

Discussion on innovative design ideas of souvenir packaging based on intangible cultural heritage perspective

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Abstract: Taking Shenyang souvenirs as an example, this paper analyzes the integration and embodiment of Manchu culture in the innovative design of souvenir packaging from the perspective of intangible cultural heritage. Based on the current situation of Shenyang tourist souvenirs, this paper explores existing problems in product type, quality and renewal cycle, and proposes innovative design methods. Strive to make the souvenir market more prosperous through innovative development ideas, rich types of souvenirs, innovative packaging design means and so on.

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage; Souvenirs; Package design

1. Introduction

Shenyang has a long cultural history. When innovating the packaging design of souvenirs, we should start from the aspect of intangible cultural heritage symbols. Based on the current situation and problems of tourist souvenirs, we should extract visual symbols, product forms, cultural elements, and so on from the Manchu culture. Through innovative development ideas, enriching the types of souvenirs, and innovating packaging design methods, we can highlight the cultural symbols of "Shenyang intangible cultural heritage" in souvenirs and endow them with local characteristics.^[1]

2. Intangible Cultural Heritage - Continuation of Manchu Culture

Shenyang currently has 9 national intangible cultural heritages, 12 provincial intangible cultural heritages, and 23 municipal intangible cultural heritages. In terms of intangible cultural heritage resources, Shenyang has a variety of forms, including oral literature, opera performances, shadow Paper Cuttings and other projects with cultural characteristics. From the perspective of intangible cultural heritage, Shenyang's intangible cultural heritage integrates the unique styles of multiple ethnic groups such as the Manchu and Xibe, and is closely related to the interactive influence of Central-Plains culture and traditional culture in Northeast China. These cultural treasures have been significantly inherited and reflected in various fields such as cross-talk, Peking Opera, Pingju, brewing, and painting. As an important part of Shenyang's intangible cultural heritage, Manchu culture is a product of the combination of Manchu and Han cultures, which continued and influenced the establishment of the Republic of China.^[2] As early as over 300 years ago, shamanic culture was born, which combined with Mongolian and Han ethnic cultures to form Manchu culture, and later merged with Han culture to ultimately form the unique Manchu Qing culture.^[3]

3. The Current Situation and Problems of Shenyang Tourist Souvenirs

There are various types of tourist souvenirs in Shenyang, such as feather paintings, silk flowers, aged forest candies, red plum monosodium glutamate, etc. Some of them are also exported to overseas markets.^[4] However, in recent years, the tourism souvenir market has been sluggish, and souvenir sales face serious product homogenization problems. The rough production process leads to low overall quality and a lack of innovation, making it difficult to meet the expectations of modern consumers. Therefore, it is difficult to effectively stimulate tourists' purchasing desire. Survey data shows that there are various factors that affect souvenir sales, with uniqueness accounting for 46%, brand influence accounting for 15%, pricing factors accounting for 32%, and exterior design accounting for only 7%. It can be seen that product features have the greatest impact on consumer purchasing desire, and there are also the following

issues with souvenir design.

3.1 Serious homogenization

At present, the lack of creativity and single design of souvenirs have become common problems in the domestic tourism market, and Shenyang tourism souvenirs have not been spared. For example, representative scenic spots such as Beiling, Shenyang Forbidden City, Zhou Enlai's former study site, and Zhang's mansion are all the same in terms of souvenirs, with serious homogenization and no distinctive features, which naturally hinders tourists' desire to purchase.

3.2 Poor product quality

Commemorative objects not only embody profound symbols of local culture, but their economic value should not be underestimated. For tourists, they are not only a choice for collectibles, but also can inspire beautiful memories. Therefore, the quality requirements for monuments are quite high^[5]. But in fact, the current souvenirs on the market are poorly made and of poor quality. Taking the Shenyang Palace Museum as an example, it was the residence of Qing emperors before entering the country. As one of the ancient cities with a long history, it has been preserved, highlighting the unique symbol of Manchu culture. The Palace Museum commemorative medals are the main commemorative commodities, which are not only expensive but also of relatively poor quality, making it difficult to match the high prices.

3.3 Type update cycle is relatively long

As the birthplace of Manchu culture, Shenyang should be given high standards in terms of the style and production quality of commemorative items. Innovative elements should be added to souvenirs to make them a brand new product, which will not only impress tourists and stimulate their desire to purchase, but also promote the development of Manchu culture. However, the current types of souvenirs are relatively single and have a long update cycle, which does not fully reflect the regional characteristics of the birthplace of Qing culture, and the artistic charm of souvenirs cannot be demonstrated.^[6]

3.4 Lack of government attention

At present, China's tertiary industry is developing rapidly, and tourism plays a great role in promoting local economic development. In the development of the tourism industry, the proportion of souvenir sales is relatively small, so the government often turns a blind eye to it, which makes market management relatively loose. Generally speaking, the quality of souvenirs is not high and the variety appears to be limited. In addition, the implementation effect of relevant policies is not ideal, and the investment of market funds is seriously insufficient. Therefore, the intervention of local governments is particularly urgent. Deeply and clearly recognize the role of souvenir sales in the development of the tourism industry, as well as the economic benefits it brings.

4. Principles of packaging design for tourist souvenirs

In souvenir sales, packaging is no longer solely for use, protection, and promotion, but more importantly, to convey cultural connotations, promote tourist attractions, and so on. If the excavation of cultural and historical factors in the design of souvenir packaging is neglected, it will inevitably affect the communication effect of souvenirs. In packaging design, the following principles should be followed.

4.1 Highlighting Regional Culture and Ethnic Characteristics

In traditional packaging in our country, natural materials such as grass rope and oil paper are mainly used, or bamboo weaving materials and bamboo tubes are used as packaging containers. Although the packaging is relatively simple, it can reflect the harmony between humans and nature. From this, it can be seen that packaging with ethnic cultural characteristics is not about hot stamping, silver patterns, or bright red and purple, but about finding answers in traditional culture and conveying spiritual imagery through visual language.

4.2 Keeping up with the times

In people's minds, souvenirs are often viewed as traditional snacks, specialties, clothing, and so on. While these are the foundation of souvenirs, they should also keep up with the times and incorporate contemporary features to attract more attention from tourists, especially young tourists. Taking Japanese packaging design as an example, it not only reflects the "Japanese style" through patterns, text, and colors, retaining the traditional flavor, but also incorporates simple Western modern text and patterns into it, showcasing the modernity of Japanese design through forms such as dots, lines, and surfaces.^[7]

4.3 Integration of Content and Form

The packaging of souvenirs, as a form of product expression, should be connected to the intrinsic nature of the product. This not only reflects the cultural connotation of the product itself, but also enhances the value of souvenirs. In this regard, the principle of integrating content and form should be adhered to, and the two should not be viewed separately. In addition, souvenir packaging can also reflect its grade and value, and different packaging can increase the price gradient of products.

5. Innovative design methods for souvenir packaging from the perspective of intangible cultural heritage

In response to the current development status of tourism souvenirs in Shenyang, we should start from the perspective of cultural symbols in intangible cultural heritage, integrate creative elements, fully reflect Manchu culture in souvenirs, stimulate tourists' desire to purchase, and promote the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage.

5.1 Innovative development ideas

In Shenyang, the rich natural scenery and profound cultural heritage have become the cornerstone of souvenir design. Integrating unique cultural elements of the region into design is the core goal of developing souvenirs. The excavation of local intangible cultural heritage enables souvenirs to be presented in tangible or intangible forms, thus becoming an important way to inherit local history and culture. Secondly, in the process of product form innovation, it is not only necessary to integrate traditional cultural elements, but also to keep up with the trend of the times, conform to modern lifestyles and aesthetic trends, so as to meet the diversified needs of consumers in the market. For example, the "Shaolin Temple Zen Wuwu Doll" series of souvenirs cleverly showcases the symbol of "Shaolin Kung Fu" and accurately conveys its cultural connotations. Through summarization, refinement, and transformation, they are organically combined with the practical functions in the products, showcasing the unique Shaolin culture in a simple cartoon image.

In addition, in product innovation design, consumer demand should also be taken as the guide. According to surveys, current consumers are not "interested" in pure ethnic handicrafts. Only by designing souvenirs with distinctive characteristics of the times and personalities based on cultural inheritance can they stand out, take the lead, and gain favor. Creative design can be carried out from multiple perspectives such as handmade art, local specialties, and cultural relic replication, aiming to meet the actual needs of consumers. In this way, the unique charm and modernity of the product can be highlighted, and tourist souvenirs and their packaging can also be creatively created, thereby attracting more attention and love from tourists.

5.2 Extracting Visual Elements

5.2.1 Display Form Factors

The intangible cultural heritage resources in Shenyang can be explored and displayed from multiple perspectives, covering fields such as plastic arts and ethnic identity. Taking Guan's shadow puppet and Manchu Paper Cuttings as examples, these works fully reflect the local social style and cultural heritage. In addition, the "Galaha" and "Xianbei Beast" toys of the Xibe ethnic group not only showcase distinct ethnic characteristics, but also contain certain market development potential. These cultural resources can be transformed into tourist souvenirs, such as shadow puppets, Paper Cuttings and postcards, and new souvenirs with unique local style can be created through innovative design and shape optimization, combined with a variety of processes and materials.

5.2.2 Reflect color factors

There are numerous ancient buildings in the Northeast region, and the architectural color paintings have diverse patterns and unique techniques, such as ink topped gold, gold topped ink, etc. The colors are very bright and rich. It is possible to develop patterns or colors from such resources and integrate them into souvenir packaging design, which can make the products more appealing to the Northeast. In addition, it satisfies the tradition of valuing whiteness, which represents the meaning of purity and auspiciousness; The clothing of the Xibe ethnic group likes to use colors such as blue, blue, brown, etc. These color factors can be reflected in tourist souvenirs, thus reflecting the ethnic cultural color;

5.2.3 Spread emotional connotations

Shaman culture is the origin of Manchu culture, and shamanic songs are the main form of worshipping gods with strong regional characteristics; The "Four Wonders of Cuisine" in Dongguan are traditional cooking techniques that also have historical and cultural heritage; The brewing technology of Laolongkou Baijiu has a long history... Through the creative development of the above resources, the souvenirs can be more regional and unique, and the unique emotional connotation of Shenyang can be spread to tourists around the world through graphics, colors, symbols and other factors [8].

5.3 Expanding the types of souvenirs

5.3.1 Ornamental souvenirs

There are various types of ornamental souvenirs in the Shenyang area, such as feather paintings, inlaid paintings, Guan's shadow puppets, etc., all of which are important elements of intangible cultural heritage. In innovative design souvenirs, Manchu cultural elements can be cleverly integrated to showcase their unique charm. For example, the costumes, flags, and accessories of the Eight Banners can be reinterpreted to design various grid dolls with strong Manchu characteristics, as shown in Figure 1. This approach allows Manchu culture to be revitalized in modern design.



Figure 1 Manchu Gege Doll

5.3.2 Practical Souvenirs



Figure 2: New Qipao

This type of souvenir usually involves multiple fields, such as food, beverages, clothing, and accessories. In terms of food and beverages, tourists visiting places such as Bawang Temple, Bulaolin, Majia Shaomai, and Laolongkou Winery can choose products with local characteristics. In terms of clothing and accessories, Manchu clothing has attracted much attention due to its reputation both domestically and internationally. Therefore, innovative design can be based on these traditional elements

to create a brand new image and enhance market competitiveness. For example, in the innovation process of fashion design, the symbolic elements of Manchu culture can be cleverly integrated into it. Following the principle of "white for auspiciousness and green for elegance", a new type of cheongsam with modern characteristics and Qing culture was made, as shown in Figure 2.

5.3.3 Interactive souvenirs

This type of souvenir is guided by traditional local culture and art, and is developed through the use of cultural and artistic resources from the perspective of intangible cultural heritage to create tourism souvenirs with local cultural semantics, which have strong uniqueness. For example, Northeast Drum, Toyota Luozi, Shenyang Crosstalk, Shaman Song, and so on, these long-standing forms of cultural heritage are not only spread through stage performances, but can also be promoted through souvenirs as media such as postcards, audio-visual products, and picture books. At the same time, utilizing modern technology and online communication platforms such as online games, audio files, video materials, and specialized websites can also attract more young tourists to pay attention to and participate. In addition, the types of souvenirs can be expanded with the help of story images, knives, creative clothing, etc., making them more interactive. The innovation of this design concept breaks the constraints of materials, craftsmanship, and dissemination forms in the past, greatly extending the breadth of the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage.^[9]

5.4 Highlighting Manchu cultural elements

The main elements of Manchu culture are reflected through graphics and colors. When innovating graphic design, it is important to have a certain understanding of totems. In Qing culture, totemic symbols are displayed through the following elements: riding and shooting patterns. The Manchu people are a nation on horseback, and horseback shooting is highly representative of the Manchu people. The Manchu riding and shooting patterns can be incorporated into souvenir designs; The second is the clothing pattern. Manchu clothing is mainly qipao, with a style that leans towards daily life. Although simple, it is exquisite. Among many styles, the "pipa lapel" is undoubtedly one of the most representative styles. Its appearance is similar to that of a pipa, both simple and elegant, hence it is widely used. Another style often revolves around animals and plants as the main themes, showcasing human reverence and exploration of the natural world, especially in primitive societies where the phenomenon of nature worship is particularly evident. The crow is regarded as a symbol in Qing culture and is known as the "divine crow", representing the divine bird that guards the family. This pattern usually appears on souvenirs, symbolizing auspiciousness and blessings, while also effectively showcasing the essence of Qing culture to tourists.

When innovating color design, one should have an understanding of Manchu colors, which are often mentioned in Qing dynasty dramas, including the colors of the Eight Banners and commonly used folk colors. Among them, the Eight Banners ultimately became the Four Banners, namely Yellow, White, Red, and Blue. In order to meet the needs of development, the design of inlaid yellow, white, red, and blue was added to the existing four solid color flags in the later stage, and the addition of borders made the flags more layered. The popular colors among the people are mainly white and cyan, which are closely related to the geographical environment of the Manchu people. Shamanism is the belief system of the Manchu people, while Changbai Mountain is regarded as a symbol of gods. Therefore, white is endowed with sacred and auspicious symbolic meanings; Blue represents the color of mountains, symbolizing elegance, simplicity, and brightness. In the innovative design of souvenirs, the above-mentioned ethnic colors can be added to make the product more ethnic and cultural.

5.5 Innovative souvenir packaging design methods

5.5.1 Provide opportunities for tourists to participate

When a monument attracts the attention of tourists, they usually hope to gain a deeper understanding of various information about the product, such as its materials and craftsmanship. Taking Shenyang's "noodle soup" as an example, in addition to showcasing the unique charm of the local area, it also provides tourists with the opportunity to participate in the production hands-on. By participating in such an experience, tourists can gain a deeper feeling, therefore, this activity is widely loved and welcomed by tourists. Figure 3 shows the production site of "noodle soup".



Figure 3: Production of "Noodle Soup"

5.5.2 Innovation in Manufacturing Materials and Processes

There are various forms of souvenirs, and in order to enhance their innovation, it is necessary to add new materials and technologies on the basis of traditional craftsmanship, so that products can be displayed to tourists in new forms to meet the needs of different tourists. For the traditional souvenir making process, only by adhering to the principle of "taking the essence and discarding the dross" can it break through the cocoon, establish a high image of Shenyang souvenirs, and make it take root in the souvenir market by strengthening publicity.

5.5.3 Highlighting Regional Cultural Symbols

In the design of souvenirs in Shenyang, regional culture refers to the Manchu culture. In the process of innovative design, Manchu culture can be integrated into souvenir design. For example, the pattern of traditional cheongsam can be displayed through seals, and tourists can choose their favorite seal styles. At the same time, tourists can also choose the pattern of the flag head according to their personal preferences and match it with their favorite colors, and even freely combine various colors from the Eight Banners. In this way, the Manchu culture was able to be vividly reflected in the form of souvenirs.^[10]

6. Conclusion

In summary, homogenization of tourist souvenirs has become a common phenomenon at present. In order to stimulate tourists' desire to purchase, attention should be paid to product packaging design. From the perspective of intangible cultural heritage, integrating local historical culture and regional characteristics can enhance the cultural connotation and value of products, thereby creating higher product added value, meeting consumers' aesthetic and spiritual needs, and further expanding the tourism souvenir market.

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