



The Cultural Creative Path of Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Study on the Cultural Inheritance of Yingge Masks and Their Integration into Modern Cultural and Creative Design

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Abstract

Background and Aim: This study explores the application of Chaoshan Yingge facial makeup culture in modern cultural and creative product design, aiming to investigate how to achieve the cultural inheritance and innovation of Yingge facial makeup by integrating traditional culture with modern design.

Materials and Methods: The study shows that, as an important local cultural symbol, Chaoshan Yingge facial makeup has great potential in cultural and creative product design. In the design process, it is necessary not only to retain the essence of traditional culture but also to combine modern design elements so that it has both historical and cultural depth and conforms to modern aesthetics and market demand. This study also explores the balance between the inheritance of traditional culture and commercialization, providing feasible design pathways for the future development of Yingge culture.

Results: The results of this study offer a new perspective for the protection and innovation of intangible cultural heritage, especially in the cultural and creative industries, and can promote the protection, inheritance, and marketization of Yingge dance and its related facial makeup culture. Meanwhile, the research findings have important guiding significance for the design and innovative practice of cultural and creative products of intangible cultural heritage.

Conclusion: It is suggested that policymakers pay more attention to the integration with creative industries in cultural heritage protection to promote the continuous inheritance and development of traditional culture.

Keywords: Chaoshan Yingge; Yingge Facial Makeup; Cultural and Creative Product Design; Cultural Inheritance; Cultural Heritage Protection; Design Semiotics

Introduction

The Chaoshan Yingge dance is a large-scale traditional folk culture of the Han Chinese and one of the most important intangible cultural heritages in the Chaoshan area. It originated from folk activities such as welcoming gods, touring gods, and warding off evil spirits. The academic community generally believes that "the origin of Yingge is a flow, not a source" (Wei, 1990). The meaning is that the formation and spread of Yingge do not have a fixed source but have gradually evolved. The spiritual connotations, artistic taste, and value orientations reflected in Yingge profoundly reflect the historical and cultural accumulation of the Chaoshan area and possess significant aesthetic and social value (Yang, 2014). The Yingge facial makeup, as an important cultural symbol in Yingge performance, conveys the characters of the figures and expresses good wishes. However, with the rapid development of society, the symbolic meanings of the graphic symbols in Yingge facial makeup have gradually been forgotten and weakened. Against this background, this study aims to re-examine the cultural connotations of Chaoshan Yingge facial makeup and explore how to re-endow it with new life and significance through the design of cultural and creative products.

In recent years, Yingge has attracted widespread attention on the Internet and has drawn countless tourists to the Chaoshan area to watch it during the Spring Festival, which has undoubtedly promoted the development of local tourism. However, existing practices in cultural heritage protection and cultural and creative design still have shortcomings, especially in integrating traditional Yingge facial makeup culture with modern market demand, where an effective design system has yet to be formed. Through this study, the cultural symbols of Yingge facial makeup will be connected with modern consumer demand, and Yingge cultural elements will be innovatively integrated into the design of cultural and creative products, thus providing new solutions for its protection and inheritance. This study focuses on how to apply the elements of the intangible cultural heritage of Yingge facial makeup to the creative design of cultural products and convey the spiritual connotations of traditional culture to consumers through cultural and





creative products. While enhancing the market competitiveness of cultural and creative products, it also enhances the cultural identity of the Chaoshan area and contributes to the sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage. If this study is successful, it will provide new ideas for product development for entrepreneurs in the Chaoshan area, bring more income, and stimulate further development of tourism in the Chaoshan area, ultimately achieving the goal of protecting and publicizing Yingge culture.

Objectives

To design artistic works and cultural and creative products for the Yingge Festival. Incorporate cultural symbols of Yingge performances into the design of facial makeup art creations, postcards, keychains, and other tourist souvenirs.

Literature review

1. Intangible Cultural Heritage

"Intangible cultural heritage" refers to the intangible cultural legacy that carries the spiritual and cultural values of a nation over thousands of years. Guangdong's intangible cultural heritage is characterized by a strong sense of regional identity. Yingge is the most representative folk culture of the Chaoshan region in Guangdong Province. In 2006, it was included in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage lists approved by the State Council (Xiao and Chen, 2022). In 2020, during his visit to Chaozhou, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized "strengthening the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, and actively cultivating inheritors, allowing intangible cultural heritage to shine with greater brilliance." and others have explored the origin, protection, inheritance, and design innovation of Yingge, providing a theoretical basis for the protection and transmission of Yingge as an intangible cultural heritage (Lei, 2022).

2. Cultural Identity and Product Design

Cultural identity plays a significant role in product design. Place identity arises from the sense of belonging and pride developed through interactions with a place. It reflects the degree to which local cultural attributes match an individual's material and spiritual needs, creating positive psychological attitudes and evaluations (Jin, 2024). Through participating in heritage rituals and sharing cultural stories and legends, individuals develop a sense of belonging to a group identity. In "Portable Culture: Definitions, Classifications, and the '3C Resonance Principle' of Cultural and Creative Products," Chen Zekai highlights the importance of designing products that resonate with consumers' cultural backgrounds and values (Chen, 2017). Similarly, Xu (2018) shows that "Regional Cultural Symbols Based on Psychological Resonance Strategies" can solve issues related to cultural and creative product design and application, which is rooted in achieving effective psychological resonance and leveraging regional cultural symbols. These theories provide critical guidance for the cultural and creative product design of Yingge face painting.

3. Cultural Function

Bronislaw Malinowski proposed that functionalism fundamentally transforms human needs into cultural necessities. Functionalism advocates studying "art" as part of a cultural system. Scholars with a cultural orientation argue that understanding art requires studying the system to which it belongs (Malinowski 1987). Xiang (2023) views the cultural function of Yingge as the "crystallization" and "epitome" of the interactions between individuals and collectives, society, and institutions, over a long historical process. The graphic symbols in Yingge face painting reflect human aspirations for life, with each symbol carrying specific and distinct meanings. The graphics themselves serve as a form of culture with unique functions. Exploring cultural functions offers theoretical support for a deeper understanding of the cultural significance, value, and essence of Yingge and Yingge face painting.

4. Design Semiotics

Design semiotics is closely related to semiotics, applying semiotic principles to the design field by integrating design content and practical methods into semiotics to advance the development of design semiotics (Cong, 2020). Symbols are diverse and polysemic, and when applied to graphic design, they not only carry visual imagery but also convey the intended meaning of the design (Ding, 2021). By interpreting the connotations behind products—such as culture, art, society, stories, and context—these elements can be incorporated into creative product design. Traditional graphic symbols originate from totems, which in turn stem from the interpretations and records of life by early ancestors. Incorporating traditional graphic symbols into design enriches creative materials, highlights ethnic characteristics, and underscores the value





of preserving cultural heritage. The research on design semiotics by these scholars provides essential theoretical guidance for applying the graphic symbols of Yingge face painting to cultural and creative design (Zhu & Luo, 2013).

5. Development of Cultural and Creative Industries for Intangible Cultural Heritage

The cultural and creative industry refers to industrial activities centered on culture and creativity, with a core focus on transforming cultural resources into economically valuable products and services through creative thinking and innovative capabilities. The "Intangible Cultural Heritage + Cultural Creativity" model represents a new path for the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. The deep integration of these two fields not only enriches the forms of intangible cultural heritage, making its transmission and dissemination more vivid and intuitive, but also promotes its popularization and integration into everyday life (Gunnar, 2024). Excellent traditional Chinese culture should be disseminated and promoted through modern cultural and creative products. The studies conducted by numerous scholars on the development of cultural and creative industries for intangible cultural heritage provide important theoretical guidance for this paper's exploration of incorporating Yingge face painting into modern cultural and creative products (Li, Zhou, & Han, 2024).

6. Tourism Souvenirs Based on User Experience Design

In Experience Design, Nathan Shedroff defines the concept of experience design. Noga Collins-Kreiner & Zins (2011) suggest that tourism consumers recall different travel experiences through various souvenirs, meaning that after a trip, people often imbue certain objects with the significance of their travel. In China, some scholars have provided theoretical support and practical results for incorporating user experience design into the design of tourism souvenirs.

Methodology

This study adopts a mixed research methodology, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure multi-angle verification and comprehensive analysis.

1. Literature Review: Literature collected through libraries, online databases, historical museums, and academic journals.

Objective: To gather and analyze materials related to Chaoshan Yingge masks, cultural and creative product design, and intangible cultural heritage preservation.

2. In-depth Interviews: Yingge practitioners in Chaoshan, Yingge performers, Yingge mask painters, cultural experts, and designers.

Objective: To collect insights, understandings, and experiences regarding Yingge masks from different groups, including cultural experts, designers, inheritors, and performers.

3. Participant Observation: Observing the preparation and performance of Yingge dances on-site.

Objective: To document the historical and cultural background, artistic style, local customs, and challenges associated with Yingge masks in performances.

4. Questionnaire Survey: Conducting online surveys targeting both tourists and residents.

Objective: To understand consumer feedback, needs, and preferences regarding cultural and creative products, aligning with market demands.

5. Case Study: Examining cases of Yingge and Yingge mask cultural and creative product designs.

Objective: To analyze the advantages and disadvantages of existing designs, providing references for future Yingge mask cultural and creative product development.

6. Data Analysis Method: Analysis of the collected data.

Objective: To gain an in-depth understanding of the cultural connotations and developmental issues of Yingge through data analysis, to validate the research hypotheses and the effectiveness of the design.

6.1 Data Collection

Quantitative analysis will be conducted through the design of a questionnaire survey to collect quantifiable data on Chaoshan Yingge masks. When evaluating the development of Yingge facial makeup, the focus will be primarily on assessing the design features of the facial makeup, product categories, and product usability, followed by an evaluation of the aesthetic satisfaction with the design.

6.2 Population Scope

The population scope includes: 300 tourists, 100 villagers (including 5 cultural inheritors, 5 Yingge staff members, 50 Yingge performers, and 100 ordinary villagers), 10 cultural department and government agency staff members, 5 artists or designers, and 5 experts or scholars.



6.3 Reliability and Validity Analysis

The questionnaire design aims to understand tourists' interest and awareness of the design direction of Yingge facial makeup, as well as their willingness to purchase and collect such items.

6.3.1 Reliability Analysis: The reliability of the questionnaire will be verified using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is a standard method for assessing the internal consistency of a questionnaire, confirming its reliability by calculating the correlations among the items.

6.3.2 Validity Analysis: The validity of the questionnaire will be verified using the IOC (Item-Objective Congruence) method. Industry experts, cultural inheritors of Yingge, and university professors of art and design will be invited to provide an accurate evaluation of the questionnaire.

Results

This chapter elaborates on the main results of the study, including insights into the perception of the Yingge tourism industry, the opinions of cultural experts and designers on the future development of souvenir design, the symbolic meaning of mask graphics, and the sustainable development concept of Yingge mask cultural creative products.

1. Tourists' Perception of the Yingge Tourism Industry and Yingge Mask Cultural Creative Products

Through the survey and interviews with tourists, the perceptions and evaluations of Chaozhou and Chaozhou Yingge were revealed. The results show that most tourists have a strong interest in Yingge dance performances, stating that the main purpose of visiting Chaozhou is to watch the Yingge dance performances and experience the charm of traditional culture. Tourists suggested enhancing the experience or participation in watching the Yingge dance performances.

Table1. Tourist's Perception

Cultural Understanding of Yingge Masks	Some tourists have a certain level of understanding of the cultural function of Yingge masks, while most tourists have limited awareness. They tend to associate Yingge masks with the symbolic functions and forms of famous theatrical masks.
Tourism Value Assessment of Yingge	Tourists give high ratings to the cultural, artistic, and historical values of Yingge Dance. There is a strong desire to watch Yingge performances, reflecting its appeal as a cultural attraction.
Development Issues of Yingge Dance Performances as a Tourist Activity	While tourists show keen interest in watching Yingge performances, concerns are raised regarding several issues. These include poor transportation conditions in Chaoshan, uncertainty in performance schedules, disorderly performances, incomplete tourist souvenirs, and a lack of distinctiveness in Yingge mask cultural and creative products.
Attitudes Towards Yingge Mask Cultural and Creative Products	The majority of tourists are willing to purchase Yingge mask cultural and creative products that offer strong cultural depth, experiential value, and artistic appeal, which could enhance the overall travel experience.

Source: Author

2. Perspectives of Experts and Designers on Yingge Mask Cultural Creative Products

Experts and designers believe that the design of Yingge cultural and creative products should fully utilize the rich cultural resources of the Chaozhou area, deeply explore the cultural resources of Yingge, and combine traditional culture with modern art design to create cultural and creative products with unique cultural value, thereby enhancing the cultural value and market competitiveness of the products.



Table 2. Tourist's Perception

Advantages of Cultural and Creative Product Design in the Context of Yingge Culture	The cultural and creative product design should leverage the cultural resources of the Chaoshan region, combining traditional culture with modern design. This will create tourist souvenirs that embody unique regional cultural features, enhance the cultural value of the products, and improve their market competitiveness.
How to Integrate Yingge Face Mask Culture into Cultural and Creative Products	In-depth research into the culture of the Chaoshan region and the cultural connotations of Yingge face masks is essential. The traditional cultural essence should be preserved while incorporating modern design elements to create cultural and creative products that reflect both historical and cultural significance and contemporary aesthetic appeal.

Source: Author

3. Artistic Design to Address Color and Pattern Coordination Issues in Cultural and Creative Products

To solve the problems of color and pattern coordination in cultural and creative design, the researcher conducted extensive data collection and design creation. By analyzing the elements of the Chaoshan region, the graphical features of Yingge face masks, and the performance festivals of Yingge, and combining contemporary consumers' emotional needs for "innovation", "uniqueness", "fun", and "cultural value" in cultural products, the researcher decided to use the "Chinese New Year" festival and its twelve zodiac signs, combined with Yingge face masks, as the IP feature (as shown in Figure 2).



Figure 1: Performance of Yingge
Source: Chen, 2024



Figure 2: Yingge illustration image creation
Source: Created by Author, 2024



Figure 3: Illustration creation
Source: Created by Author, 2024



Figure 4: Illustration creation
Source: Created by Author, 2024

4. Improvement of Yingge Cultural Product

4.1 Pattern Design: In terms of pattern design, researchers extracted traditional pattern symbols from Yingge and Yingge masks and passed them on as modern graphic language to meet the aesthetic needs of modern consumers.

4.2 Color Matching: In terms of color matching, researchers use the traditional colors of Yingge opera masks to combine the beauty of traditional charm with modernity. Create a color language that contemporary people can accept.

4.3 Design Concept: Cultural and creative product design emphasizes cultural inheritance and innovation, conveying the cultural values and historical stories of Yingge culture through illustrations.

4.4 Cultural Protection: Researchers emphasized the cultural stories and graphic design symbols of English songs and their facial makeup in illustrations, to promote the protection and inheritance of Yingge.

4.5 Product Evaluation: Through user surveys and market analysis, researchers conducted product evaluations on cultural and creative design products to ensure they meet market demand.



Figure 5 Cultural and creative products
Source: Created by Author, 2024



Conclusion

1. Reinterpretation of the Cultural Value of Yingge Masks

Through an in-depth study of the cultural connotations of Yingge, this research provides a deeper understanding of the cultural value and historical background of Yingge and Yingge masks.

2. Cultural Identity in Cultural and Creative Product Design

The research results indicate that incorporating cultural elements of Yingge and Yingge masks into cultural and creative products enhances users' cultural identity and increases the products' appeal.

3. The Importance of User Experience

The findings demonstrate that cultural and creative products that are engaging, cultural, and unique can meet users' emotional needs, enhance user experience, and improve product competitiveness.

4. Policy Recommendations

Based on the research and findings, this study provides policy recommendations to local governments to support cultural promotion in the Chaoshan region, the development of cultural and creative industries, and the preservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage.

5. Academic and Practical Contributions

This research offers new theoretical insights and case studies for the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, as well as for the design of cultural and creative products.

Recommendation

This research emphasizes the importance of protecting and passing down intangible cultural heritage, particularly the facial makeup art of Yingge, a unique and valuable cultural identity. The study highlights the integration of cultural knowledge into the design and production of creative products to support long-term preservation and innovation. Cultural preservation plays a crucial role in fostering individual pride while promoting social harmony and understanding, which serve as fundamental pillars for developing creative ideas and community collaboration.

Additionally, the study explores the preservation of masks in various cultures, such as African tribal masks used in spiritual rituals and Japanese Noh masks in traditional performing arts. These examples underscore the application of cultural heritage to economic innovation. Presenting these values through unique, creative products not only stimulates local economic growth but also strengthens cultural connections on a global scale. This approach ultimately leads to sustainable development in the future.

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