

Methods for Design Cultural and Creative Products from the Perspective of User Experience

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Abstract: At present, the value of cultural propaganda and economic growth brought by the cultural and creative industry cannot be underestimated. Considering from the perspective of user experience, designers can increase the added value of cultural and creative products and enhance their market competitiveness. Through analyzing user experience, the core cultural connotation of products can be established; reasonable products can be customized for target groups; the visual perception of products can be optimized and the integrated cultural brand images, which is very important for the future development of the cultural and creative industry, can be created. Designers should consider how to create products which are popular with the audience and enhance the influence of the cultural industry from users' perspective. Only the identification and analysis of user experience can improve the market competitiveness of cultural and creative products.

1. Introduction

As a cultural and economic phenomenon, cultural consumption has become a new social hot spot. In this context, although cultural and creative products in our country are continually inheriting and innovating, the homogenization of products leads to unsatisfactory sales volume. Museums represented by the Palace Museum create products with good reputation, but the design of cultural and creative products in many other areas fails to make innovation. Similar or even identical products are pasted with local cultural symbols; the lack of creative design leads to consumers' aesthetic fatigue. The research on the design methods of cultural and creative products in China is still limited in cultural resources and semiotics; study from the perspective of user experience is relatively scarce. In addition to the basic function of cultural inheritance, cultural and creative products also need to consider the user's point of view and to meet the needs of the customers. Therefore, this paper analyzes the design of cultural and creative products from the perspective of user experience.

2. The Importance of User Experience in Cultural and Creative Product Design

The concept of "User Experience" appeared in the 1990s; it was created by Donald Norman, an American scholar. User experience refers to users' subjective feelings after using the product; it includes emotions, beliefs, preferences, cognitive impressions, physiological and psychological reactions and other aspects.^[1] User experience affects the loyalty and trust of users, which is directly related to the reputation of products and even the earnings of enterprises.

3. The Design Focus of User Experience in the Designing of Cultural and Creative Products

To explore the design of cultural and creative products from the perspective of user experience, the most important thing is to understand users' needs. Through the questionnaire, the author found out that main factors affecting target customers' purchasing behaviors are creativity, appearance, commemorative significance, practicability and price. The data is shown in Figure 1. These factors constitute the complete users' experience on cultural and creative products, which can be roughly

divided into three parts: creativity, friendliness and vision.

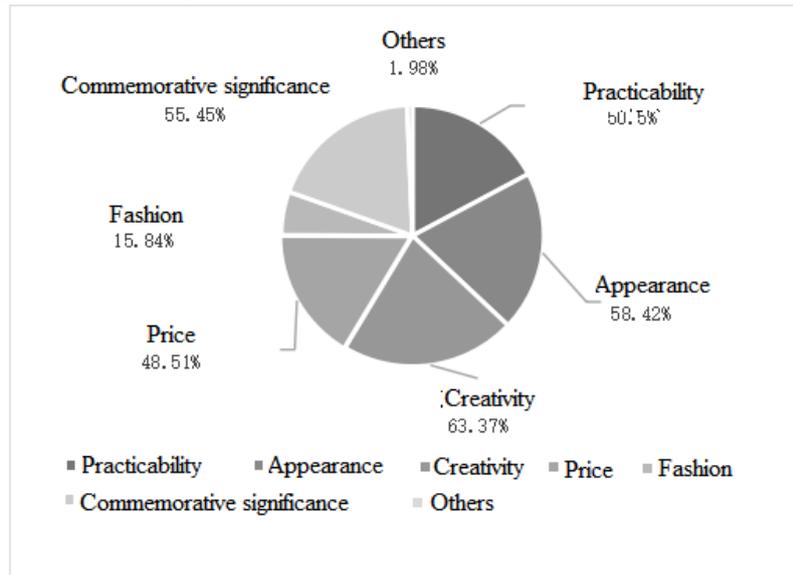


Figure 1. Questionnaire on “Factors Affecting the Purchase of Cultural and Creative Products”

3.1 Creativity

Creativity is the primary characteristic of cultural and creative products. Innovation is the key factor for the success of products. Designers should integrate cultural contents, rationally select design elements, skillfully combine typical images, and highlight the uniqueness of the product, so as to realize the unique, creative and impressive design. In addition, today, people who are keen on cultural consumption are mainly young people and people with higher cultural levels. The youth like to pursue creative elements such as “fashionable”, “lovely” and “funny” images which conform to the current trend. They are good at breaking conventions. Consumers with higher cultural level have higher aesthetic standards; they love traditional culture and pay attention to the quality of cultural consumption. Therefore, the design of cultural and creative products should seek key innovation points according to the characteristics and needs of different groups of customers, so as to win a certain proportion of the market.

3.2 Friendliness

The friendliness of cultural and creative products includes three parts: the product is easy to learn and use in its functional operation; it has clear information; it can satisfy users’ emotional needs. When designing cultural and creative products, designers need to select content information. The process can be considered from following aspects: keep to cultural themes, guiding action and unifying cognition. Keeping to cultural themes means to consider, “what cultural information can the product help users to understand?” Guiding action means, in the culture presentation, the designers should consider, “if the user knows this information, what will he do with it?” This enables the audience to grasp the focus of cultural information and purchase the product. Unifying cognition means that the information level presented conforms to the user’s cognition and should be consistent with the characteristics of the product, so as to avoid misunderstanding and disoperation, and increase users’ good impression on the product.

3.3 Visual performance

On the basis of satisfying the function of cultural and creative products, designers should also attach equal importance to the visual perception. Customers need to feel the existence of “beauty” in the process of using. Their first impressions on cultural and creative products are determined by the visual performance of products. Designers need to extract cultural elements to establish product features, promote and beautify these features, and provide a complete and matching visual design scheme. In order to bring users aesthetic experience, they need to create unique sensory experience,

such as the unique use of color or tactile comfort when design products. They also need to create unique or interesting psychological experience, and to consider how to make culture meet consumers' emotional needs.^[2] These external forms of products should be linked with cultural information through visual information, so as to win users' satisfaction and acceptance.

4. Methods for Design Cultural and Creative Products Based on User Experience

Based on above factors, it can be seen that to satisfy users' psychological needs on consumption, designers can not only propagate the cultural connotation, or simply copy relevant cultural elements. In today's cultural consumption industry, only by standing on users' point of view and earnestly understanding their real needs, can designers really arouse their interests and stimulate their purchasing behaviors.

4.1 Establishing the core cultural connotation of products

The core cultural connotation of the product is the soul of the product. All excellent cultural and products have profound cultural connotations or unique cultural demands. Only by accurately evaluating the core cultural values and correctly integrating the orientation of culture and the purchasing psychology of target groups can the cultural spirit of products be brought into full play.

From cultural products to cultural industries, it is necessary to export cultural connotations and to confirm to the product culture in order to increase the added content of the product. The purpose of cultural and creative products is not only to meet peoples' needs, but also to create economic benefits for manufacturers. The most important thing is to inherit and carry forward the essence of human culture.^[3] The success of the new landmark KAWS sculpture at IFS in Changsha has attracted many young people. KAWS designers integrate many street wall paintings, posters and sculptures to form their own graffiti culture. All their products have iconic, X shaped cartoon eyes. This kind of graffiti cultural spirit with lovely rebellion has been playing a role in KAWS's creation of all cultural products. In order to promote its art and culture, KAWS brings these giant dolls to exhibitions around the world or tailor sculptures for different places according to their topographic and architectural characteristics. When people see these giant "landscape" dolls suddenly appearing in the street, KAWS will surely be able to pass on the art trend culture to everyone standing under these sculpture dolls and looking up, as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2. KAWS Giant Doll

4.2 Customizing reasonable products for the target group

To design cultural and creative products, designers need to find corresponding consumer groups according to the cultural characteristics of the product, analyze their requirements, and customize relevant product categories.^[4] The coordination and consistency of target groups help designers to understand target users' preferences on function, shape, color and texture at any time. The following Table analyses different products which attract the two groups of customers with higher purchasing power.

Table 1. Classification and Analysis of Target Groups

target group	Young Customers		Highly-educated Customers	
traits	pursuing novelty; being good at breaking conventions		being highly educated; loving traditional culture and pursuing high-quality life	
case	 <p>The Palace Museum: “Plaque Series” three-dimensional, resin fridge magnet</p>	 <p>Starbucks: pink “Cat’s Claw” double glass</p>	 <p>Life Deduction: gourd shaped travel tea set made by white stone</p>	 <p>Palace Museum: “All the best” aromatherapy furnace seat</p>
	<p>The classical plaques such as “Cold Palace” and “Royal Dining Room” are linked with household appliances, which bring joy to life while sharing gifts from the history and culture of the Palace Museum.</p>	<p>Starbucks produced this cup in the Cherry Blossom Season this year, which combines the vivid and lovely three-dimensional cat claws with the anti-scalding double-layer glass. It is sought after by young consumers.</p>	<p>The combination of Chinese gourd culture and tea culture: the shape of gourd represents the meaning of fortune; the material of white stone represents good wishes. The combination of bamboo and porcelain in the pot cover not only represents the tranquility of tea tasting, but also conforms to ergonomics and can avoid burning hands.</p>	<p>The design inspiration comes from the Palace Museum collection Jian-shen Zhu’s Scroll Painting on Good Omens and the Light Green, Silk Riding Jacket with Flower Patterns on Good Luck. The image of ripe persimmon is integrated with the pot. The lid of the pot is the pattern of persimmon pedicels, which is integrated into the meaning of “all the best”.</p>

4.3 Optimizing the visual perception of the product

Modern people’s aesthetics is changing, so both the cultural connotation of products and the shape design need to be optimized and redesigned to cater the current public aesthetics.^[5] In fact, optimizing the cultural connotation of products is to expand the culture in depth. Designers need to extract and redevelop cultural elements to acquire the visual characteristics of a new unified system. In the modern cultural market economy, the cultural and economic values should be realized by cultural and creative products. In the process of optimization, we should pay attention to following aspects. Can the cultural propaganda influence users’ cognitive behaviors? We should not deviate from its cultural orientation. Can the current technology meet users’ requirements? Designers also need to understand audiences’ preferences and taboos for traditional culture. For example, the Palace Museum and Tencent Photoshop Everyday software jointly released the “Palace Museum National Treasure Lip Gloss”, creating a “national treasure color” lipstick in the new media.^[6] When users change their lip colors, they can browse interesting knowledge on national treasures. They not only have the pleasant experience on the color aesthetics of the ancient people, but also feel the historical and cultural flavor behind the color. The optimization of modeling is not only the visual packaging process for external products. The development of the times can affect people’s aesthetic tendencies; we need to further get rid of the stale and bring forth the fresh and deepen the reform.^[7]



Figure 3. The Palace Museum “National Treasure” Lip Gloss

4.4 Creating the integrated cultural brand image

Nowadays, in the management of cultural industry, after satisfying customers’ demand for quality and appearance, the pursuit for user experience will be transferred to the brand silently. The power of cultural brand has become the criterion for users to judge the credibility of a product. By creating and establishing a brand image, the cultural influence and economic growth rate of the industry can be enhanced, and the behaviors of consumers can be influenced and shaped. ^[8] For example, in the questionnaire on the brand effects of theme parks shown in Figure 4, people have the deepest impression on Disney among these amusement parks.

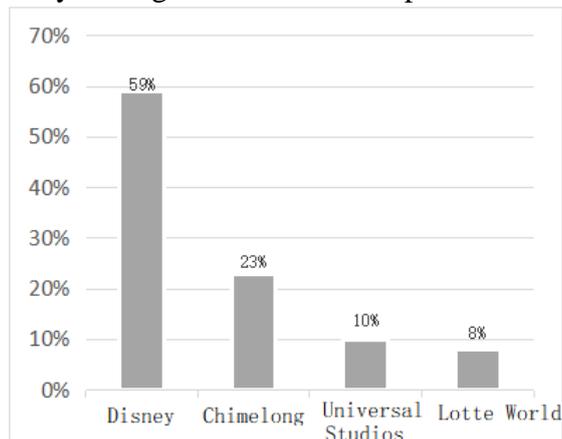


Figure 4. Cognition for Theme Parks

In fact, the consumption of cultural and creative products is a reciprocal relationship layer. By creating a suitable cultural image, designers can cultivate and guide the audiences’ taste of consumer goods and improve the overall aesthetic quality of the target consumer groups. Emotion is the main component of human consciousness. Products do not have emotion; but they can be connected with human beings in some way, and then have a certain sense of life. ^[9] This connection requires designers to establish a cultural brand image. By analyzing Disney products, we can see that all kinds of products created by Disney for brand culture can convey its own cultural images and characteristics. The Spider-Man Children’s Umbrella they developed is shown in Figure 5. Aiming at the heroic protectionist cultural image it propagated, Disney skillfully combines an umbrella with the shelter protects children from rain and wind. The slogan is, “I am in charge of rain and wind; you are in charge of handsome”. The product has six strong umbrella bones to support the waterproof cloth. Unique smooth umbrella caps and round umbrella beads protect children from being poked. The brilliant Spider-Man shape and durable quality are constructed together, which fully reflects Disney’s strict quality control and high content of cultural image output. ^[10] This kind of promotion and sale of products cater to the consumption feeling of Marvel’s target group, and successfully propagates the cultural connotation of the brand, which meets the practical and aesthetic needs of today.



Figure 5. Disney Store, Children's Umbrella with the Image of "Spider-Man" in The Avengers of Marvel

5. Conclusion

From the perspective of user experience, this paper explores how to further develop the design of cultural and creative product in today's society with abundant cultural consumption products. The purpose of design is to solve daily problems; designers need to constantly pay attention to our physical and mental development. The fundamental core of design is to "serve people and people-oriented". Products are slowly changing from materialization to non-materialization. In the post-information society, it is very important to consider the development of creative products from the perspective of users. Both the localized design and the transformation of foreign styles should be identified and analyzed based on user experience. Only in this way can we really improve the market competitiveness of cultural and creative products.

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