



## Design and Development of Oil Paper Umbrella Patterns to Convey the Identity of Yiyang City to the New Generation of Customers

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### Abstract

**Background and Aim:** Yiyang, a city renowned for its vibrant local culture within Hunan Province, has cultural traditions that significantly influence both local and wider communities. This study aims to: 1) examine the elements defining Yiyang's local culture and identity, and 2) create oil paper umbrella patterns that resonate with young consumers to enhance the promotion of this cultural identity.

**Materials and Methods:** Using a combination of literature reviews, website surveys, and expert interviews, the study maps out the cultural landscape of Yiyang.

**Results:** Findings categorize Yiyang's identity into four main elements: traditional customs, scenic locations, handicrafts, and local cuisine. Traditional customs are mainly represented by the Yiyang Dihua Drum and Mugwort Dragon Boat Race; scenic areas are represented by the old tea-horse route, Mountain Yuntai, and Dongting Lake; handicrafts are represented by an oil-paper umbrella, Xiaoyu Bamboo Art, and Meishan Paper Cutting; and local food is mainly represented by Anhua Black Tea, Ma Xiang Cake, and Yuanjiang Asparagus. The cultural elements of Yiyang are cleverly integrated into the design of the oil paper umbrellas, reflecting the cultural connotation of Yiyang through the pattern design, making it a carrier for spreading the culture of Yiyang, which has important cultural significance and market value.

**Conclusion:** The study not only deepens the understanding of Yiyang's cultural identity but also successfully translates these elements into appealing product designs targeted at young consumers, thereby enhancing both cultural appreciation and market value.

**Keywords:** Yiyang; Culture identity; Hunan culture; Pattern design

### Introduction

Yiyang, a prefecture-level city in Hunan Province, China, is celebrated for its rich water resources, unique cultural characteristics, and vibrant history marked by diverse traditional handicrafts (Xu, 2014).

Yi Yang is at the crossroads of different regional cultures within Hunan Province, which makes Yi Yang culturally diverse, and this multicultural background has a positive significance for China's cultural diversity and national cohesion. It also plays an important role in economic development. Its economic development has an impact on the overall economic growth of Hunan and even China (Xu, 2014). Yiyang has a very developed handicraft production industry, especially the production of oil-paper umbrellas. Yiyang's natural environment and rich bamboo resources provide high-quality raw materials for the production of oil-paper umbrellas. Yiyang oil-paper umbrellas are renowned nationwide for their exquisite craftsmanship and unique design and have become an important representative of Yiyang local culture.

The origin of oil paper umbrellas can be traced back to the Eastern Han Dynasty, after Cai Lun invented paper, there appeared oil paper umbrellas coated with cooked tung oil on the surface of the paper, but the umbrellas at that time were mainly made of yellow paper, which is about 2,000 years ago (Mu, 2021). At that time, craftsmen in the Yi Yang area began to combine paper umbrellas with wooden umbrella bones, and by tightly connecting the specially crafted paper to the wooden bones, they produced a practical tool for rain protection and sun shading, i.e., oil paper umbrellas (Lu, 2018).





Figure 1: Yiyang oil paper umbrella heir  
Source: HUNAN DAILY (2021)

Over time, craftsmen in the Yi Yang area gradually passed down the skill of making oil-paper umbrellas, and at the same time began to draw various patterns on the umbrellas, adding to their artistic value. These patterns often incorporate elements of the natural landscape, folk traditions, and religious beliefs of the Yi Yang region, making the oil-paper umbrellas not only a practical tool but also a cultural expression and artistic creation.



Figure 2: Yiyang Oil-paper Umbrella  
Source: BBS.REDNET.CN. (2023)

Yi Yang oil-paper umbrellas, as traditional handicrafts, have rich historical and cultural values. However, with the development of modern society, Yi Yang oil-paper umbrellas may be affected by modern industrialized production and consumption habits in the market, leading to a decline in production and market share. However, with the renewed interest in traditional culture and the rise of cultural and creative industries, Yi Yang oil-paper umbrellas have begun to receive renewed attention. However, while adapting to the demands of the modern market, how to protect and develop traditional handicrafts through innovative design, publicity, and promotion has become the key to harvesting the market of the new generation of consumers for Yi Yang oil-paper umbrellas (Lu, 2018).

The government of Yiyang City has made great efforts to improve the overall level of cultural undertakings and the comprehensive strength of cultural industry development, increased investment in the construction of public welfare cultural facilities, and raised funds through multiple channels to improve the investment environment for cultural facilities (Yiyang City People's Government, 2010).

Currently on the market Yi Yang oil paper umbrella lacks an identity of the pattern, the old image is out of touch with the times and has not met the new generation of customers' consumption demand. How to create patterns with the identity of Yi Yang to enrich the design of Yi Yang oil paper umbrellas, and further enhance the uniqueness and representativeness of the product. These are all the problems and challenges faced by the innovation and reform of Yi Yang oil paper umbrellas (Lu, 2018).

Contemporary young people are increasingly interested in purchasing cultural products that are modern and attractive, and their desire to keep up with fashion and innovation is particularly evident in their choice of cultural products to purchase. Young people's purchasing power and consumer decision-making occupy an important place in today's marketplace, and they are not only consumers in the marketplace, but also promoters and disseminators of cultural products. The attraction of cultural



products also lies in their connection to cultural values. Young people are more likely to support products that demonstrate regional identity and traditions, as these products are not just commodities, but also carry a sense of cultural tradition and identity, and by linking the products to the unique culture of the Yi Yang region, these products can better appeal to young customers and succeed in the market.

This study aims to promote Yiyang culture and enhance the city's identity by designing and developing oil-paper umbrella patterns with Yiyang cultural identity. Specific research questions include: 1. What are the unique elements of Yiyang culture; 2. How to design Yiyang oil-paper umbrella patterns that meet the aesthetic tastes of young consumers; 3. Can the designed oil-paper umbrella patterns effectively enhance cultural identity and market appeal; 4. How to ensure the accurate expression and deep integration of cultural elements in product design.

Yi Yang oil paper umbrella to convey the city image of Yi Yang to a new generation of customers. This is because the current traditional image of oil paper umbrellas lacks modern appeal and is difficult to resonate with young consumers. Through pattern design and development, it can enhance the visual appeal of the product and promote the cultural heritage, while contributing to the cultural tourism industry in Yi Yang.

## Objectives

1. Examine the elements defining Yiyang's local culture and identity;
2. Create oil paper umbrella patterns that resonate with young consumers to enhance the promotion of this cultural identity.

## Literature review

### Introduction to Yiyang

Yiyang is in the center of China's Hunan Province, located on the Dongting Lake Plain, and is blessed with rich water resources and unique Hunan culture. The city is known for its rich natural beauty, long history, and traditional handicrafts that attract many tourists. Yiyang is one of the most important historical and cultural cities in Hunan Province, and the city is home to many historical sites and ancient buildings, as well as is highly regarded for its specialty food, art performances, and traditional culture. As a meeting point of different regional cultures within Hunan Province, Yiyang presents a diverse cultural background that is positive for China's cultural diversity and national cohesion, as well as playing an important role in the development of the economy, which has an impact on the economic growth of Hunan and China as a whole (Xu, 2014). Yiyang City, with its deep cultural heritage and rich humanities, is known as the "hometown of culture", where various cultural elements intermingle with each other to form the unique culture of Yiyang. The Meishan culture, black tea culture, and flower-drum opera culture are important cultural heritages (Hu, 2016), reflecting the rich cultural connotation and diversified cultural traditions of Yiyang. Meanwhile, Yiyang City is also one of the important tourist destinations in Hunan Province, attracting many tourists to visit the city (Wen, 2013).

### Yiyang Cultural Identity

The traditional customs of Yiyang are unique cultural symbols of the region, highlighting its strong cultural identity. Yiyang Dihua Drums, also known as "Pairs of Flower Drums", is one of the traditional songs and dances of Yiyang folk culture and entertainment (Liu, 2015). It is distinguished from the stage flower-drum theatre by the word "ground", and is mainly performed on festivals and some important occasions by Dihua drums artists who walk through the streets and lanes and doors, with no special requirements for the performance venues. The music is based on percussion of gongs and drums, big tubes, suona, and the sound of gongs and drums are interspersed with people and singing, and the lyrics are mostly combined with the Yiyang dialect, which belongs to the "Shouting Flower Drums" with a spirited and exciting plot. Yiyang pairs of flower drums are generally a clown once (Liang, 2006). The movements of Yiyang Dihua drums originate from life, permeated with rich flavor and distinctive identity, and are a unique style of small flower drums. Based on the unique performance form, regional identity, and traditional culture, the Yiyang Dihua drums incorporate modern elements and show the love of life and the inheritance of the traditional culture of the people of Yiyang. The Mugwort Dragon Boat Race is one of the highlights of the traditional summer festival in the Yiyang region. This event



combines the harvest culture of the Yiyang region with the dragon boat sport, as an expression of harvest and prayers for good luck. Participants wearing traditional costumes and paddling dragon boats decorated with mugwort race along lakes or rivers in a spectacular spectacle that attracts a large number of visitors and spectators. The Mugwort Dragon Boat Race is not only a traditional sports event, but also an important embodiment of the harvest culture and traditional customs of the Yiyang area, which expresses the people of Yiyang's wish for a good harvest and prayers for good fortune, and also demonstrates the Yiyang people's inheritance and innovation of traditional culture (Liu, 2015).



Figure 3: The Dihua Drum Musical Instrument

Source: Bai Du (2024)



Figure 4: Old Tea-Horse Route

Source: Xinhun prefecture-level city in Hunan (2022)

The scenic area spots in Yiyang are represented by the old tea-horse route, Yuntai Mountain, and Dongting Lake. The Yiyang Old tea-horse Route is famous for the last horse gangs in the south and the most complete remnants of the old tea-horse Route, which preserves the original alpine dwellings and canyon scenery, away from the hustle and bustle of the world, and is beautiful and unique (Wen, 2013). The Yiyang Old tea-horse route is different from those in other regions, with a unique "cabin and horseback" transport identity, and a rich historical and cultural heritage and legend. Yiyang Anhua Yuntai Mountain Scenic Area is famous for its diversified tourism resources. The unique Longquan Cave formed hundreds of millions of years ago in the Paleozoic Carboniferous Tuff, offers the world's rare "Dragon Spring Waterfalls" and "The World's Greatest Goose Pipe". Because of the unique topography and soil composition and cultivated Yuntai Mountain large-leaf tea species, is known as the "mother of tea" (Yiyang City People's Government, 2021). Here, the natural environment and tea culture, Taoist culture, health culture, and other intermingling, form a unique form of cultural tourism, attracting tourists to come to enjoy its unique charm. As the second largest freshwater lake in China, Dongting Lake brings unique natural scenery and rich resources to Yiyang City (Hu, 2016). Its vast waters and surrounding wetland ecosystems have nurtured rich fishery resources and wetland biodiversity, providing important support for economic development. Add unique historical heritage and humanistic charms to Yiyang City, attracting many tourists to come for sightseeing, and promoting the prosperous development of the culture and tourism industry.

Yiyang handicrafts are rich and diverse, reflecting the rich cultural traditions and craftsmanship of the region (Xu, 2014). Among them, the oil paper umbrella is one of the most representative handicrafts in Yiyang. There are 72 basic procedures for making oil paper umbrellas, and 32 procedures are for making the umbrella bones. Choose a good bamboo, make a good umbrella bone, and then the good

Anhua leather paper to do the umbrella surface, the best pine wood to do the umbrella head, Changde, Xiangxi tung oil boiled and brushed on the umbrella body, to be able to produce a complete Yiyang oil paper umbrella (HUNAN DAILY, 2021). In addition to oil paper umbrellas, Yiyang is also famous for traditional handicrafts such as Xiaoyu bamboo art and paper-cutting. Xiaoyu bamboo art is a folk traditional handmade craft that uses rigid (hemp) bamboo with a diameter of less than 5cm as the skeleton and moso bamboo as the parts to be processed into a variety of utensils. Yiyang Xiaoyu Bamboo art Ware is mainly made by this craft, combined with traditional techniques such as splicing, embedding mortise, and tenon joints. With beautiful shapes and fine workmanship, Xiaoyu Bamboo art Ware is an excellent traditional craft in Hunan (Yuan et al, 2018). Meishan paper-cutting is a general term for the traditional folk art of paper-cutting popular in the Anhua area of Yiyang, Hunan province, which is based on Meishan culture. It is mainly expressed in traditional life in the following aspects: ritual activities, wedding celebrations, major festivals, birthdays, birth, shoe patterns, life decoration, life entertainment (shadow play), and it is an indispensable spiritual food for the people in the specific historical environment (Tian & Xiang, 2012). Yiyang handicrafts not only have a high artistic value but also carry the rich cultural connotation and historical heritage of the region. These handicrafts have not only enriched the lives of the people but also become an important symbol of the culture of the Yiyang area and a cultural business card, attracting many tourists to come to appreciate and buy them, making a positive contribution to the economic development and cultural heritage.



Figure 5: Yiyang Oil Paper Umbrella  
Source: Photograph by Cao Xiyu (2024)



Figure 6: Anhua Black Tea  
Source: Hunan Black Tea (2023)

Yiyang local food is famous in Hunan Province and the whole country for its unique flavor and rich variety. Yiyang Anhua black tea is one of the six basic tea types and the originator of Chinese black tea (Wen, 2013), which is famous for its unique geographical environment and selenium-rich moraine soil. On April 6, 2010, the former General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China approved the implementation of geographical indication product protection for "Anhua Black Tea". On November 15, 2019, it was selected for the Chinese Agricultural Brand Catalogue. (SOHU, 2023). Yiyang Yuanjiang Ma Xiang Cake is the first of the four famous cakes in Hunan province, with a long history of production and a thin, crispy, and sweet taste. It is made from specialty raw materials, with complex production procedures and exquisite traditional handcrafting skills, and was recognized as Hunan Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009, with unique identity and cultural value (SINA, 2022). Yiyang Yuanjiang Asparagus, produced in Yuanjiang



City, Hunan Province, enjoys the National Geographical Indication for Agricultural Products. It grows in the unique moist environment of Yuanjiang River, where the geographical conditions of rivers and lakes blend to create its unique quality (Liu et al, 2023). Growing in the natural oxygen bar of Dongting Lake, absorbing negative oxygen ions, the quality is natural and healthy, rich in nutrients and green. The surrounding water quality is rich in minerals and nutrients, and the soil is deep and fertile, which provides sufficient nutrients for its growth and gives it the identity of fresh taste and yellowish color. These local foods not only satisfy people's taste buds but also demonstrate Yiyang's rich agricultural resources and unique food culture.

### **Yiyang Oil Paper Umbrella**

Yi Yang Ming oil paper umbrellas began in the Tang and Song dynasties and flourished in the Ming and Qing dynasties, with a history of more than a thousand years. At that time, craftsmen in the Yi Yang area began to combine paper umbrellas with wooden umbrella bones, and by tightly connecting the specially crafted paper to the wooden bones, they produced a practical tool for rain protection and sun shading, i.e., oil paper umbrellas (Lu, 2018). These oil-paper umbrellas can protect against rain in the rainy season and shade the sun when the sun is strong, and thus are widely used in the region. Over time, craftsmen in the Yi Yang area gradually passed down the skill of making oil-paper umbrellas, and at the same time began to draw various patterns on the umbrellas, adding to their artistic value. These patterns often incorporate elements of the natural landscape, folk traditions, and religious beliefs of the Yi Yang region, making the oil-paper umbrellas not only a practical tool but also a cultural expression and artistic creation.

Currently on the market Yi Yang oil paper umbrella lacks an identity of the pattern, the old image is out of touch with the times and has not met the new generation of customers' consumption demand. How to create patterns with the identity of Yi Yang to enrich the design of Yi Yang oil paper umbrellas, and further enhance the uniqueness and representativeness of the product. In today's competitive market environment, the image of Yi Yang oil paper umbrellas' craft products remains in the traditional old style, failing to follow the trend of the times, and lacking modern fashion sense, which makes it difficult to arouse interest in young consumers, which are all the problems and challenges faced by the innovation and reform of Yi Yang oil paper umbrellas (Lu, 2018).

### **New Generation of Consumer Aesthetics**

Contemporary young people are increasingly interested in purchasing cultural products that are modern and attractive, and their desire to keep up with fashion and innovation is particularly evident in their choice of cultural products to purchase. Young people's purchasing power and consumer decision-making occupy an important place in today's marketplace, and they are not only consumers in the marketplace, but also promoters and disseminators of cultural products. If the younger generation is attracted to buy cultural products, then this will breathe new life into these products, and at the same time provide strong support for the heritage and development of culture. The attraction of cultural products also lies in their connection to cultural values. Young people are more likely to support products that demonstrate regional identity and traditions, as these products are not just commodities, but also carry a sense of cultural tradition and identity, and by linking the products to the unique culture of the Yi Yang region, these products can better appeal to young customers and succeed in the market. With the rise of cultural and creative industries, the visual image design of cultural products has been upgraded, but the image of craft products of Yi Yang oil-paper umbrellas is still in the market with the original old image, which lacks the sense of the times, and the packaging lacks culture and innovation and loses the market (Lu, 2018).

### **Theories of Cultural Analysis and Design**

Oil-paper umbrella patterns are the inheritors and reproducers of traditional culture, conveying history, folklore, and regional culture through colorful patterns and providing people with a profound cultural experience. These patterns are tools for cultural expression and identification, reflecting the identity and cultural spirit of different regions and helping people recognize and understand culture. Pattern design enhances the market appeal of oil paper umbrellas and helps manufacturers to stand out in a competitive market, while oil paper umbrella pattern design becomes part of the cultural and creative industry and promotes the development of the industry.



Cultural relativism theory emphasizes the diversity and relativity of cultures and argues that the formation and development of cultures are influenced by historical, geographical, and social factors, leading to the formation of unique cultural traditions and values in different regions and ethnic groups (Tu, 2010). Through the theory of cultural relativism, the researcher can gain a deeper understanding of the meaning and connotation behind the culture of Yiyang.

Cultural identity theory believes that cultural identity is the result of the interconnection between individuals and socio-cultural groups, and is a psychological state formed in the process of socialization, including the identification with one's own culture and the cognition and attitude towards other cultures. Cultural identity theory emphasizes the importance of culture in the cognitive and emotional aspects of the individual and the interactive relationship between the individual and the social culture (Qing, 2010). In the design process, cultural identity theory can guide designers on how to incorporate cultural elements into their products, thus enhancing consumers' sense of cultural identity.

The conceptual theory of design suggests that design can influence people's psychology, emotions, and behavior. In oil paper umbrella design, understanding user experience and emotional needs is key to making the pattern resonate with the user. Cultural design is concerned with incorporating cultural elements into the design to convey the idea of a specific culture. Through the use of traditional patterns, colors, or symbolic elements, appropriate colors can convey emotions that fit the ambiance and purpose, conveying the culture of Yiyang (Wang, 2024). Through market research and user feedback, we understand the needs and preferences of the target users, especially young consumers in the new era. Combine these needs to determine the core concept and direction of the design, so that the design has cultural connotations, but also meets the aesthetic and functional needs of users.

The Elements of Art Theory is a theory about the basic building blocks of visual art, including color, text, shape, form, texture, composition, and artistic style. These elements work together, and through their use and combination, can create works of art with depth, emotion, and visual appeal. The Elements of Art theory emphasizes the importance of these basic elements in expressing the theme, atmosphere, and emotion of a work of art (Lv, 2016).

## Conceptual Framework

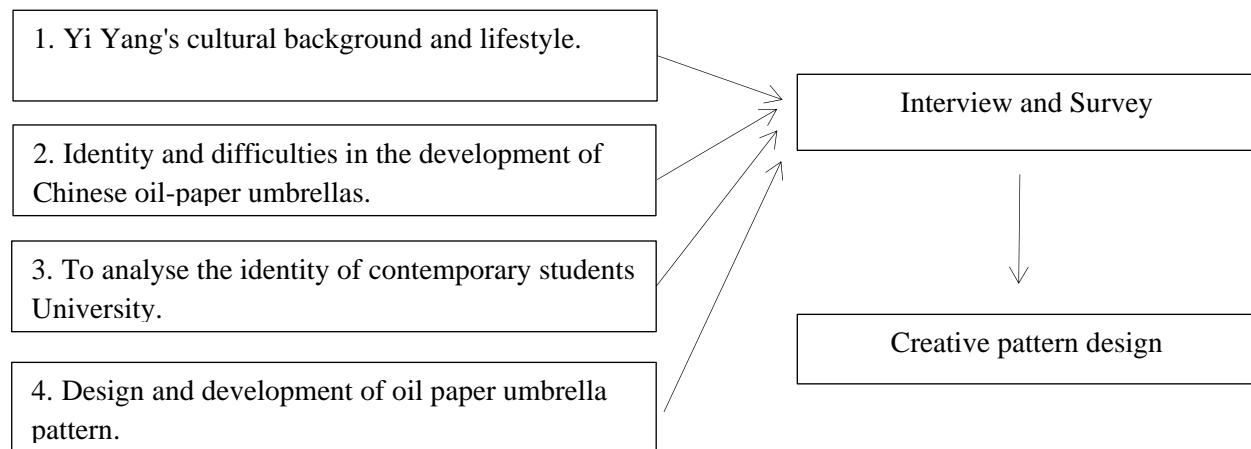


Figure 7 Conceptual Framework

## Methodology

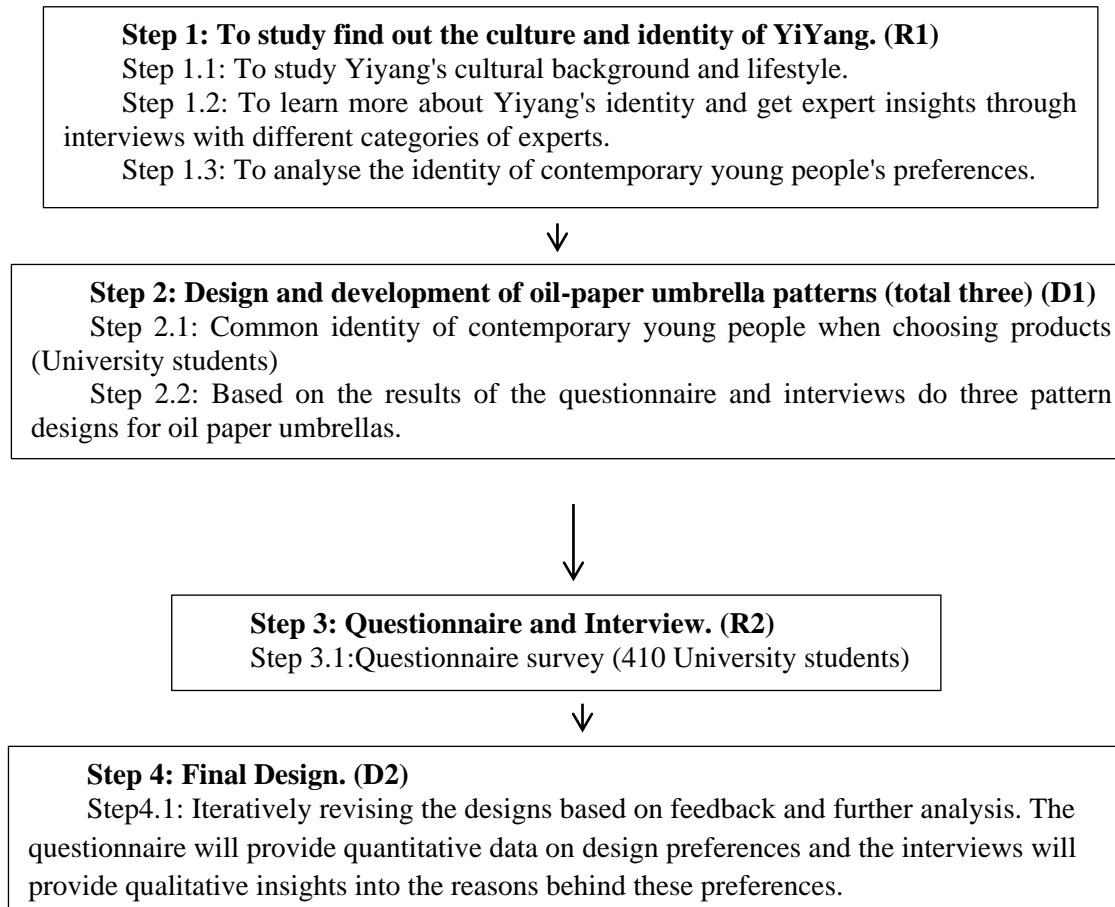


Figure 8 Methodology

### Step 1: To study and find out the culture and identity of YiYang. (R1)

1.1: To study Yiyang's cultural background and lifestyle.

Through researching history books, ancient documents, museum archives, academic papers, and internet resources, we delve deeper into Yiyang's development history, geographical features, and human history.

Population: ancient sites, ancient buildings, red tourism resources, religious cultural resources, folk cultural resources, historical celebrities' cultural resources, intangible cultural heritage resources (Wen, 2013), traditional customs, humanistic scenic spots, handicrafts, and local cuisines (Yiyang City Government, 2023)

Sample: Through an in-depth study of Yiyang's cultural identity, such as its traditional customs, humanistic scenic spots, handicrafts, and local cuisine, representative symbols are selected as design elements. The basis for selecting Yiyang features into four categories (traditional customs, humanistic scenic spots, handicrafts, and local cuisine) mainly comes from the introduction and promotion of Yiyang local features on the official website of the Yiyang city government and the official website of the local tourism and culture bureau. (Yiyang City Government, 2023)

1.2: To learn more about Yiyang's identity and get expert insights through interviews with different categories of experts.

In-depth interviews: Selecting academic experts, cultural experts, and community leaders as interviewees can fully support the research work from the three levels of theory, practice, and grassroots. The participation of these experts not only ensures the academic depth and cultural

connotation of the research, but also provides guidance and promotion channels for practical applications, and ultimately realizes the effective inheritance and innovation of Yiyang culture.

### 1.3: To analyze the identity of contemporary young people's preferences.

**Social media analysis:** Analyze discussions, shares, and comments on social media platforms about Yiyang people's tourism and cultural handicrafts, which can help capture the actual consumption experience and feelings of Yiyang young people.

**Population:** The researchers found that the top three APPs are WeChat, Xiaohongshu, and TikTok through researching related reports.

**Sample:** According to the purposefulness, since WeChat is a communication tool and its main function is to chat and communicate, Xiaohongshu and TikTok are chosen as social media communication platforms.

### **Step 2: Design and development of oil-paper umbrella patterns (total three) (D1)**

#### 2.1: Common identity of contemporary young people when choosing products (University students)

According to the researchers' preliminary observation and study, the new generation of Yiyang consumers focuses on personalization, fashion, cultural pursuits, and the influence of social media. Combining Yiyang's cultural elements with modern design concepts meets young consumers' needs for product uniqueness and innovation while enhancing the product's market appeal and cultural identity.

2.2: Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews do three pattern designs for oil paper umbrellas.

Design three patterns of oil paper umbrellas to convey cultural values in the patterns, showing creativity and artistry.

### **Step 3: Questionnaire and Interview. (R2)**

#### 3.1: Questionnaire survey (410 University students)

The researchers designed a questionnaire about the design of three oil paper umbrella patterns, which covered details of pattern appearance, colors, symbols, and cultural elements, and included open-ended questions to collect subjective feedback. Four hundred and ten university students were recruited as respondents through social media, with the sample representing a young customer base. Data was collected online, and through quantitative and qualitative analyses, the researcher concluded and interpreted the popularity of each design option and respondents' specific feedback.

### **Step 4: Final Design. (D2)**

4.1: Iteratively revising the designs based on feedback and further analysis. The questionnaire will provide quantitative data on design preferences and the interviews will provide qualitative insights into the reasons behind these preferences.

## **Results**

### **Step 1: To study and find out the culture and identity of YiYang.**

Step 1.1: To study the cultural background and lifestyle of Yiyang.

The researcher reviewed relevant literature and the official websites of the Yiyang government and Tourism and Culture Bureau through step 1.1 to get the following cultural identity of Yiyang:

**Traditional custom:** Yiyang is represented by the Dihua Drum and the Mugwort Dragon Boat Race, which demonstrate a strong local identity. The Dihua Drum reflects the festive life of the folk through their unique performances, and the mugwort dragon boat race commemorates Qu Yuan at the Dragon Boat Festival, reflecting the love and inheritance of traditional culture.

**Scenic area:** Yiyang boasts scenic areas such as the old tea-horse route, Yuntai Mountain and Dongting Lake. The Old tea-horse route showcases the history of ancient commerce and travel, Yuntai Mountain combines tea culture and Taoist culture, and Dongting Lake is known for its unique wetland ecological landscape, which showcases a wealth of humanistic features.

**Handcrafts:** Yiyang is represented by oil-paper umbrellas, Xiaoyu bamboo art, and Meishan paper-cutting, and the handicrafts are renowned for their superb craftsmanship and rich patterns, reflecting the Yiyang people's cherishing and passing on of traditional culture.

Local food: Yiyang's local food, including Anhua Black Tea, Ma Xiang Cake, and Yuanjiang Asparagus, showcases a unique identity and rich flavor culture. These delicacies not only satisfy the taste buds but also reflect Yiyang's rich agricultural resources and unique food culture.

Step 1.2: The result of the expert's interview about the identity of Yiyang.

Yiyang's cultural identity was rich and varied from the perspectives of academic experts, cultural experts, and community leaders. Academic experts emphasized Yiyang's rich history and diverse folklore, demonstrating its unique position in Hunan's Hunan culture. The cultural experts highlighted Yiyang's craftsmanship and spirit of inheritance, representing the respect for and protection of traditional skills. Community leaders focus on Yiyang's community cohesion and cultural vitality, reflecting the community's love and support for traditional culture. Overall, Yiyang's cultural identity is a blend of deep history, traditional craftsmanship, and community cohesion, demonstrating the diversity and richness of Yiyang as a historical and cultural city.

Step 1.3: To analyze the identity of contemporary young people's preferences.

The market potential of handicrafts will be further unleashed as consumers' demand for spiritual culture increases. Handicrafts are not only a kind of practical objects, but also a kind of cultural carrier and artistic display. In modern society, people pay more and more attention to the quality of life and personalized needs, handicrafts are loved by consumers because of their unique artistry and cultural connotation. Xiaohongshu and TikTok have certain similarities as social media platforms, where users can interact, communicate, and share content with other users, and both provide rich and varied content covering different fields and topics, which meets the diversified needs of users.

## Step 2: Design and development of oil-paper umbrella patterns (total of three)

Step 2.1: Common identity of contemporary young people when choosing products

The study found that when choosing tourism cultural and creative products, Generation Z university students prefer commodities that represent cultural identity, focus on design and craftsmanship, like products that can be shared on social media, value the practicality and emotional resonance of the products, and pursue personalized customization. The design should emphasize culture, unique design, and handicraft production, and incorporate social sharing elements.

Step 2.2: Pattern design of three oil paper umbrellas

Combining the identity and design elements of Yiyang, the researchers designed three patterns of oil paper umbrellas with Yiyang identity, based on elements such as content, color, style, and composition.



Figure 9: Yiyang Oil Paper Umbrella Pattern Design 1  
Cao Xiyu (2024)

**Design 1:** To better promote the culture of Yiyang, the researcher studied based on the preferences of young people, and got the result that young people prefer designs with local identity and personalized customization. Therefore, Design 1 combines the identity pattern of Yiyang with the English letters YIYANG, hoping to have an international and modern design style. Incorporating the pattern into the glyphs to become a whole design not only enhances the visual appeal and brand recognition, but also effectively conveys the cultural identity and stories of Yiyang, demonstrates creativity and artistry, and at the same time has a significant advantage in marketing and cultural promotion.



Figure 10: Yiyang Oil Paper Umbrella Pattern Design 2  
Cao Xiyu (2024)

**Design 2:** The researcher obtained from the study of young people's preferences that college students, when choosing traveling cultural and creative products, are more inclined to buy goods that represent local culture, history, or identity, hoping to feel the unique charm of traveling through the products. Based on young people's preferences combined with the historical, geographical, and social factors in the theory of cultural relativism, the researchers extracted the identity patterns of Yiyang obtained from the study and then combined them with the map of Yiyang city. The use of contrasting colors for the design highlights the uniqueness of each pattern while enhancing the visual hierarchy and aesthetics of the map. This design is not only neat and unified but also effectively conveys the cultural identity of different parts of Yiyang, enabling viewers to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Yiyang's regional culture and unique flavor when enjoying the map.



Figure 11: Yiyang Oil Paper Umbrella Pattern Design 3  
Cao Xiyu (2024)

**Design 3:** The researcher combined the Yiyang patterns obtained from the study with the Chinese identity for 'Yiyang' to give the design a better Chinese flavor, using Chinese red to represent Chinese culture. Each motif represents a distinctive element, and the motifs are integrated into the Chinese strokes to form a whole, which visually demonstrates Yiyang's diverse culture and regional identity. The use of uniform colors and consistent styles ensures the integrity and aesthetics of the design, enhances the audience's memory and sense of identity with Yiyang, and effectively spreads Yiyang's unique cultural charms.

### Step 3: Questionnaires and interviews

By analyzing the results of the questionnaire, it can be concluded that the public has a certain degree of knowledge and interest in the design of the Yiyang oil paper umbrella pattern, but the degree of understanding still needs to be improved, the identity of the culture of Yiyang need to be further publicized and promoted, and the majority of the participants believe that there is no obvious cultural identity in Yiyang. Regional identity, commemorative significance, cultural connotation, artistic value, aesthetics, and price are important factors affecting the participants' willingness to buy non-heritage cultural and creative oil-paper umbrellas, and the design should focus on considering combining the relevant factors to design. In the design of oil paper umbrellas, colors such as red, blue, green, yellow, cyan, and white are widely considered to be used in pattern design. The modern style (geometric lines

category) was favored by most participants, followed by the traditional style (birds and flowers pattern category). Design 2 was the most chosen design by the 410 university students, and the main reason for the choice was the incorporation of Yiyang's identity motifs into the map of Yiyang so that the design reflected the local identity as well as highlighting the geographical location. The design adopts a style of two colors, warm and cold, which is simple and clear visually. The lines outline the pattern with rich details, while the overall simplicity is not lost. So, Design 2 is the oil paper umbrella pattern design solution that can be eventually improved.

#### Step 4: Final Design

According to the results of the questionnaire on the design of the oil-paper umbrella pattern conducted for local university students in Yiyang, Design 2 gained the highest degree of popularity, with 179 participants, or 43.66%, liking this design. In order to further enhance the attractiveness of the design and the cultural dissemination effect, the design will be further improved with the results of the questionnaire.

Pattern base: Continue to follow the design that combines the identity patterns of Yiyang with the map of Yiyang, integrating the individual patterns of each Yiyang feature into the map lines to form a whole, so that the design embodies the local identity and highlighting the geographic location, and highlights Yiyang's regional identity and cultural heritage.

TABLE 1: The figures come from the survey results of Question 10 in the online Questionnaire

Do you have any other suggestions or ideas for Yiyang's special oil paper umbrella pattern design?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The current pattern design is mainly based on graphics, the whole umbrella design can also add relevant text, such as Yiyang tourism culture advertisement, the combination of graphics and text can better express the cultural identity of Yiyang.</li><li>2. It is suggested to promote these identity oil-paper umbrellas through campus activities, social media, cultural festivals, and other channels so that more people will understand and love this traditional craft.</li><li>3. In the future, we can design a limited series with different themes around different festivals and seasons in Yiyang city, and the pattern can also be made into a relevant periphery in conjunction with the Yiyang Cultural Tourism so that tourists coming to Yiyang will be interested in spontaneous carding.</li><li>4. Provide customized services, so that consumers can choose their favorite patterns, and colors, and even add personal elements, which can increase the uniqueness of the product and personal emotional connection.</li></ol>
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Color Adjustment: According to the feedback from the questionnaire, most of the participants thought that blue, green, cyan, red, yellow, and white were the most suitable for the pattern design of the oil-paper umbrellas. Therefore, the base color of the umbrella will be adjusted to blue, green, and cyan, which are cool colors to make the overall design more modern and visually comfortable.

Combination of text: Add text next to the umbrella pattern, using calligraphy fonts and the official slogan of the Yiyang Culture and Tourism Bureau, 'Yishan Yishui, Yimei Yiyang' as the content of the text (People's Government of Yiyang City, 2023), a combination of text and graphics, to promote the cultural identity of Yiyang. The 'Yiyang' part of the text is 'Yiyang'. The word 'yi' can be interpreted as 'good for people or things, richness, growth', which is the same as the word 'yi' in Yiyang, and can be interpreted as 'good mountains, good water, good and beautiful Yiyang'.



Figure 12: Final pattern design incorporating preferred colors and text  
Cao Xiyu (2024)



Figure 13: Visualization of the final pattern on an oil-paper umbrella  
Cao Xiyu (2024)

## Discussion

The researcher will go through the four areas of Cultural identity Classification, Analysis of the identity patterns of oil-paper umbrellas, Design Colours, Morality, and Connotation.

For the classification of Yiyang cultural identity, the researcher classified Yiyang culture into four categories, namely four types of traditional custom, scenic areas, handicrafts, and local food. This is inconsistent with the classification of Yiyang's cultural identity by expert Wen Dashan in "Preliminary Exploration of Cultural Tourism Development Strategy in Yiyang". Experts classify Yiyang's cultural identity into seven categories: ancient sites, ancient buildings, red tourism resources, religious cultural resources, folk cultural resources, historical folk cultural resources, and intangible cultural heritage resources (Wen, 2013).

Regarding the aspect of analyzing the characteristic patterns of oil-paper umbrellas, the researchers found that the patterns of oil-paper umbrellas are mainly single forms and flower and bird patterns. This is consistent with the research of expert Lu (2018) in "Research on brand image promotion in Hunan - Yiyangming oil paper umbrellas as an example". The expert concluded that the old oil paper umbrella patterns did not reflect the Yiyang identity and did not meet the aesthetics of the new era.

Regarding the design colors, the researcher learned through the questionnaire results those colors like blue, green, and cyan were more popular among the participants. This is inconsistent with the research of expert Lu (2018). According to Lu Ning, Morandi's color scheme has a premium feel with a visual effect that blends modern and contemporary sensibilities, allowing the colors to break the boundaries of tradition and present an elegant sense of color.

In terms of meaning and connotation, the researchers used the combination of Yiyang English letters and Yiyang cultural identity, the combination of Yiyang city map and Yiyang cultural identity, and the combination of Yiyang Chinese characters and Yiyang cultural identity, with the starting point of highlighting Yiyang. This is inconsistent with the pattern design style mentioned by the expert Ying Xu in "Heritage and Innovation of Hunan Yiyang Ming Oil-Paper Umbrella Crafts", Ying Xu believes that the pattern design of Yiyang oil-paper umbrellas is mainly influenced by the traditional Chinese auspicious culture and the culture of Hunan region, and she proposes that the umbrella pattern of Yiyang Ming umbrellas mainly conveys the symbolism of happy and auspicious blessings, which is suitable for different joyful occasions with different symbolism. For example, the pattern of oil paper umbrella for



weddings is "dragon wind presents auspiciousness", "heavenly fairy matches the pair", etc.: to congratulate the child's newborn, it is "two dragons fetch treasure", "magpies are infested with plums", etc. Plum infested", "Fairy scattering flowers" and so on; as a birthday gift, "Bird facing the wind" and "Pine tree prolonging life" (Xu, 2014).

## Conclusion

### Yiyang's Culture and Identity:

This study aimed to explore Yiyang's culture and develop oil paper umbrella patterns to promote Yiyang's cultural identity. Researchers studied Yiyang's literature, cultural background, and lifestyle, and conducted expert interviews. They identified four main categories of Yiyang's cultural identity: traditional customs (Dihua Drum, Mugwort Dragon Boat Race), scenic areas (Old Tea-Horse Route, Mount Yuntai, Dongting Lake), handicrafts (Yiyang Oil Paper Umbrella, Xiaoyu Bamboo Art, Meishan Paper Cutting), and local food (Anhua Black Tea, Ma Xiang Cake, Yuanjiang Asparagus). Analysis of Generation Z's preferences revealed a high acceptance of products with cultural identity.

### Pattern Design and Development of Oil Paper Umbrellas:

Based on Yiyang's cultural identity and young consumers' preferences, researchers designed three umbrella patterns:

Incorporating "YIYANG" in English letters with rich colors and a unified style.

Combining Yiyang identity patterns with a city map using contrasting colors and simplicity.

Integrating Yiyang identity with the Chinese character "Yiyang" in red, harmonizing the picture and character.

### Questionnaire Survey:

A survey of 410 Yiyang University students collected feedback on the three umbrella designs. Design 2, which combined Yiyang identity patterns with a city map, was the most preferred (179 votes, 43.66%). Based on this feedback, Design 2 was chosen for final development.

### Final Design:

Design 2 was refined based on survey suggestions. The umbrella's main color was adjusted to a cooler tone, and the design pattern's colors were modified. The official Yiyang Culture and Tourism slogan "Yishan and Yishui, Yimei and Yiyang" was added in calligraphy to enhance cultural promotion.

## Recommendation

With regard to the integrated development of culture and tourism: it is suggested to create a cultural tourism brand with local identity and to enhance Yiyang's tourism attractiveness and cultural influence by setting up cultural display areas, handicraft experience areas, and cultural tourism routes.

Product design and development: In product design, focus on the deep integration of culture and design, optimize the design with the help of market research and user feedback, strengthen the cultural display of product packaging and brand stories, and hold cultural experience activities.

Product promotion and cultural publicity: local governments should publicize and promote Yiyang culture through cultural activities and new media, increase support for craftsmen and cultural and creative industries, and encourage the younger generation to participate in cultural inheritance and innovation, to promote the inheritance and development of local culture.

Through relevant studies, the researchers hope to better promote the local culture of Yiyang, enhance the design level and market competitiveness of cultural products, and achieve the goal of promoting the cultural identity of Yiyang.





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