

Research on the Design of Regional Cultural Creative IP Characters from the Perspective of Semiotics

Wanheng Zhong¹, Xingyuan Zhang²

1.Guangzhou Huashang Vocational College, Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province, 511300;

2.Huizhou Economics and Polytechnic College, Huizhou City, Guangdong Province, 516057

Abstract: This paper aims to explore the principles and applications of semiotics in the design of regional cultural and creative intellectual property (IP) characters. Symbols, as meaningful and functional signs, transmit specific cultural information by relating to people's cognition and cultural experiences. The design of regional cultural and creative IP characters draws upon regional culture and imaginative creativity to construct characters with unique personalities and regional characteristics. Through the practical application of the design of Chaozhou tea culture IP characters, symbolized character images are closely linked to regional culture, conveying the spirit and distinctive features of the region's culture while enhancing the brand's allure and market value.

Keywords: Regional culture; Semiotics; Cultural and creative design; IP character design

Fund Project:

Research on the practical teaching methods of higher vocational Art and design major under the background of market economyHSJGKT202223

Introduction

Symbols are meaningful and functional signs that possess shared significance. They establish connections with people's cognition and cultural experiences through concrete material entities or graphical representations. Symbols can take the form of linguistic elements such as words, signs, and icons, as well as non-linguistic elements like images, colors, movements, and gestures. Through the use and interpretation of symbols, individuals can comprehend the profound cultural, historical, and social implications they represent, thereby transmitting specific cultural information. Semiotics, an interdisciplinary field of study, aims to investigate and understand the nature, structure, function, and meaning of symbols. In the early 20th century, Peirce, one of the founders of semiotics, presented a comprehensive theoretical framework, delving into the classification, significance, and the relationship between symbols and cognition. Furthermore, Peirce asserted that the meaning conveyed by symbols is constructed within social and cultural contexts rather than inherent to the symbols themselves. In the design of regional cultural and creative IP characters, adopting a semiotic perspective can assist designers in uncovering the symbolic systems and representational meanings embedded in regional culture, thereby facilitating the creation of character images that effectively convey specific cultural connotations.

1. Designing Regional Cultural and Creative IP Characters

The concept of designing regional cultural and creative intellectual property (IP) characters revolves around the integration of regional culture and imaginative creativity to create character images with distinctive personalities and regional characteristics. The design of regional cultural and creative IP characters emphasizes the unique features of the region, with their appearance, attire, styling, and behavior reflecting the specific region's culture, traditions, and customs. While preserving traditional regional culture, these characters also incorporate modern elements, making local culture more contemporary and appealing. By endowing the characters with storylines and anthropomorphic emotional expressions, a resonance and emotional connection can be established

with the audience. Characters with different personalities, abilities, and traits not only cater to the preferences and demands of diverse viewers but also open up possibilities for interactivity, collaboration, and cross-domain cooperation.

These character images not only showcase and disseminate the unique charm of regional culture through their appearance, characteristics, storytelling, and values but also drive regional development and economic growth. Their development brings vitality and growth to the local tourism industry, creates employment opportunities, stimulates consumer spending, and enhances the regional brand image. Through the development of regional cultural and creative IP, the local economy can achieve diversification, increased income, and an improved quality of life for residents.

2. Construction Methods of Cultural and Creative Symbols

Peirce conceptualized symbols as a triangular relationship comprising three elements: the Sign, the Object, and the Interpretant. Symbols, acting as mediators, establish a connection between the object being referred to and the interpreter. Based on Peirce's semiotic theory, the construction of symbols can be categorized into the following types (Figure 1) :

2.1 Construction of the Icon:

Icon are represented based on their similarity to the object being referred to. There must be certain shared features between the symbol and the object, which are perceptible and evident. This enables the symbol to denote or represent the object through its appearance, shape, structure, and other characteristics. The construction process involves selecting a symbol to represent the object and deriving a correlated interpretation from the object.

2.2 Construction of the Index:

Index are represented based on their direct connection to the object being referred to. There exists a physical or causal relationship between the symbol and the object, allowing the receiver to perceive the symbol and associate it with the object. The construction process involves first selecting a reference object from the meaning and interpretation, and then determining the symbol based on this reference object.

2.3 Construction of the Symbols:

Symbols are represented based on agreed-upon and shared meanings. The connection between the symbol and the object being referred to is based on social and cultural consensus and conventions. The meaning of a symbol is not direct or inherent but rather assigned and endowed. The construction process involves selecting new symbols from the existing body of shared knowledge within society and subsequently establishing the object under consideration.

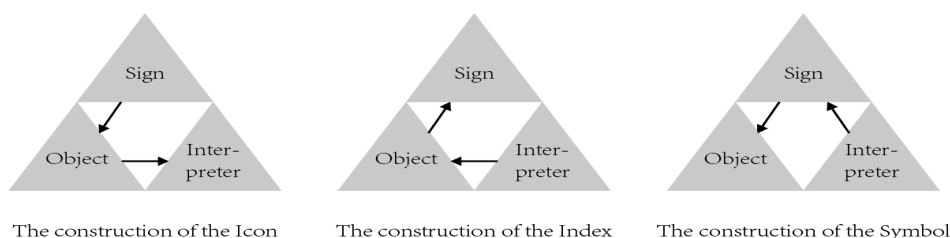


Figure 1: Three Construction Methods of Symbols

In the design of regional cultural and creative IP characters, the Icon can be employed to create character images that are associated with regional characteristics by incorporating shapes, images, and other elements that are reminiscent of the region. The Index can serve as guiding and indicative elements in regional cultural and creative IP character design, conveying specific information about the regional culture. Moreover, by utilizing social and cultural consensus and conventions, symbolic character images can be created, endowing the characters with specific symbolic meanings to enhance their cultural connotations and convey specific values.

3. Principles of IP Character Design with Regional Cultural Symbols

3.1 Meaning and Symbolism:

Regional cultural IP characters should embody the meaning and symbolism of symbols, conveying the specific culture and values of a particular region through their appearance, clothing, behavior, and other aspects. During the design process, consideration should be given to the symbols and symbolic elements of the regional culture, making them representative and significant, capturing the attention and understanding of the audience regarding the regional culture.

3.2 Accuracy and Recognizability of Symbols:

As the foundation of IP character design, designers should ensure the accurate representation of symbols. The visual appearance,

form, and details of the symbols should align with the regional cultural symbols, enabling people to quickly identify and understand the cultural background represented by the character.

3.3 Memorability and Uniqueness of Symbols:

Symbols, as visual or linguistic representations, possess distinctive forms and meanings, evoking associations and memories of specific things, concepts, or emotions. The appearance, form, and distinctive features of the regional cultural IP characters should distinguish them from other characters and images, creating lasting impressions and connections in people's minds.

3.4 Emotional Appeal and Storytelling:

Symbols, as a visual, auditory, or symbolic expression, have the ability to evoke emotional resonance and tell stories. In the design of regional cultural IP characters, consideration should be given to emotional resonance with the audience. The character's story, experiences, and traits should align with the emotional needs and values of the audience, fostering emotional connections and resonance, thereby increasing the audience's affection and attention towards the character.

3.5 Scalability and Diversity:

Regional cultural IP character design should have scalability and diversity to adapt to different forms of presentation and media. The character design should be flexible, allowing for expansion and extension across different media, platforms, and scenarios, increasing the character's influence and market value.

4. Practical Application of Symbolic IP Character Design in Chaozhou Tea Culture

Symbolization, which involves giving meaning to perceptions, is a fundamental way in which humans interact with experiences. The process of symbolization, which involves assigning significance to a particular object or concept, can be summarized as follows: concept formation, symbol selection, attribution of meaning to symbols, symbol dissemination and cognition, and symbol perpetuation. Chaozhou, as one of the tea-producing regions in China, has a rich history of tea culture. Throughout the development of tea culture, certain iconic symbols have become closely associated with Chaozhou's tea culture.

The IP character "Xiao Lv Fu" is a creative design that personifies Chaozhou's tea culture, taking inspiration from the tea-picking girls in the Tea Garden Island region of Chaozhou, Guangdong Province (Figure2).



Figure 2: "Xiao Lv Fu" - IP Character of Chaozhou Tea Garden

The IP character "Xiao Lv Fu" is designed with a focus on Chaozhou tea culture, incorporating symbolic and abstract elements of tea into the overall attire, including the headpiece, hairstyle, and dress. The clothing reflects a combination of the local tea-picking farmers' work attire and contemporary aesthetics, making the character visually distinct, easily recognizable, and appealing to the younger generation. This design captures the essence and characteristics of the local culture, conveying the spirit and uniqueness of Chaozhou tea culture.

The "Xiao Lv Fu" IP character is closely intertwined with the stories and traditions of Chaozhou tea culture. Through narrative storytelling and plot development, the character is intricately connected to Chaozhou tea culture, showcasing its values and bringing the Chaozhou tea culture IP character into people's lives. This enables more individuals to understand, appreciate, and actively participate in the preservation and promotion of Chaozhou tea culture.

With its rich story world and background, the "Xiao Lv Fu" IP character possesses versatility and adaptability across various forms of expression and media. It can be extended to commercial fields and brand marketing, incorporating the character into product design, brand image shaping, advertising campaigns, and more. This application brings a unique regional cultural flavor and emotional resonance to businesses and brands, enhancing their attractiveness and market value (Figure3).

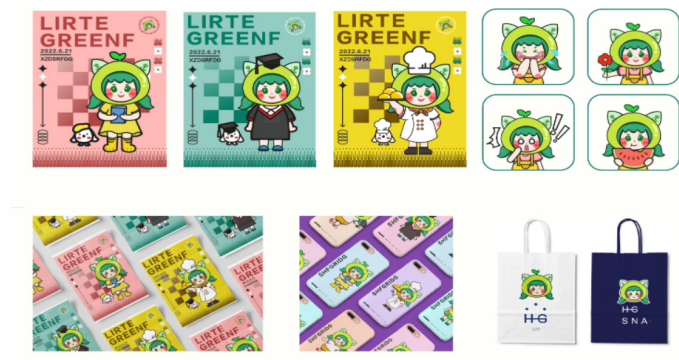


Figure 3 - "Xiao Lv Fu" IP Character Merchandise Design

5. Conclusion

This article has discussed the concept and significance of semiotics and the importance of semiotics in the design of regional cultural symbolization in the context of geographical cultural IP character design. Symbols, as shared and culturally rooted signs, can convey specific cultural information through their use and interpretation. In the design of regional cultural IP characters, the visual and symbolic features of symbols are utilized to create characters with distinct regional characteristics and convey the cultural essence of a specific region.

In the case of Chaozhou tea culture IP character design, the creation process and practical application of the "Xiao Lv Fu" IP character were introduced. Through symbolization design techniques, Chaozhou tea culture is combined with regional characteristics to create a character with both regional cultural features and a modern touch. This IP character, through storytelling and background setting, is closely linked to Chaozhou tea culture, conveying the values and uniqueness of Chaozhou tea culture. Furthermore, this IP character has expandability and adaptability, making it applicable to commercial fields and brand marketing, enhancing brand appeal and market value.

References:

- [1] Zheng Binghan, Zhong Lei. Design Strategies of Urban IP Images from the Perspective of Semiotics: A Case Study of Tianjin City. *Journal of Shijiazhuang University*, 2023(03), 156-160.
- [2] Kou Kai. Research on Tourist Experience of Night Tourism from the Perspective of Semiotics: A Case Study of Qilou Old Street in Haikou City, Hainan Province. *Western Tourism*, 2023(05), 45-47.
- [3] Li Ziyi. Research on the Construction of Visual Image of Qinhuangdao City from the Perspective of Semiotics. (Master's thesis). *Liaoning University of Science and Technology*, 2021(08).
- [4] Tian Yuan, Wang Xiayu, Dong Shiwei. Research on the Application of Regional Cultural Symbols in Qihexian Cultural and Creative Design. *Design*, 2022(15), 14-16.