



Analyze the Consumer Demand and Generation Y's Behavior Toward Ceramic Products

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Abstract

Background and Aim: With Generation Y emerging as the primary consumer group, their behavior and preferences play a critical role in shaping traditional product markets. In Yunnan Province, ceramic products like Jian Shui purple pottery face challenges in appealing to younger consumers. This study aims to explore Generation Y's behavior and consumer demand toward ceramic products, focusing on five key dimensions that influence their purchasing decisions.

Materials and Methods: This research adopts a mixed-methods approach. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 102 Generation Y respondents in Yunnan Province, targeting five core aspects: functionality, cultural symbolism, personalization, environmental sustainability, and aesthetics. In addition, expert interviews with three senior ceramic professionals were conducted to provide qualitative insights and contextual interpretation of survey findings.

Results: The findings indicate that Generation Y consumers prefer ceramic products that combine practicality with emotional and aesthetic value. They seek products that are culturally resonant yet modern, highly personalized, environmentally responsible, and visually minimalistic. These five behavioral dimensions reflect a shift toward identity-driven, ethical, and lifestyle-integrated consumption.

Conclusion: These results confirm that Generation Y consumers evaluate ceramic products through a holistic lens—blending functionality with emotional resonance, heritage with innovation, and ethics with aesthetics. The study offers both theoretical understanding and practical guidance for modernizing traditional ceramic design and marketing strategies to align with generational expectations.

Keywords: Consumer Demand; Ceramic Product; Generation Y's Behavior

Introduction

In recent years, Generation Y—individuals born between 1980 and 1999—has emerged as the leading force in global consumption. This demographic is known for its pursuit of personalization, cultural engagement, ethical awareness, and minimalist aesthetics. In China, these behavioral traits are particularly influential in industries rooted in cultural heritage, such as the ceramic arts. Jian Shui purple pottery, a representative ceramic tradition of Yunnan Province, is facing challenges in attracting this younger audience. While its craftsmanship and history are well-recognized, its traditional styles often fail to resonate with Generation Y consumers, who seek products that align with their lifestyle values and emotional identity. As a result, a clear gap has formed between the offerings of traditional ceramic producers and the expectations of this modern consumer base.

This study addresses that gap by focusing on the consumer demand of Generation Y in relation to ceramic products. The research problem centers on how this generation's behavior influences their perception and selection of traditionally crafted goods. With limited existing research on this topic—especially in the context of localized ceramic industries—this study fills an important theoretical and practical void. The objectives of this study are: (1) to identify five key dimensions that define Generation Y's demand for ceramic products—functionality, cultural symbolism, personalization, environmental sustainability, and aesthetic preference; (2) to analyze how their behavioral traits shape expectations toward product design; and (3) to provide design and marketing strategies to help ceramic producers modernize their offerings while preserving cultural value.

Given the widening gap between traditional ceramic product offerings and the evolving expectations of Generation Y, it becomes necessary to investigate how this demographic perceives and interacts with culturally rooted design. While previous studies have explored generational behavior in mainstream consumer markets, limited attention has been paid to its impact on heritage industries such as ceramics. To address this gap and provide actionable insights for design adaptation and strategic innovation, this study defines the following research objectives.

Objectives

To address the gap between traditional ceramic design and the expectations of Generation Y consumers, this study sets out the following objectives:

1. To investigate the five core dimensions of consumer demand—functionality, cultural symbolism, personalization, environmental sustainability, and aesthetic preference.
2. To analyze how Generation Y's behavior influences ceramic product design expectations across these five dimensions.
3. To propose strategic insights for ceramic producers to adapt traditional crafts to modern market demands while maintaining cultural integrity.

Literature review

Understanding Generation Y's behavior toward ceramic products requires examining how their values influence five critical dimensions of consumer demand. Prior studies offer insights into each of these dimensions.

1. Functionality and Emotional Usability – Norman (1986)

Donald Norman's user-centered design theory introduced the idea that good design must serve both functional and emotional needs. This theory is especially relevant to Generation Y consumers, who demand more than just utility in products—they expect user experience to be intuitive, pleasant, and emotionally satisfying. In the context of ceramic design, this means traditional emphasis on form and craftsmanship must be paired with ergonomic features such as a comfortable grip, appropriate weight balance, and ease of cleaning. Moreover, functionality becomes emotional when the product fits seamlessly into daily routines and conveys a sense of calm and control. This study uses Norman's perspective to understand why Generation Y prioritizes both physical performance and emotional comfort in evaluating ceramic products.

2. Cultural Reinterpretation – Williams (2014)

Williams (2014) emphasizes that modern consumers, particularly younger generations, are not rejecting cultural heritage but seeking ways to reinterpret it within their own identities. This observation directly informs the current study's focus on how Generation Y engages with ceramic design. While older buyers may value accuracy and historical fidelity, younger consumers prefer updated cultural motifs that feel relevant to contemporary life. For example, minimalist linework inspired by traditional calligraphy or abstract reinterpretations of ethnic patterns are more appealing to Generation Y than rigid reproductions of past forms. This supports the idea that cultural content in ceramics should be subtle, symbolic, and harmonized with modern aesthetics to maintain cultural continuity without alienating new users.

3. Personalization and Identity – Fromm & Garton (2013)

Fromm and Garton's (2013) research on millennial marketing highlights the centrality of self-expression in modern consumption. Generation Y expects brands and products to serve as tools for constructing and communicating personal identity. In the case of ceramic products, this translates into a strong demand for personalization—such as engraved text, symbolic icons, birth-sign motifs, or limited-edition releases. These features transform a ceramic piece from a generic object into a personal artifact with emotional significance. This study echoes their findings by showing that consumers in this demographic prefer items that reflect individual milestones or values. Personalization is no longer optional; it is expected as part of a product's intrinsic narrative value.

4. Sustainability as a Standard – Schroeder (2017)

Schroeder (2017) argues that Generation Y is fundamentally different from earlier consumers in viewing sustainability not as a virtue but as a non-negotiable baseline. They are more likely to investigate material sources, production transparency, and product lifecycles before committing to a purchase. This mindset extends to ceramic products, where buyers expect clay to be locally sourced, kilns to be energy-efficient, and packaging to be minimal and recyclable. Importantly, sustainability also intersects with design—products must appear eco-conscious through natural textures or “raw” finishes. In this study, over 77% of respondents rated environmental concerns as a primary factor, reflecting Schroeder's conclusion that ethical production is now assumed rather than praised.

5. Aesthetic Minimalism – Chilton (2012)

Chilton's (2012) study of design culture notes that minimalism has become a dominant aesthetic among younger consumers, especially in relation to home and lifestyle products. This trend is not purely visual—it reflects deeper psychological needs such as balance, emotional clarity, and reduced decision fatigue. Generation Y often equates design quality with simplicity and coherence. In ceramic design, this

translates into a preference for soft forms, neutral or monochrome palettes, and restrained decoration. The current research confirms this trend, with over 75% of survey respondents selecting modern, abstract, or geometric aesthetics. Chilton's insights help explain why "quiet design" resonates: it reflects not only a stylistic choice but also a generational value system rooted in intentional living.

Together, these five strands of literature provide a theoretical foundation that links Generation Y's behavioral tendencies with specific dimensions of ceramic product demand. However, to guide empirical investigation and ensure analytical clarity, these insights must be synthesized into a structured conceptual model. The next section presents the conceptual framework that visually maps the relationship between Generation Y's behavior and the five core demand dimensions explored in this study.

Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in the understanding that Generation Y's behavior directly shapes their demand for traditional ceramic products. Drawing from the reviewed literature, five core demand dimensions are identified as central to this relationship: functionality, cultural symbolism, personalization, environmental sustainability, and aesthetic preference.

The conceptual framework proposes that Generation Y's behavioral traits—such as value-based consumption, identity expression, ethical awareness, and digital fluency—act as influencing factors that inform their evaluation of ceramic products across these five dimensions. These demand dimensions serve as the key variables through which consumer preferences are observed, measured, and interpreted.

By integrating these elements, the framework links behavioral theory with product-specific evaluation criteria, guiding the development of the questionnaire, interview structure, and overall research methodology. It also provides a structure for analyzing the data in a way that reflects the interconnected nature of consumer values and product design.

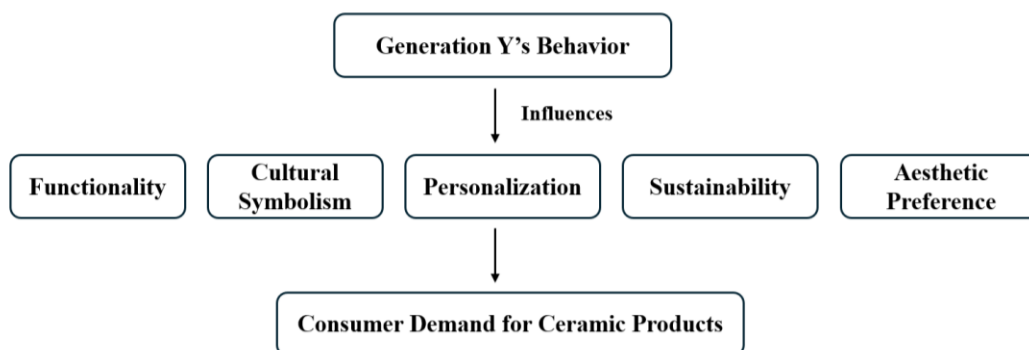


Figure 1 Research Framework
Note: Constructed by the researcher

Building on this conceptual framework, the study requires a research design capable of capturing both the measurable preferences and the contextual motivations of Generation Y consumers. To operationalize the five core demand dimensions and test their relevance in a real-world setting, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach. The following section outlines the methodology used to collect and analyze data, combining quantitative survey instruments with qualitative expert interviews to ensure both breadth and depth of insight.

Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively examine Generation Y's consumer demand for ceramic products. By integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, the research ensures both measurable accuracy and interpretive depth. The selected methods include literature review, questionnaire survey, and expert interviews, each playing a distinct role in supporting the study's framework.

1. Literature Review Method

The literature review method involves systematic collection and analysis of existing scholarly works, aiming to identify theoretical gaps, construct analytical models, and form hypotheses. This method is commonly used in social science and design research to build a foundation for empirical inquiry.

In this study, the literature review was employed to explore five key demand dimensions among Generation Y consumers: functionality, cultural symbolism, personalization, sustainability, and aesthetic preferences. It also helped establish the conceptual framework by identifying the behavioral patterns of Generation Y relevant to ceramic product evaluation. Key theories from Norman (1986), Williams (2014), Fromm & Garton (2013), Schroeder (2017), and Chilton (2012) were integrated to support the design of subsequent research instruments.

2. Questionnaire Survey Method

The questionnaire survey method is a quantitative research technique used to collect structured responses from a target population. It allows researchers to statistically analyze patterns, preferences, and correlations across large samples.

In this study, a structured questionnaire was developed based on the five demand dimensions derived from the literature review. The survey consisted of 20 items, including Likert-scale and multiple-choice questions. It was distributed online using purposive sampling, targeting Generation Y consumers (aged 25–40) in Yunnan Province. A total of 102 valid responses were collected during April 2025. The survey aimed to quantify the relative importance of each demand dimension and identify general consumer behavior trends in the ceramic product market.

3. Expert Interview Method

The expert interview method is a qualitative technique that involves engaging subject-matter specialists to gain in-depth insights, professional interpretations, and contextualized opinions. It is often used to validate or supplement quantitative findings.

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three senior ceramic professionals:

(1) Li Weizhong – Senior Craftsman, Yunnan Province; (2) Ma Xingyun – National Arts and Crafts Artist, Visiting Professor; (3) Zeng Dandan – Independent Ceramic Designer

The interviews were guided by the same five dimensions explored in the survey. Each session lasted 45–60 minutes and was conducted either in person or by phone. Experts were invited to interpret emerging trends in Generation Y's ceramic consumption behavior and provide industry-oriented insights that could enrich data interpretation and validate the conceptual framework.

4. Data Analysis Approach

Data collected from the survey were analyzed using SPSS for descriptive statistics and frequency analysis, helping to reveal patterns across demographic and behavioral variables. Interview data were transcribed and thematically coded to extract meaningful narratives. A cross-analysis was then conducted to identify convergence or divergence between the quantitative and qualitative findings, ensuring triangulation and enhancing the reliability of conclusions.

With the research design in place and data collection completed through structured questionnaires and expert interviews, the next step involves analyzing the findings in alignment with the study's conceptual framework. The following section presents the results derived from both quantitative and qualitative sources, organized according to the five dimensions of consumer demand. These findings provide critical insights into how Generation Y evaluates ceramic products and form the empirical basis for subsequent discussion and practical recommendations.

Results

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the mixed-methods approach introduced in the previous section. The results are organized according to the three research objectives established in the introduction. First, the study identifies the five key demand dimensions through which Generation Y consumers evaluate ceramic products. Second, it analyzes how their specific behavioral patterns influence expectations in product design. Finally, it synthesizes these insights to propose strategic directions for ceramic producers aiming to modernize traditional crafts. The combination of quantitative survey data and qualitative expert interviews provides both statistical trends and contextual understanding, ensuring that the findings are both grounded and actionable.

1. Key Demand Dimensions of Generation Y

The first objective of this study was to identify the key dimensions that define Generation Y's demand for ceramic products. Based on data collected from 102 questionnaire responses and interviews with three senior ceramic experts, five interconnected demand dimensions were confirmed: functionality, cultural symbolism, personalization, environmental sustainability, and aesthetic preference. These

dimensions reflect Generation Y's holistic evaluation model that merges practicality, identity, ethics, and design. Each of these is explored in detail below.

Functionality emerged as a foundational concern, with 69.6% of respondents prioritizing practical use over formality. Participants emphasized ergonomics such as grip comfort, weight distribution, ease of pouring, and cleaning efficiency. Expert Li Weizhong supported this finding by stating that “comfort and usability are no longer separate from beauty in today's ceramic evaluation.” Furthermore, Ma Xingyun introduced the idea of “emotional functionality,” where utility is also defined by how a product feels in daily use—calming, smooth, and emotionally pleasant.

This suggests that Generation Y consumers evaluate product usability not only through physical interaction but also through emotional response, redefining the traditional utilitarian logic. Functionality, for them, becomes the first layer of engagement—setting the stage for deeper symbolic or aesthetic interpretation.

Cultural symbolism was also highly valued, with 67.7% of participants indicating a preference for designs that reflect cultural identity. However, instead of traditional replication, Generation Y prefers abstract or narrative reinterpretations of heritage. Zeng Dandan remarked that “younger consumers don't want to be lectured by tradition—they want to converse with it.” This indicates a demand for ceramics that subtly convey cultural roots while fitting seamlessly into modern lifestyles.

This shift from imitation to interpretation reveals a generational desire for authenticity that feels lived-in rather than imposed. As Sun (2018) noted, cultural identity among younger Chinese consumers often takes the form of quiet symbolism rather than overt heritage declarations.

Personalization ranked even higher, with 70.6% of respondents desiring products that reflect their individual stories, values, or milestones. Popular preferences included custom text engraving, symbolic patterns, color personalization, and limited editions. Zeng emphasized the importance of co-creation, suggesting that consumers increasingly expect a participatory role in design. Li Weizhong described personalization as a way to “turn everyday objects into emotional artifacts.”

This behavior-driven preference reinforces the theory proposed by Fromm and Garton (2013), which highlights self-expression as a dominant motivator among Generation Y consumers. Ceramic producers, therefore, must evolve from being sole creators to facilitators of meaning-making.

Sustainability was treated as an essential baseline by more than 77% of respondents. Concerns included raw material sourcing, energy use during firing, recyclable packaging, and product longevity. Unlike previous generations, Generation Y expects sustainability to be embedded in both the production process and the aesthetic expression of the product. Expert Ma stressed that “long-lasting, reusable design is the new sustainability,” and Zeng noted that even packaging needs to “look ethical” to align with buyers' values. This suggests that sustainability for Generation Y is not just a production principle, but a lifestyle indicator that must be visually and emotionally encoded into the product.

Aesthetic preferences showed a strong trend toward minimalism and geometric forms. Over 75% of respondents favored simple shapes, monochrome palettes, and reduced ornamentation—what Chilton (2012) calls “quiet design.” This trend is not purely visual; it reflects deeper generational values such as emotional clarity, spatial calmness, and intentional living. Experts emphasized that younger consumers are drawn to products that communicate harmony and restraint.

In summary, these five dimensions reveal a complex yet consistent pattern: Generation Y does not view ceramic products through a single lens. Their demand is multifaceted—products must function well, express personal and cultural identity, reflect ethical values, and integrate visually with their living space. This integrated expectation forms the foundation for the next analysis of how behavior shapes product expectations.

2. Behavioral Influence on Ceramic Expectations

The second objective of this study is to analyze how Generation Y's behavior influences their expectations for ceramic product design. While the previous section outlined five core demand dimensions, this section investigates the underlying behavioral patterns that shape these preferences. The findings demonstrate that Generation Y's expectations are not random or superficial, but are rooted in deeply held values and generational traits that redefine how ceramic products are evaluated.

2.1 Personal Identity and Self-Expression

Generation Y consumers prioritize products that reflect their unique identity. This behavior is driven by a strong desire for self-definition and emotional ownership. Rather than viewing ceramics as static objects, they see them as narrative tools—capable of marking life events, expressing beliefs, or

symbolizing personal milestones. As a result, they expect ceramic products to offer customization options and symbolic motifs. The demand for engraved text, limited-edition collections, or co-created designs is a direct extension of their behavior as expressive consumers.

2.2 Cultural Interpretation through Contemporary Lenses

Younger consumers engage with culture not as passive inheritors, but as active interpreters. Their consumption behavior reflects a desire to connect with heritage on their own terms. This translates into a preference for ceramic designs that reinterpret rather than replicate cultural elements. Instead of traditional motifs presented in rigid formats, Generation Y favors abstraction, minimalism, or modern storytelling formats. Their behavior encourages designers to translate tradition into symbols that are subtle, fluid, and emotionally resonant.

2.3 Ethical and Sustainable Mindset

This generation's behavior is also shaped by ethical awareness and environmental responsibility. Unlike previous generations, who viewed sustainability as optional, Generation Y considers it a default expectation. Their values drive them to seek transparency in material sourcing, environmentally friendly production processes, and recyclable packaging. Their ceramic product expectations, therefore, extend beyond aesthetics or function—they want objects that reflect a conscious lifestyle. Even the look and feel of the product must align with eco-friendly narratives.

2.4 Desire for Simplicity and Emotional Clarity

Another behavioral trait that shapes ceramic preferences is Generation Y's pursuit of emotional clarity and lifestyle coherence. Amid constant digital engagement and fast-paced living, they seek calm, intentional design. Their attraction to "quiet design" reflects this value—a behavior rooted in a desire to create emotionally restorative environments. This preference explains their inclination toward monochrome palettes, geometric lines, and clean forms in ceramics. Aesthetic minimalism becomes a behavioral response to psychological overload.

2.5 Digital Fluency and Visual Expectations

Digital behavior also plays a vital role. Generation Y's visual culture—shaped by platforms like Instagram and TikTok—has increased their sensitivity to style, storytelling, and branding. They expect ceramic products not only to function well but to look good online, tell a story, and align with a digital lifestyle. This behavioral pattern pushes ceramic producers to consider how design, packaging, and presentation translate across both physical and digital spaces.

In summary, Generation Y's behavior acts as a powerful driver of ceramic design expectations. Their choices are rooted in identity expression, ethical consciousness, and emotional needs—all of which are manifested through demand for personalization, cultural resonance, sustainability, and visual simplicity. These insights offer ceramic designers a behavioral blueprint to develop more relevant and responsive products.

3. Strategic Implications for Ceramic Development

The third objective of this study is to translate behavioral insights into actionable strategies for ceramic producers, particularly those rooted in traditional practices such as Jian Shui purple pottery. The findings reveal that Generation Y consumers demand more than aesthetic appeal or cultural authenticity—they seek emotional relevance, ethical alignment, and lifestyle integration. To meet these expectations, ceramic designers and marketers must adopt a new mindset that blends traditional craftsmanship with contemporary behavior-driven design logic. The following strategic implications are proposed:

3.1 Embed Personalization into Product Systems

Given Generation Y's strong desire for self-expression, ceramic producers should introduce personalization options as part of their core offering. This may include modular design systems, engraving services, limited-edition series, and co-creation platforms. These strategies allow consumers to become co-authors of their ceramic pieces, deepening emotional engagement and brand loyalty.

3.2 Redesign Cultural Elements through Minimalist Storytelling

Traditional patterns and symbols should not be abandoned but reimaged through modern design languages. By using abstract forms, subtle motifs, or narrative framing, ceramic products can retain cultural depth while appealing to contemporary tastes. For example, regional elements like ethnic patterns or poetry may be incorporated in minimalist typography or geometry rather than ornate illustration. This approach preserves heritage while ensuring visual relevance.

3.3 Prioritize Sustainability as Brand Identity



Sustainability must become a visible, consistent part of product identity. This includes using locally sourced clay, adopting low-emission firing techniques, implementing eco-packaging, and educating customers about the environmental advantages of long-lasting ceramics. These elements should not remain hidden but be clearly communicated through branding and storytelling—on packaging, websites, and social media platforms. Generation Y rewards transparency and expects visible environmental accountability.

3.4 Align Aesthetic Design with Emotional Lifestyle Values

Designers should focus on visual simplicity and emotional clarity. Products with clean lines, monochrome or low-saturation palettes, and calming forms are more likely to be integrated into Generation Y's daily rituals and living environments. Quiet design is not just a trend but a behavioral response to digital overload and visual noise. Ceramic products that contribute to mindful, intentional living will have a stronger appeal and usage continuity.

3.5 Integrate Digital Platforms into Design Communication

Digital presence is crucial—not just for marketing but for shaping perception of the product itself. Generation Y's expectations are filtered through mobile screens and social media platforms. Ceramic brands should curate visually coherent, story-driven online content, use short-form video to highlight craftsmanship, and engage with user-generated content. Moreover, design itself should consider photogenic qualities—such as matte textures, soft color gradients, and shareable packaging aesthetics.

In conclusion, these strategic implications illustrate how traditional ceramic industries can reposition themselves not by abandoning their roots, but by adapting their expressions. By aligning with Generation Y's behavioral logic, producers can ensure cultural continuity, market relevance, and sustainable growth.

The preceding chapter outlined the key findings derived from both quantitative and qualitative data, revealing Generation Y's distinct preferences, behavioral patterns, and their implications for ceramic product design. While these results provide empirical clarity on what this consumer group values, it is equally important to interpret these findings within the broader theoretical and industrial context. The following discussion examines how the study's outcomes align with or challenge existing literature and highlights the theoretical contributions and practical significance of the research.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight a multidimensional understanding of Generation Y's consumer behavior in the context of traditional ceramic products. Compared to previous studies that focused primarily on fast-moving consumer goods or digital branding (e.g., Smith, 2012; Ismail, 2016), this research extends behavioral analysis into the relatively underexplored domain of cultural product design—particularly ceramics.

A key contribution of this study is its integration of design theory and generational behavior into a structured conceptual framework that explains how five distinct demand dimensions emerge from underlying values such as identity expression, ethical awareness, and emotional clarity. While earlier works such as Fromm & Garton (2013) emphasized personalization in general consumer contexts, this study applies that insight specifically to ceramic consumption and links it with co-creation and symbolic narrative in product design. Similarly, Schroeder's (2017) observations about sustainable branding are contextualized here as actionable expectations embedded in both design language and material production processes.

Moreover, this research addresses a notable gap in the literature, namely, the disconnect between traditional craft industries and modern consumer markets. Although authors like Greenhalgh (2003) and Zhang (2015) have documented the historical value of ceramics, few have connected these traditions with behavioral trends among younger generations. This study bridges that divide by showing how cultural products can be reimagined through minimalist aesthetics, ethical narratives, and digital communication strategies.

In short, the study contributes a fresh, behavior-centered perspective on design innovation within heritage industries. It demonstrates that Generation Y's preferences are not superficial trends but are anchored in a broader lifestyle logic that redefines how tradition, ethics, and aesthetics are consumed in the 21st century.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore the consumer demand and behavioral patterns of Generation Y toward ceramic products, with a specific focus on the traditional ceramic industry in Yunnan Province. Through a combination of literature analysis, questionnaire surveys, and expert interviews, the study has achieved the following key conclusions:



Firstly, the research identified five core dimensions of consumer demand among Generation Y: functionality, cultural symbolism, personalization, environmental sustainability, and aesthetic preference. These dimensions reflect the generation's holistic expectations and align with both emotional needs and lifestyle values.

Secondly, the study confirmed that Generation Y's behavior—characterized by identity expression, ethical awareness, and digital fluency—directly influences their product expectations. Their preferences are not based on visual appeal alone, but on deeper psychological and social needs. Traditional ceramic products are evaluated based on how well they resonate with these values.

Thirdly, the study proposed strategic design and marketing implications to help traditional ceramic producers respond to generational shifts. These include embedding personalization into design, modernizing cultural symbols, making sustainability visible, aligning with minimalist aesthetics, and embracing digital storytelling.

In conclusion, the research demonstrates that understanding the behavior of Generation Y is essential for the survival and innovation of heritage crafts. By aligning product design with the values and lifestyles of this consumer group, ceramic producers can bridge the gap between tradition and modernity and open new opportunities for cultural relevance and market sustainability.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, this study recommends that cultural and creative industry policymakers give greater attention to generational behavior in the revitalization of traditional crafts. Local governments and design institutions should support cross-generational product innovation by offering grants, training, and marketing platforms that encourage collaboration between traditional artisans and young designers. Furthermore, design education programs should integrate behavior-based user research methods to help emerging designers create culturally relevant yet contemporary products.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the behavioral design discourse by demonstrating how generational psychology can shape product evaluation in cultural industries. Future research should continue exploring how identity-driven and ethics-based consumption theories intersect with aesthetic and symbolic product design, particularly in non-Western cultural contexts.

In terms of practical application, ceramic producers should treat Generation Y's behavior not as a marketing trend, but as a core reference in product development. By building modular personalization systems, simplifying visual language, and integrating sustainability transparently into branding, ceramic brands can improve product-market fit while preserving craft integrity.

For future research, several directions are recommended. First, studies may expand the sample beyond Yunnan Province to compare regional differences in Generation Y's preferences. Second, cross-generational comparisons with older or younger groups (e.g., Gen Z or Baby Boomers) could offer deeper insights into evolving aesthetic standards. Third, experimental design research could be conducted to test specific co-creation or personalization models. Lastly, digital ethnography could be used to analyze how ceramic products are consumed and represented across online platforms.

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