

Research on Creative Product Design of Regional Specialized Tourism Culture in Southern China

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Abstract: *This paper explores the design of tourism cultural and creative products in southern China, with the objective of investigating the transformation of the region's abundant cultural resources into appealing tourism cultural and creative products through the application of innovative design methodologies. The study commenced with an extensive review of the extant literature on southern regional cultural characteristics and tourism cultural and creative products. This was followed by a thorough analysis of the prevailing issues in the design of tourism cultural and creative products. The study then provided a comprehensive overview of the status quo and characteristics of tourism cultural and creative product design in the southern region. The paper proposes a design strategy that emphasizes the refinement of cultural connotation, functional innovation, beautification of form, material upgrading, and branding. The study's findings indicate that the design of tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region should prioritize the excavation and preservation of local cultural characteristics, the integration of modern design concepts and technologies, the innovation of product forms and functions, the enhancement of material quality, and the creation of an appealing brand image. Furthermore, the cultural interpretation and experience design of the products should be reinforced to amplify their cultural dissemination effect. This study provides a theoretical foundation and a practical reference point for promoting innovation and industrial development in the design of tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region. This is of great significance for enhancing regional cultural soft power and tourism competitiveness.*

Keywords: The Southern Region, Tourist Cultures, Creative Products, Design Research, cultural innovation

1. Research background

As an important region with deep cultural heritage and beautiful natural landscape, the southern region has witnessed a booming tourism industry in recent years. According to the data of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the number of domestic tourists in the southern region will reach 3.86 billion in 2022, accounting for 45.7% of the national total, and the total income from tourism will be 3.2 trillion yuan, an increase of 18.3% year-on-year. In this context, as an important carrier for spreading local culture and enhancing tourism experience, the design research of tourism cultural and creative products has been receiving more and more attention from both academics and the industry.

The research on creative product design of tourism culture in the southern region is of great significance in promoting regional cultural heritage and innovation and enhancing the competitiveness of tourism industry. First of all, it helps to deeply explore and utilize the rich cultural resources in the southern region, transform traditional cultural elements into modern tourism products through innovative design, and realize the living heritage of culture. Secondly, high-quality tourism cultural and creative products can enhance tourists' experience and satisfaction, increase tourism consumption and promote regional economic development. Moreover, unique tourism cultural and creative products can shape the local cultural brand and enhance the soft power of regional culture and international influence.

This study will focus on the design of tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region of China, analyzing the characteristics of cultural resources in the southern region, sorting out the current situation of tourism cultural and creative product design, and conducting in-depth discussions on how to innovate design methods, enhance the cultural connotation of products and market competitiveness. The study will propose design strategies from the dimensions of cultural connotation refinement, functional innovation, form beautification, material upgrading, branding, etc., and analyze them with specific cases, in order to provide theoretical guidance and practical reference for the design of tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region, and to promote the sustainable development of the regional tourism and cultural industry.

2. Analysis of Characteristic Tourism and Cultural Resources in Southern China

2.1 Characterization of the natural landscape of the southern region

The natural landscape of the southern region is rich and diversified, with unique geographical environment and climate characteristics, providing rich materials for the design of tourism and cultural creative products. The region mainly includes the vast area of Jiangnan, covering subtropical and tropical climate zones, with hilly and mountainous terrain, numerous rivers and lakes, and dense vegetation.

The natural landscape of the southern region is mainly characterized by the following: first, abundant landscape resources. The karst landforms represented by Guilin, Huangshan and Zhangjiajie have created unique landscapes and attracted a large number of tourists from home and abroad. Secondly, the water system is well developed. The Yangtze River, Pearl River and other large river basins have nurtured rich wetland ecosystems and water town culture, and the landscape of lakes such as Dongting Lake and Poyang Lake is also very distinctive. Moreover, there is rich biodiversity. The warm and humid climate and dense vegetation in the southern region harbor rich animal and plant resources, such as the tropical rain forest ecosystems in Wuyi Mountain and Xishuangbanna, which are famous in the world.

These natural landscape features provide a rich source of inspiration for the design of tourism cultural and creative products, such as the integration of landscape elements, water village scenery, tropical plants, etc. into the product design, which not only reflects the local characteristics, but also conveys the unique natural flavor of the South.

2.2 Characterization of the human landscape in the southern region

The southern region, with its rich and varied humanistic landscape, is one of the important birthplaces of Chinese civilization and has profound historical and cultural deposits. The humanistic landscape of this region is characterized by the following features. There are many remains of ancient civilization. The southern region is an important birthplace of Chinese

ancient civilization, such as the ancient ruins of Sanxingdui, which reflect the brilliant achievements of early Chinese civilization. In addition, many ancient cities and towns, such as the ancient city of Lijiang, have preserved a wealth of historical buildings and traditional streets and lanes, demonstrating the unique humanistic features of the region (Cai,2024).

The southern region serves as one of the cradles of Buddhist and Taoist cultures, where religious cultural relics offer abundant elements and inspiration for the design of tourism-related cultural and creative products (Ni,2022). The religious cultural significance in this area is profound, as exemplified by Mount Putuo, located in Fujian and Zhejiang provinces. As a renowned religious and cultural sanctuary, it attracts a large number of believers and tourists, making it an important destination for pilgrimage and sightseeing.

The southern region is famous for its beautiful landscapes, which have attracted many literati since ancient times, leaving behind a wealth of poems and allusions, such as Su Dongpo's "I want to compare the West Lake to the West" and Li Bai's "A remnant of the sun spreads over the water", etc., which profoundly depict the natural scenery and human feelings of the South. These literary works profoundly depict the natural scenery and humanistic feelings of the South. Incorporating these cultural elements into the design of tourism cultural and creative products not only enhances the cultural heritage and artistic value of the products, but also enables tourists to feel the unique poetic atmosphere and historical flavor of the South in the process of using or collecting them.

Modern history is rich in relics. The southern region has played an important role in the history of modern China, such as the Xinhai Revolution, the War of Resistance against Japan and other major historical events have left a deep imprint here. These monuments and memorial sites provide unique themes and materials for the design of tourism cultural and creative products.

2.3 Characteristics of folk culture in the southern region

Folk culture in the southern region is rich and colorful, reflecting the distinctive lifestyle and traditional customs of each place. These folk culture characteristics provide a rich source of creativity for the design of tourism cultural and creative products.

Diversity of ethnic cultures. The southern region is the settlement of China's ethnic minorities, such as the Zhuang in Yunnan and Guangxi, all of which have unique cultural traditions of dress, food, festivals and so on. For example, the three ways of tea in Dali, Yunnan, and the Miao silver jewelry in Qiongzhusi, Guizhou, have become a very distinctive symbol of tourism culture. These ethnic and cultural elements provide rich inspiration and materials for the design of tourism cultural and creative products.

Many traditional craftsmanship techniques and pattern elements in southern China, such as Jingdezhen porcelain, Suzhou embroidery, and Guangdong Cantonese enamel porcelain, can be skillfully incorporated into the design of modern tourism-related cultural and creative products. This approach not only helps preserve and promote traditional culture but also satisfies the consumption needs of contemporary consumers (Zhang,2025). These remarkable traditional handicrafts constitute essential components of China's intangible cultural heritage. Local food culture is unique. Southern food culture is rich, such as Sichuan's spicy hot pot, Guangdong's Cantonese morning tea, Fujian's southern Fujian snacks, etc., all with distinctive local characteristics. These unique culinary cultures can become important elements in the design of tourism cultural and creative products, such as the development of special food packaging, kitchenware and other related products.

Folklore festivals are very rich. There are many unique folk festivals all over the south, such as the Zhuang Song Wei Festival in Guangxi and the Year of the Miao in Guizhou, etc. These festivals are rich in folk cultural connotations. Incorporating these festival elements into the design of tourism cultural and creative products can enhance the cultural connotation and local characteristics of the products.

3. The Current Situation of Creative Product Design for Tourism Culture in The Southern Regional Specialties

3.1 Types of cultural and creative products for tourism in the southern region

Tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region are rich in types, covering a variety of industries, showing strong regional characteristics. The integration and innovation of different business forms promote the development of tourism cultural and creative products, so that they can meet the needs of tourists while also promoting the dissemination and inheritance of local culture.

The category of daily decorations constitutes a significant portion of the southern region's tourism cultural and creative market, accounting for approximately 40% of the total. This category primarily encompasses a wide range of handicrafts and decorative items that reflect local characteristics, such as depictions of Guilin landscapes, Jingdezhen ceramics, and Suzhou embroidery. These products typically integrate traditional craftsmanship with modern design principles, preserving traditional cultural elements while also being functional and aesthetically pleasing.

In the category of stationery and office supplies, designers frequently integrate local elements, such as landscape features and architectural symbols, into product designs. This approach not only enhances the practical functionality of the products but also infuses them with cultural significance (Qu,2021). Products in this category account for approximately 25% of the market share and primarily consist of items like bookmarks, pen holders, and folders, which serve as essential office supplies.

Clothing accessories make up roughly 20% of the market, featuring a diverse range of items including T-shirts, hats, silk scarves, and bracelets. These products are not only popular for their practicality and style but also for their unique designs that incorporate distinctive local patterns and elements. For instance, some accessories feature motifs inspired by Miao silverware, which is renowned for its intricate craftsmanship and cultural significance in certain regions of China. Others draw inspiration from the breathtaking natural scenery of Huangshan, particularly its iconic sea of clouds, adding an element of natural beauty to the design.

The food packaging category accounts for approximately 15% of the market share and primarily involves the design of packaging for local specialty foods. For instance, products such as Hangzhou West Lake Lotus Root Vermicelli and Guangdong slow-cooked soup leverage exquisite packaging designs to not only enhance their product image but also transform them into highly distinctive tourism cultural and creative products.

3.2 Design characteristics of tourism cultural creative products in the southern region

The design of tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region presents some distinctive features. It reflects the designers' innovative utilization of local cultural resources and their response to market demand. (Li,2022).

Focus on the refinement and utilization of cultural symbols. Designers usually extract representative cultural symbols from the rich natural and human resources of the southern region, such as the karst landforms of Guilin's landscapes and the ink and wash mood of Suzhou's gardens, etc., and skillfully integrate these symbols into product design. For example, some stationery products are designed with simplified landscape outlines, which not only reflect the local characteristics, but also have a modern sense.

The design of creative tourism and cultural products in the southern region focuses on the integration of functionality and aesthetics, and strengthens its practical value while ensuring the aesthetics of the product's appearance. For example, the design of tea sets not only integrates the elements of local tea culture, but also combines the needs of modern lifestyles to create easy-to-carry tea sets, making them both culturally rich and practical. This design concept not only enhances the market competitiveness of the product, but also provides tourists with more convenient and cultural experience value of tourism souvenirs, and further promotes the dissemination and development of regional culture.

Modern designers emphasize diversity and localization in their choice of materials, incorporating local specialties such as Jingdezhen ceramics and Suzhou silk, while actively exploring the application of new materials to create unique visual and tactile experiences. For example, the combination of traditional bamboo weaving techniques with modern environmental materials allows the product to retain its traditional flavor while conforming to contemporary environmental concepts. This kind of innovation not only enriches the design language, but also promotes the modern interpretation of traditional crafts, realizes the integration of cultural heritage and sustainable development, and gives deeper value and meaning to the design.

Focus on product serialization and branding design. To enhance product recognition and market competitiveness, many designers and enterprises have increasingly emphasized product serialization design and branding strategies. For instance, by adopting the theme of "Jiangnan water town," a series of products such as stationery, clothing, and home furnishings can be designed to create a cohesive visual style and unified brand image (Tang,2013).

3.3 Problems of tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region

Although the design of tourism and cultural creative products in southern regions has achieved certain accomplishments, several pressing issues still require resolution. Currently, product designs focused on cultural excavation remain inadequate. Many works remain at a superficial level of symbolic application without delving into the deeper connotations of local culture. The lack of thorough analysis of cultural essence renders these designs overly formalistic, making it challenging to convey the unique charm and spiritual value of regional characteristics. For instance, some landscape-themed cultural and creative products merely replicate landscape patterns, lacking a profound interpretation of their cultural significance, which results in limited cultural value (He,2021). Such superficial cultural expression not only diminishes the cultural impact of the products but also undermines their market competitiveness. To enhance design quality, it is essential to conduct more rigorous research and interpretation of local culture, ensuring that products genuinely embody cultural values and foster emotional resonance and user identification.

Current tourism cultural and creative products are generally marked by homogeneity. Many designs in the market lack innovation and exhibit similar forms, making it challenging to highlight local characteristics and diminishing their appeal to consumers. For instance,

common souvenirs such as postcards and keychains in scenic areas often share similar design concepts and fail to effectively express regional culture. According to a survey, approximately 60% of tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region display varying degrees of homogeneity. This not only undermines the market competitiveness of these products but also restricts the dissemination and recognition of local culture. There is an urgent need to enhance cultural depth and product differentiation through innovative design. In terms of practicality, innovation remains insufficient. Some products place excessive emphasis on design aesthetics while neglecting the innovation of practical functions, leading to reduced usability. For example, certain decorative yet functional handicrafts struggle to meet the needs of modern consumers (Chen,2023).

Some tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region suffer from lax quality control in the selection of materials and production processes, resulting in uneven product quality and affecting consumers' experience and overall satisfaction. Due to the lack of uniformity in craftsmanship standards, some products have poor durability and inferior materials, which in turn damage brand image and market competitiveness. According to statistics, about 30% of tourism cultural and creative products are subject to consumer complaints due to quality problems, which not only reduces tourists' trust in the products, but also hinders the sustainable development of the regional tourism cultural and creative industry to a certain extent.

Insufficient marketing and promotion efforts. Due to the lack of effective marketing strategies and channels, many excellent tourism cultural and creative products are difficult to reach the target consumer groups, resulting in poor market performance. According to the survey, only about 20% of the tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region have specialized marketing and promotion plans.

4. The Southern Region Characteristics of Tourism Cultural and Creative Product Design Strategy

4.1 Highlighting regional cultural characteristics

In the design of creative tourism and cultural products with southern regional characteristics, highlighting regional cultural characteristics is one of the key strategies. The southern region has rich and diverse cultural resources, including unique architectural styles, traditional crafts, folk customs, historical sites and so on. Designers should dig deep into these cultural elements, skillfully integrated into the product design, so that the product becomes a powerful carrier of local culture.

Take Chaozhou, Guangdong Province as an example, its unique Chao embroidery, wood carving, ceramics and other traditional crafts can become a source of inspiration for tourism cultural and creative products. Designers can apply the exquisite patterns of Chaozhou embroidery to the design of handbags, scarves and other daily necessities, or incorporate ceramic elements into the innovative design of tea sets and tableware. This can not only inherit and promote traditional culture, but also provide tourists with unique cultural experiences and souvenirs (Zhao & Wang,2020).

The rich natural landscape and ecological resources in the southern region not only constitute important humanistic features, but also provide unique design inspiration for tourism and cultural creative products. By artistically integrating representative landscape elements such as Guilin landscape and Wuyi Mountain tea plantation into the product design, the product can be

endowed with distinctive regional characteristics, enhancing its cultural value and market competitiveness. This design not only shows the natural beauty of the southern region, but also effectively enhances the recognition and attractiveness of the product, so that tourists can deeply feel the unique charm of the local culture in the process of consumption.

4.2 Integration of modern design elements

On the basis of retaining traditional cultural characteristics, incorporating modern design elements is an important strategy for enhancing the attractiveness of tourism cultural and creative products with southern regional characteristics. The introduction of modern design elements can revitalize traditional culture and better meet the aesthetic needs and usage habits of contemporary consumers.

One effective approach is to reinterpret traditional handicrafts through the integration of modern materials and techniques. For instance, leveraging 3D printing technology to replicate and innovate traditional wood carvings or stone carvings not only preserves the essence of traditional craftsmanship but also imparts these products with new forms and functions (Liao&Su&Liu,2025). In other words, by utilizing this technological method, it becomes possible to reproduce the styles of traditional wood or stone carvings while modifying and enhancing them, thus maintaining the core values of traditional craftsmanship while introducing innovative elements. This approach not only retains the essence of traditional craftsmanship but also facilitates another strategy: combining traditional patterns or techniques with modern design language. For example, traditional embroidery arts such as Hunan embroidery and Miao embroidery can be integrated with minimalist modern clothing designs to create fashionable items that embody both cultural heritage and contemporary aesthetic appeal.

Through innovative design techniques, the cultural symbols or elements of the southern region can be modernized. For example, the characteristic eaves and window panes of Lingnan architecture are abstracted and applied to the design of modern home furnishings or accessories, which not only retains the cultural connotation, but also has a sense of modernity and practicality. This fusion of tradition and modernity can not only attract young consumers, but also open up a new way for the inheritance and innovation of traditional culture (Chen,2020).

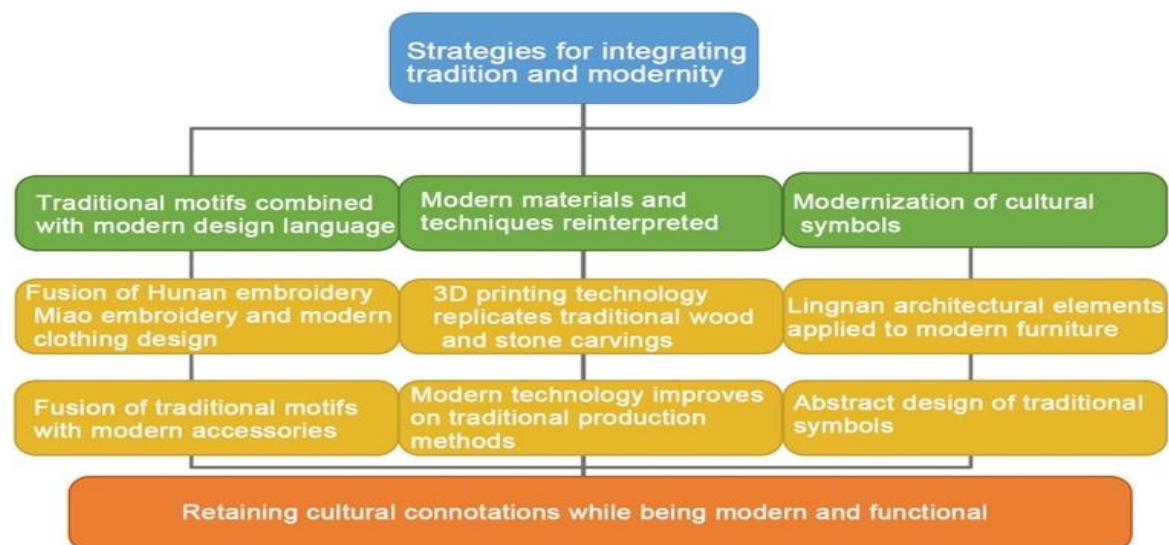


Figure 1: Modern design integration strategy for characteristic tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region

4.3 Focus on the combination of practicality and aesthetics

The combination of practicality and aesthetics is the key to enhance the value and attractiveness of the products in the design of tourism cultural and creative products with southern regional characteristics. Excellent tourism cultural and creative products should not only have a strong cultural flavor and aesthetic sense, but also have practical use value to meet the diversified needs of tourists (Su,2023).

In terms of practicality, designers should fully consider the function of the product and the use of the scene. For example, portable rain gear with southern characteristics can be designed to cope with the rainy climate of the south, but also incorporate local cultural elements. Another example is to incorporate the architectural features of Hakka Tulou into the design of thermos cups or lunch boxes, which not only retains the cultural characteristics, but also has practical value.

In terms of aesthetics, we should pay attention to the visual appeal and cultural connotation of the product. The beauty of the product can be enhanced by the exquisite and unique rich colors. For example, applying the elements of Huashan petroglyphs of Guangxi Zhuang to the design of silk scarf or T-shirt can not only show the unique ethnic culture, but also meet the demand of tourists for fashionable single product.

By integrating practicality and aesthetics, tourism cultural creative products can enhance market competitiveness while increasing the effect of cultural dissemination. This design strategy not only meets the actual needs of tourists, but also provides a unique cultural experience, so that they can feel the charm of regional culture in the consumption process. At the same time, the combination of aesthetics and practicality of the products helps to enhance the emotional identity of tourists and leave deep travel memories, thus promoting the dissemination and inheritance of culture and improving the attractiveness and brand influence of tourist destinations.

4.4 Strengthening branding and marketing

In the design of tourism cultural and creative products with southern regional characteristics, strengthening brand building and marketing is an important strategy to enhance the competitiveness and influence of products. Excellent brand can not only improve product recognition and attraction, but also give the product more cultural connotation and emotional value.

We should pay attention to the brand image. By creating a unique brand identity, packaging design and visual system, it can highlight the cultural characteristics of the southern region. For example, using Lingnan gardens as inspiration, designing a brand image with southern characteristics, applying it to product packaging and promotional materials to enhance brand recognition and cultural connotations.

Emphasis should be placed on the creation and dissemination of brand stories. Can be centered on the history and culture of the southern region, folklore or local characteristics, to create an attractive brand story. Such as Hunan Xiangxi Miao culture as the background, create a series of cultural and creative products with mysterious colors, and through multimedia means to tell the relevant cultural stories, to attract the interest of consumers and emotional resonance.

Also focus on the integration of online and offline marketing channels. With the help of social media, short video platforms and other new media channels, the design concept and cultural

connotation of the products can be displayed to attract young consumers. At the same time, in tourist attractions, cultural venues to set up physical experience stores, so that tourists feel the quality of products and cultural atmosphere. Through the online and offline linkage, all-round enhancement, enhance the effect of product sales.

5. Conclusions

The study focuses on the in-depth discussion of tourism cultural and creative product design in southern China, and puts forward a series of innovative design strategies by analyzing the rich cultural resources and the development status of tourism industry in the southern region. The research results show that the design of tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region should focus on highlighting regional cultural characteristics, integrating modern design elements, emphasizing the combination of practicality and aesthetics, and strengthening brand building and marketing. Showing regional cultural characteristics is the core of the design of tourism cultural and creative products in the southern region. Designers create products rich in local characteristics and cultural connotations by digging into the unique architectural styles, traditional crafts, folk customs and other cultural elements of the southern region. This not only helps to inherit and promote traditional culture, but also provides unique cultural experience for tourists.

Incorporating modern design elements is the key to enhancing the attractiveness of products. By combining traditional cultural elements with modern design language and reinterpreting traditional crafts with new technology, innovative products with cultural heritage and contemporary aesthetics are created. This fusion of tradition and modernity not only attracts a wider range of consumer groups, but also opens up new ways for the inheritance and innovation of traditional culture.

Focusing on the combination of practicality and aesthetics is an important strategy to enhance the value of products. Excellent tourism cultural and creative products should have both practical use value and aesthetic value to meet the diversified needs of tourists. Through skillful design, we can create aesthetic and practical products to enhance their market competitiveness and cultural dissemination effect.

Strengthening brand building and marketing is a necessary means to enhance the influence of products. By shaping a unique brand image, creating an attractive brand story, and integrating online and offline marketing channels, all-round enhancement to improve product sales results. The study provides a theoretical basis and practical reference for promoting the innovation and industrial development of tourism cultural and creative product design in the southern region. Future research can further explore the application of digital technology in the design of tourism cultural and creative products, and how to better combine cultural experience with product design to adapt to the ever-changing market demand. Through continuous innovation and optimization of design strategies, the characteristic tourism cultural and creative products of the southern region will certainly play a more important role in inheriting culture, promoting tourism development and enhancing regional competitiveness.

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