]. In this regard, cultural and creative products involve transforming a specific cultural theme through interpretative conversion into modern design, enabling products to embody regional cultural experiences, memories, or traditional cultural elements, ultimately elevating the cultural significance of tourism, thus fulfilling the products' profound emotional experiences.

However, the design of cultural and creative products in most regions is still immature, mainly facing the following problems. Firstly, product types lack innovation, often appearing too similar to one another. Research shows that cultural and creative product types across different regions are overly similar, with simple copying of cultural elements lacking design innovation and distinctiveness. Such products not only fail to create unique attractions for tourists, but also struggle to showcase the cultural connotations and humanistic traits of the local region. Second, product forms lack depth in excavating cultural elements. Over-commercialization often leads to the direct mass reproduction of cultural elements, resulting in narrow usage and form categories, such as two-dimensional souvenir products like postcards and bookmarks. Third, brand systems have yet to be established. The establishment of a brand demands higher requirements for the inheritance of the historical and cultural value of products. Conversely, branding can increase the added value of tourism-based cultural and creative products, while enhancing product identification. Although some cultural and creative brands have emerged, such as the Palace Museum and Suzhou Museum, some regional tourism-based cultural and creative product brands have weak development, particularly in exhibiting characteristics of regional folklore culture and the often stilted relationship between cultural elements and products. Therefore, studying how to incorporate local cultural and folk customs, distinctive landscapes, and traditional handicrafts into modern creative methods for product design research by injecting new concepts, fashion, and technology is vital to enhance the value and significance of cultural and creative products. Looking ahead, this approach not only benefits the development of regional tourism industries, but also builds emotional communication bridges for the world to understand their local cultures.

3. Design Principle of “People-oriented, Culture-driven”

Culture forms a shared value system and spiritual force that is based on the sum of material and spiritual cultural elements that are recognized by the people [4]. Humans create culture during the process of productive practice, which includes values, lifestyles, behaviors, and consciousness in daily life. These cultural contents are carried through “objects”, and “objects” design can be seen as the process of materializing cultural contents. Different design objects are crystallizations of different cultures, and design as a unique cultural phenomenon restricts and influences cultural development [5]. Therefore, the interaction between humans and culture occurs through the design of “objects”. Thus, being people-oriented, or human-centric, is one of the important ways of thinking in modern design, and is the starting point for considering a product's functionality, usability, and spirituality in response to the needs of people [6]. The “culture” in “culture-driven” refers to the source of inspiration in design, where “driven” means change and learning. People change through learning, and the use of a product can have an impact on their lives and psychology. Therefore, for cultural and creative products, their design stems from culture, and their core value lies in materializing cultural values, allowing users to experience and perceive cultural values during product usage.

Overall, “cultural significance” is the key element that distinguishes cultural and creative products from ordinary industrial products, and design practice for cultural and creative products emphasizes the pursuit of cultural depth. Solid research on traditional artistic aesthetics is necessary

to support the design and development of cultural and creative products and to achieve, reinforce, and correct the “cultural significance” of these products [7]. In the design and development of tourism-based cultural and creative products, efforts are made to draw design inspiration from local culture, such as natural landscapes, characteristic architecture, and folk culture, among others. Through innovative design methods, local culture is presented in more ways and ultimately serves the purpose of transmitting culture during the interaction between people and objects. Excellent cultural and creative designs possess distinctive cultural identification and allow culture to be naturally manifested during product usage, evoking emotional resonance and memories of the city, and are important in promoting local culture and enhancing market competitiveness.

4. Analysis of Design Strategies for Tourism-based Cultural and Creative Products

4.1. Practical Design: the Fusion of Functionality and Aesthetics

The essence of design is to meet people’s needs and behaviors, and cultural and creative product design is the process of materializing cultural content through a certain design language, which also should meet people’s needs, including functional and aesthetic demands. In reality, most cultural and creative product designs tend to focus only on “aesthetics”, neglecting practicality, producing low-quality products that leave an impression of being “good to look at but not practical”^[8]. Therefore, cultural and creative product design should emphasize functionality and usability, making them useful and practical with cultural elements and connotations infused into the design. The design of cultural and creative products should be closer to people’s daily lives, outputting culture through the use and interactions of everyday objects, closely related to daily life scenes, and more easily loved and purchased by consumers. This approach can expand the product’s application range while also enriching product categories. On the basis of refining cultural elements, innovative design can be achieved through graphic innovation, fusion of graphics and utensils, and other methods, which can extend regional elements into various product designs more effectively ^[9]. Taking Southern Fujian tiles as an example, they are representative elements of modern Southern Fujian architecture, which carry the historical background of Chinese people working and settling down in Southeast Asia. The design of “Tile Bookend” extracts the graphic elements of the tiles and incorporates them into stationery (book stand) design. The main body of the bookend and the disc achieve the function of rotational function through structural design, and the disc can adjust to different angles as needed. The handmade cement tiles are embedded within the disc, integrating the tile’s material and graphics, reflecting the characteristics of modern Southern Fujian architecture. The overall shape meets modern aesthetic requirements, is convenient to use, and arouses people’s life interest through the combination of external form and internal spirit, see Figure 1. In addition, there are similar cultural and creative derivatives, such as tile fridge magnets and paperweights. These designs combine daily product demands with cultural background stories of Southern Fujian architecture, expanding the application of tiles from architectural content to stationery products, integrating culture into daily life scenes, and exhibiting the pursuit of life aesthetics.

The aesthetic attractiveness of a product has the power to communicate positive emotions, as Donald A. Norman eloquently stated in *Emotional Design*: “beautiful things work better, and are more enjoyable to use.” The functional capacity of a product remains constant, but its form can be portrayed in various ways, such as with seating being designed for sitting, and tea sets for serving. The primary objective of aesthetics is to express core social values, moral beliefs, behavioral norms, and means of emotional expression through the product design process ^[10]. Therefore, practical design of cultural and creative products should incorporate both functional and aesthetic values, in order to seamlessly transition from the product’s visual appeal to its functional attributes and facilitate emotional experiences during usage, ultimately expressing the product’s meanings, cultures, values, and other spiritual properties. For instance, the cultural and creative product “Building Story Book Lamp” from Suzhou Museum exemplifies this concept, as seen in Figure 2. The lamp is designed in the shape of a book, indistinguishable from any other book found in bookstores, but upon opening the book, a night light emits, providing control of light intensity

through the angle of the book's opening, with three different lighting modes available that alternate between warm and cold color tones. Intriguingly, the book's pages contain fascinating views, intriguing quotations, and insightful theories by the great architectural master, Pei Leoh Ming, which are displayed when reading. The design of this piece is pleasing to the eye, and is convenient to store, serving both as a lamp and as a desk ornament, catering to nighttime lighting needs, while providing an artistic and exquisite atmosphere to daily life. Simultaneously, the design conveys the cultural spirit of architectural ideas and beliefs. It effectively demonstrates the integration of function and form to present cultural elements through the entries of a book, which, on one hand, retains the utility and user-friendliness of a lamp, and on the other hand, embodies the cultural aesthetics and quality of life.



Figure 1 Tile bookend design.

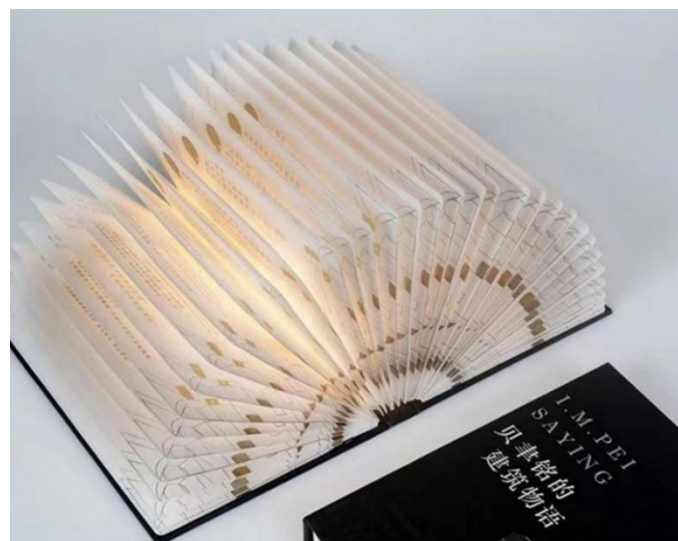


Figure 2 Building story book lamp.

4.2. Emotional Design: the Confluence of Three Constituent Elements: Human Beings, Material Objects, and Cultural Factors

As a matter of fact, design endeavors to serve the needs of humanity by pursuing preconceived objectives, and the physical substrate, or “material objects”, functions as the medium for this activity. It thus embodies both material utility and aesthetic expression, effecting a unity of substance and spirit. With the passage of time, people have become increasingly invested in the emotional aspects of “material objects”. In this context, emotional design finds expression at three distinct layers: first, the instinctual layer, foregrounding the product's aesthetics and the sensory impressions of its material, shape, texture, and so on; second, the behavioral layer, which revolves around the product's usage, efficiency, and attendant emotional experiences. User-friendly design

engenders positive emotions, whereas difficulty and frustration lead to negative affective responses; and finally, the introspective layer of design, where the product's underlying thought-patterns, cultural context, and ethical significance are brought to the fore, generating an overlap between experiential and affective dimensions. Of these layers, it is the introspective layer that plays the most seminal role, emphasizing the need to stimulate recollection, evoke profound sensory beliefs, and induce philosophical deliberation through interactive processes.

As a material vehicle for cultural communication and inheritance, cultural and creative products primarily function to transmit cultural sensitivity and temperament as the core of their features. Establishing emotional ties with the consumer and conveying the essence of traditional culture through contemporary life philosophy to achieve emotional resonance with the consumer is the starting point for the divergent design thinking of cultural and creative products [11]. Based on emotional design's three layers, cultural creative product designers can begin by addressing product appearance at the instinctual layer, selecting regional cultural elements as a basis for the design and transforming them into patterns or graphics to be incorporated into the product, creating a final result that is not just interesting, but visually pleasing. Second, from the behavioral layer, cultural and creative product design must reflect a degree of practicality, incorporating both usage and practical functionality. Design that is oriented around people's needs, expertly integrated into their daily life, and closely combined with common household items reinforces product good will and usability. Finally, in the introspective design layer, the focus should be on creating scenes that resonate with or interact with consumers, thereby maximizing their immersion in the product. In fact, the emotional experience of cultural and creative products is the result of the mutual projection and interaction of the three aforementioned levels. In the design of cultural and creative products, culture serves as the connotation while the material subject serves as the medium. Emotional design is achieved through interaction between human beings and material objects, and it represents an implicit way of conveying emotions by eliciting emotional resonance or evoking memories. In practical terms, cultural symbols can be extracted and transformed into specific product forms through design methods such as making the product appearance more entertaining, functional, and situational. This is done to stimulate people's emotional experiences and evoke emotional resonance. For example, the design of the mascot "Bing Dwen Dwen" of the Beijing Winter Olympics combines the national treasure-panda with an ice crystal shell, and the flowing color lines of the head are inspired by the athletes' helmets. The overall image is both cute and friendly, embodying the characteristics of ice and snow sports while being endowed with many Chinese cultural symbols. The "Bing Dwen Dwen" cultural and creative product of Winter Olympics brilliantly embodies the three levels of emotional design. Through its interesting and vivid cartoon appearance, it conveys Chinese culture and sporting spirit, thereby evoking emotional experiences of cultural confidence and identity. At the same time, it also conveys the world's support and attention towards the Beijing Winter Olympics.

4.3. Innovative Design: Creative Processing with Culture as the Core

Cultural and Creative products value the continuity of culture and the playfulness of creativity. They are based on the enhancement, innovation, creation and extension of culture, and are essentially a manifestation of respect for culture rather than negation of it [12]. The core value of design lies in innovation. Cultural and Creative products not only make full use of cultural resources for innovative graphic symbols, but also for innovative product elements. Innovation is achieved through inspiration, element refinement, redesign, and modification. Creative presentation is a critical element in the design of cultural and creative products. It is not simply an imitation or replication of cultural elements, but requires imaginative design processing and re-creation of cultural symbols, in order to meet modern aesthetic needs and the pursuit of life. Innovation can be achieved in three ways: Firstly, innovative product modeling. Modern design methods can be used to redesign products, by selecting and refining cultural content to create new graphics with original and distinctive features. Due to the nature of cultural heritage carried by cultural relics, certain traditional cultural elements can be directly reflected in the shaping and decorative patterns of

artifacts. Therefore, design elements can be directly extracted from cultural relics, and abstract, realistic, impressionistic and other element design processing can be carried out, in order to redesign to meet product needs^[13]. This is the most direct and effective method, and the innovative design in this process requires careful and rational consideration, making cultural and creative products possess cultural identity, and integrating beauty and art into the product, in line with modern aesthetic needs. For example, the portable tea set in Figure 3 has cultural elements that originate from the famous North Song dynasty painter, Wang Ximeng's painting titled *A Thousand Miles of Rivers and Mountains*. The product design incorporates some of the typical features of the painting into the shape and packaging of the tea set, presenting the painting through the appearance and packaging of the product. This allows cultural elements to be naturally expressed in the product and brings traditional Chinese culture into daily life, while conveying an aesthetic pursuit of life. Secondly, innovative product functionality and interactive usage. Starting from the interaction between human beings and material objects, emphasis can be placed on the experiential elements of the product, in order to achieve innovation in product content. Experience is the feeling that people establish when using a product, or the memories evoked during use. While disseminating culture, cultural and creative products should not be limited to decorative functions, but rather should also realize practical value in daily life. It is only when cultural and creative products are integrated into daily life that people can more deeply appreciate the cultural connotations contained in the product^[14]. For example, the cultural and creative product "Wooden puzzle of Suzhou museum structure", shown in Figure 4, is an educational puzzle toy that is suitable for both children and adults. Its inspiration comes from the architecture of the Suzhou Museum. The building form is transformed into a three-dimensional puzzle, which can be used to restore representative parts of the Suzhou Museum's buildings. During the interactive process of assembling the puzzle, players can experience the charm of the architecture. Such a design not only endows the Cultural and Creative product with new vitality, but also fully conveys regional culture during interactive use, while increasing the product's economic value. Thirdly, innovative product communication media. With the rapid development of modern network technology, "Internet + cultural and creative products" have incorporated modern digital technologies, including multimedia interaction, AR, VR, and MR, to make the presentation of cultural and creative products more diverse, fashionable, and accessible to modern people's lives, becoming an important means to connect cultural dissemination with modern life, and enhance cultural experiences. For example, the "Forbidden City 365" App released by the Palace Museum in 2022 uses four forms: beautiful images, knowledge, stories, and quizzes, to showcase the culture of the Forbidden City. Users can explore the Forbidden City from multiple angles and immerse themselves in the beauty of the palace. The App also offers historical and cultural narratives, which not only suits modern people's reading habits, but also truly and completely showcases the charm of Chinese traditional culture.



Figure 3 Portable tea set with the picture of a panorama of rivers and mountains.



Figure 4 Wooden puzzle of Suzhou museum structure.

5. Conclusion

The design of tourism-based cultural and creative products should start from the human perspective, focusing on the presentation and creative expression of cultural connotations. Furthermore, practical, emotional, and innovative designs ought to be employed to create products that combine utility and aesthetics, culture and emotion, as well as interaction and technology. This approach ensures that products establish emotional resonance with people while conveying cultural connotations. The design principle of “people-oriented, and culture-driven” guides research on the design of cultural and creative products, and sets them apart from other products. This principle promotes the inheritance and dissemination of culture, extends and expands product value, enhances the tourism experience of people, and drives the development of the cultural industry and local economy. It also contributes positively to the realization of a symbiotic relationship between cultural tourism.

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