

The Value of Semiotic Theory in Brand Image Design - A Case Study of Xunpu Women's Folk Culture

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Abstract: Background: In recent years, under the trend of China's rapid development of domestic tourism and the recovery of national consumption, Quanzhou leveraged the "World Cultural Heritage" to build up its brand image. Thus, the number of tourists increased significantly from the year 2021 to 2024. In 2024, the city received a total of 818.12 million tourists during the Spring Festival holiday, of which Xunpu Village received 361,000, while Xunpu Village received 361,000 tourists, a year-on-year increase of 600%. The fast-growing tourist audience group puts forward new challenges for the brand transformation and dissemination of the culture of Xunpu. **Purpose:** This study is dedicated to examine the value of Xunpu Women's Folk Culture in brand image design through specific analysis of Quanzhou folk culture. To explore the cultural and tourism policies, and industry trends, focusing on the artistic characteristics of Xunpu women's Head-pinned flowers and peripatetic headdresses, residential "Oyster Shell Houses", and habits of life, in order to develop a path to combine Xunpu women's culture and the current brand image. **Methods:** Qualitative induction, field study and literature analysis are used to analyze the role played by the brand image of Xunpu women in the transformation of local cultural resources. **Results:** The article systematically proposes that intangible cultural heritage has evolved into a crucial cultural capital, and the image of Xunpu women, as a carrier of Quanzhou's local culture. It is an important link in achieving the resource transformation of Quanzhou's local intangible cultural heritage. **Conclusion:** To create a unique brand image of the region, which not only helps to highlight the influence of the culture of Xunpu women, but also deepens the cognition, better disseminates the local culture, strengthens the concept of protection and inheritance of the cultural spirit. Thus, skillfully integrates the culture of Xunpu women into the brand image to become an important initiative, and promote the local culture's development and inheritance in modern society.

Keywords: Xunpu Women's Folk Culture; brand image; symbol; brand value; Quanzhou

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

In recent years, the improvement, efficiency enhancement, transformation and upgrading of cultural tourism have become the focus of China's economic and social development. The mutual promotion of culture and tourism has gradually evolved into a systematic process, becoming an urgent need for local economic development and social transformation. In the future, cultural tourism will be one of the main directions for developing China's tourism industry (Xu, 2020). People view tourism as a necessity for a happy life; hence, they travel even to crowded tourist destinations during holidays. Tourism is considered one of the important indicators for improving people's sense of happiness (Wang, 2021). With the changing times, the consumption behavior of tourists has also been adjusted accordingly. Personalized and distinctive tourism experiences are increasingly favored, thus attracting more tourists to come. This trend also drives people

to pay more attention to local culture, making the experience and exploration of cultural elements more significant during travel. It can be observed that people's spiritual needs are gradually becoming prominent, and what they pursue during travel is not only physical enjoyment but also spiritual satisfaction and cultural experiences. According to statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics of China, in 2022, cultural and related industry enterprises above the designated size in China achieved a revenue of 12180.5 billion yuan, an increase of 0.9% compared to the previous year. Among them, 16 industry subcategories with more apparent characteristics of new cultural formats achieved revenue of 4386 billion yuan, an increase of 5.3% compared to the previous year. The status of the cultural industry in social development is constantly improving (Statistical Bulletin on Culture and Tourism Development, 2023). In 2008, the customs of the Xunpu women were included in the second batch of the national intangible cultural heritage list. Xunpu women is a local walking intellectual property (Abbreviated as "IP") in Quanzhou, as well as a symbol and artistic image of marine culture in the Southern Fujian region. They use Head-pinned flowers as hair accessories, wear earrings with clove hooks, and wear large train tops and wide-leg pants. These costumes and ways of wearing carry a long history of customs. Among them, the "Head-pinned flowers" of the Xunpu women is particularly eye-catching and is known as the "walking garden." Xunpu women's Culture is Quanzhou's brand image that achieves differentiated cultural tourism.

1.2 Purpose of the study

This study aims to highlight the importance of brand image in transforming local cultural resources. At present, due to the government's policy support and star effect, the traditional headdress of Xunpu women has attracted widespread attention, and local villagers have therefore opened many "cultural experience stores" wherein tourists rent clothes, put on make-up, and take photos. However, the disorganized cultural experience makes the tourists' spirit unsatisfied, and the individual turns to major media platforms, which reduces the number of visitors. Furthermore, the commercialized content lacks a unified brand image due to the quick development of cultural experience stores. Additionally, most people remain there in order to wear a unique dress, which makes it less exciting than other places. Moreover, many do not know the city of Quanzhou and simply have "Head-pinned flowers" around the dress, which is a good vacation photo material. These one-sided impressions have hindered the development of the local economy. Due to the lack of information in the existing literature, this paper tries to fill these gaps through the dynamics of the city's economic industry driven by the local cultural brand image.

1.3 Research Content

Firstly, an in-depth investigation of the historical background of dress modeling, oyster shell house, and cultural belief rituals of Xunpu women was carried out. To collate relevant domestic and international literature and analyze the historical origins and uniqueness of the culture of Xunpu women. Explore the potential value of the brand image of Xunpu Women's Folk Culture and provide its theoretical basis. Secondly, summarize the spiritual kernel contained in the culture of Xunpu women and the artistic implication of Chinese marine culture. Moreover, it analyzes the symbols of the image of Xunpu women that already exist in the market. Finally, it explores the significance of the cultural elements of Xunpu women in the construction of the brand image and gives the brand characteristics and values to enhance the public's cognition of the culture of Xunpu women.

1.4 Research Methods

Based on literature, case analysis, and field study, it especially focuses on the related cultures, such as costume styling of Xunpu women, "Oyster Shell Houses" architecture, as well as beliefs to provide theoretical support for the brand image research. 1) Literature analysis method: In order to study the value of Xunpu women's culture in the design of a brand image, relevant information and brand image design are collected to explore the role of Xunpu women's culture in the transformation of local economic resources. 2) Case study method: in-depth discussion of successful cases of brand image promotion of Xunpu Women's Folk Culture, concluded that with the help of brand image symbol publicity, a better scope and effect of dissemination can be achieved. 3) Field study method: field observation and investigation of Xunpu village, investigation and visit with local villagers of Xunpu village, to obtain material data. Provide data and information base for the dissertation.

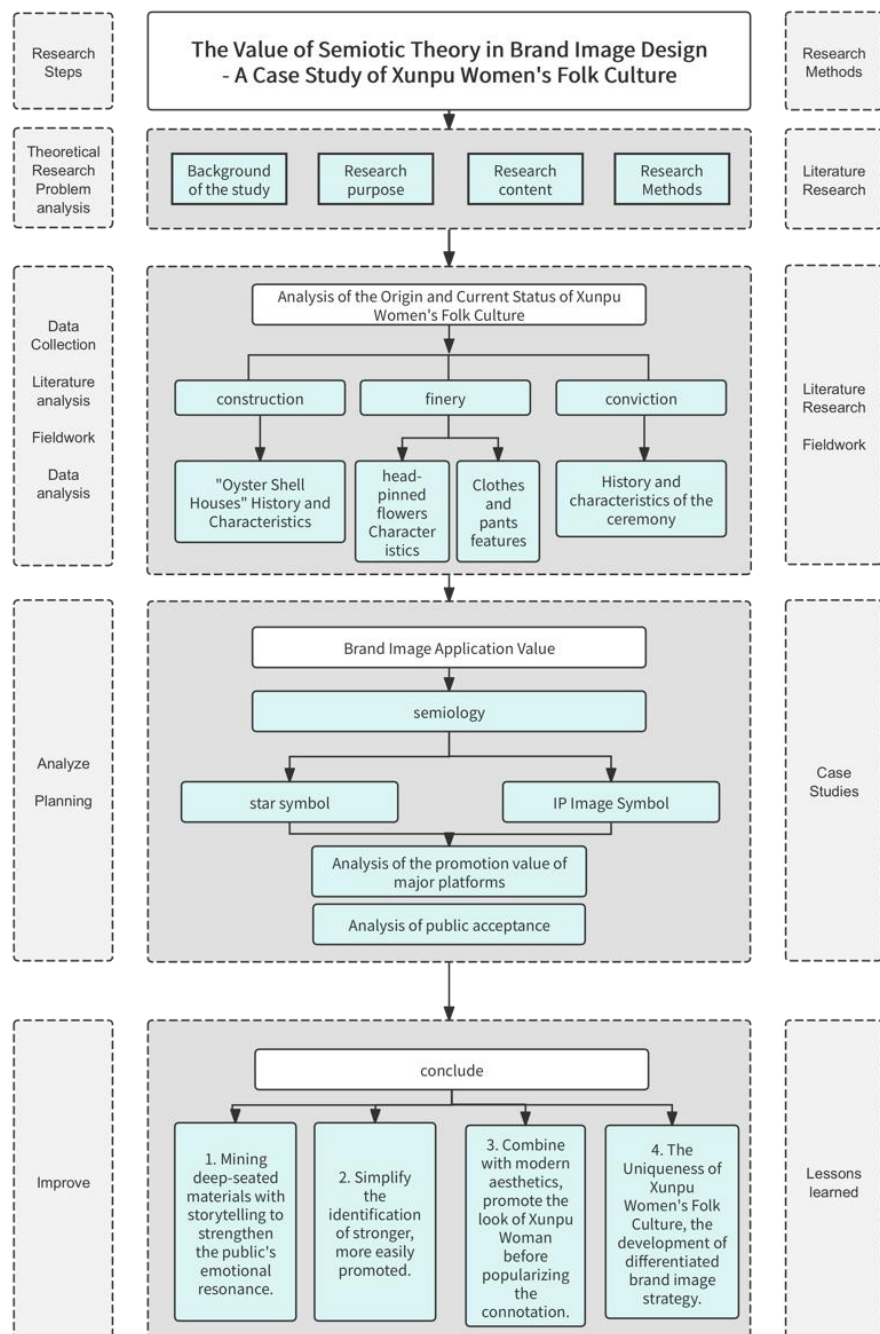


Figure 1: Frame diagram

2. Literature Review

According to the papers and journals indexed by China Knowledge Network (CNKI), few scholars study the theme of Xunpu women, and most of the research focuses on costumes and headdresses. In Quanzhou's local culture, the dress of Xunpu women is not only an important part of the traditional folk dress in Southern Fujian, but it is also a unique brand image and a unique symbol. Lu Xinyan and Tong Youjun, in the article "Research on 'Non-legacy' Xunpu women's Costumes under the Perspective of Marine Culture," analyzed the aspects of Xunpu women's clothing modeling and structure, it is also incorporated in some foreign cultural elements, with obvious characteristics of marine culture and folklore (Lu, 2014). Chen Fang's "A study on the culture of Xunpu women's clothing In south Fujian" also conducted an in-depth discussion on the cultural connotation of the dress by pointing out that the traditional dress of Xunpu adopts a geometric structure, adheres to the design concept of human-oriented design, it gives full consideration to the practicality of the dress and the demand for physiological comfort (Chen, 2018). Chen Zuying and Hong Wensheng, in "Research on the Cultural Inheritance of the Headdresses of Xunpu Women," analyzed in detail the styling characteristics of the costumes of Xunpu women and elaborated on the historical inheritance and connotation of the culture of the headdresses of Xunpu women with ear ornaments (Chen, 2020). The article shows that the costumes changed with the change of dynasties, and the main purpose of such changes was to improve the comfort of the wearers and make it easier for them to engage in labor. Wang Yingying, and Chen Fang, in the article "Comparative Analysis of the Traditional Costume of Women in Xunpu and Huian District," comparing the characteristics of the costumes of the two, it can be pointed out that each of them has its own uniqueness, and the same as an indispensable and important part of the traditional costumes of Southern Fujian, reflecting the rich cultural connotation of the local (Wang, 2018). Zhang Yan and He Kejie, in the article "Some Comparisons of Clothing Design and Decoration Between She Women in Fujian Costal Areas and Xunpu Women," point out the differences in the cultural connotations of the two by comparing the decorative parts of the patterns of the costumes of the She and the Xunpu women in terms of the subject matter, techniques, and colors (Zhang, 2018). The above article analyzes in detail the comparison with other costumes and shows the regional characteristics of traditional costumes.

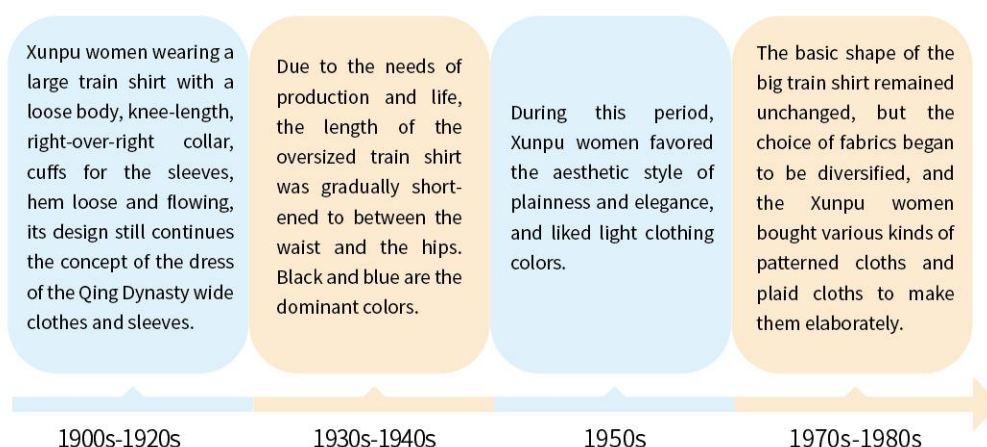


Figure 2: Changes in the clothing of Xunpu women

In his book "Brand Design 100+1," Kan Tai-keung interprets 100 brand marks through 100 easy-to-understand design insights and profoundly analyzes the planning, operation, and design process of brand image through a brand image design case (Jin, 2017); Muhammad Ehsan Malik, Basharat Naeem, Madiha Munawar in his article

"Brand Image: Past, Present and Future" defined the concept of brand image from different perspectives, mainly covering generic, message, symbolic, personality-based and cognitive psychological aspects. Based on this, a number of dimensions such as functional, symbolic, experiential, emotional, economic, social, personalized, self-esteem, corporate and utility were further developed, which were summarized into a dual model of brand image, covering both cognitive and emotional domains (Muhammad, 2012); Francisco et al.- Peña and Dolores M. Frías-Jamilena, in the article Brand personality in cultural tourism through social media, indicate that there is a relationship between customer engagement and brand personality that positively influences each other on social media (Francisco, 2019); Lin Haibin, in his article "Brand visual image and consumer psychology," states that brand image influences consumer behavior by triggering the process of perception, cognition and identification (Lin, 2008). The above articles show that humanistic emotional design is not only highlighted in market value but also in brand emotion. Zhou Qian and Zhong Yantao, in their article "Research on Museum Brand Image Design Based on IP Consumption Trend," indicate that through the research on the consumption preferences of the new generation of consumers, we can deeply excavate the value and connotation of IP, enhance the consumer's sense of IP experience, as well as form a complete IP development system and other aspects (Zhou, 2023); Gao Lina, in her article "Cultural Properties of Brand Image Design," brands are the high degree of combination of spiritual culture and material civilization, the image design of brand is a cultural phenomenon, which contains rich cultural connotations (Gao, 2005). Liu Tingting, in "Analysis of emotional brand image design based on cognitive psychology" In addition to vision, the design of brand image can also be assisted by smell, hearing, taste, etc., and the use of a variety of information media realizes the intangible dissemination of brand information (Liu, 2020). It can be seen that domestic and international research related to brand image design has been quite sufficient, which indicates that brand image design is important in today's market. At the same time, these studies provide the theoretical basis for the current research.

To summarize, although the current research on this aspect of Xunpu women's costumes is relatively more, from the perspective of brand image, there is little literature related to the brand image of Xunpu women's local culture, which is only the re-innovation of the costume symbols. With the development of the Internet and the enhancement of the competition for the transformation of local non-heritage cultural resources, based on the above-existing research results, this paper perfects the Xunpu women's culture in the brand image of the local value. Therefore, the research of this paper is of practical significance for the dissemination of the culture of the Xunpu women.

Table 1: Characteristics of Literature on Xunpu women

Field of Research	Bibliography	Trait
maritime culture	<Research on "Non-legacy" Xunpu women's Costumes under the Perspective of Marine Culture>	It is mentioned that some foreign cultural elements have been incorporated into the costumes of the Xunpu women, which have obvious characteristics of marine culture and folklore, and the modeling and structure are dissected.
Costume characteristics and cultural connotations	<Research on the traditional costume appearance form and culture connotation of Xunpu women>	Detailed analysis of the characteristics of costumes such as the oyster suit, the big train shirt, and the wide-legged pants, and elaboration of their cultural connotations.

head ornament	<The Interpretation of the Headdress Culture of the Three Great Fisherwomen of Fujian--Xunpu women>	Through the analysis of the characteristics of the headdresses of Xunpu women, the origin of the regional folk culture and the exotic culture of the Maritime Silk Road is shown.
Dress Comparison	<Some Comparisons of Clothing Design and Decoration Between She Women in Fujian Costal Areas and Xunpu Women>	By comparing the decorative differences in the dresses of Shezu and Xunpu women, the differences and commonalities in the aesthetic concepts, totems, and auspicious symbols of the two in terms of cultural connotations are pointed out.
	<Comparative Analysis of the Traditional Costume of Women in Xunpu and Huian District>	By comparing and analyzing the types of dress forms of Xunpu women and Hui'an Fisherwomen, the two have individuality in dresses, as well as commonalities in the customs and cultures of Southern Fujian and in functions.

3. Features of Culture of Xunpu women

Xunpu women are mainly distributed in Quanzhou City, Fujian Province, China. Their culture covers important components such as production, life, and folk beliefs and retains many traditional customs of Southern Fujian, such as unique wedding festivals, New Year's festivals, festivals of celebration and sacrificial ceremonies, etc., of which the sacrificial ceremony of "A-Ma Zu's incense tour" is the most popular one. The Mazu incense parade of Xunpu women has been inherited since 1666, with a history of more than 300 years since then. In that year, the ancestors of Xunpu went to the ancestral temple of Mazu in Meizhou, Putian, to perform the "incense-cutting" ceremony. Since then, this "Xun Xiang" activity has continued as a sacrificial ceremony to this day. The costumes, headdresses, and earrings culture of the Fisherwomen of Xunpu presents a unique style and has accumulated a long historical heritage due to the unique environment and geographical location of Xunpu. The culture of architecture, dress, and beliefs of the Fisherwomen of Xunpu have obvious national characteristics. However, with the change of the times, the expanding market economy has brought new challenges to the inheritance and development of the culture of Xunpu women. This chapter will start from the perspective of the human environment and folk culture of the Xunpu women and analyze in depth the three levels of residential architecture, costumes, and beliefs.

Table 2: Characteristics of "Oyster Shell Houses" (drawn by the author)

Research Direction	Reference	Trait
Mixed masonry method i.e. brick inside and oyster shell outside	1. The convex side of the oyster shell is facing upwards for effective drainage, and the inner wall will not be eroded by rainwater.	1. At the top of the wall under the eaves.
	2. The overall presentation of light-colored walls, and poor heat absorption, make the winter warm and cool in the summer.	2. On both sides of the window outside the wall.

	3. Good sound insulation, anti-moth-eaten, durable and sturdy, with "a thousand years of brick, ten thousand years oyster" proverb	3. The entire wall above the stone foundation is embedded with oyster shells.
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Figure 3: "Oyster Shell Houses" in Quanzhou Xunpu Village (Photo by the author)

3.1 Characteristics of Residential Architecture of Xunpu women

As one of the three major fisherwomen in Fujian, the Fisherwomen of Xunpu are often famous for their unique dress style. However, the unique oyster shell wall architecture in the fishing village of Xunpu is also one of the most typical elements of the marine culture of Southern Fujian. In the Minnan language, the oyster is called "Little oyster," and "Cuo" means house, from which oyster shell house gets its name. (Figure 3) The oyster shells used in the construction of oyster shell houses are large in size, generally between 10 and 50 centimeters, and the size can be comparable to the palm of an adult male's hand, and some are even larger. There are two main types of oyster shells used for the wall materials of oyster shell houses, namely, the *Crassostrea rivularis* and the *C.gigas*. In fact, such large oyster shells are not produced locally, and the source dates back to the Song and Yuan Dynasties. Marco Polo mentioned in the book "Marco Polo's Travels" that "'CiTong Port' (Quanzhou) is one of the largest ports in the world, where ships travel like shuttles, a large number of merchants gather goods and are piled up in the mountains, and Dehua ceramics are beautiful and inexpensive." (Marco, 1989) At that time, Quanzhou was being used as an important port, a starting point of the Maritime Silk Road trade and commerce between the merchant ships close to the village of Xunpu set sail. Most of them used the Fukushipo loaded with silk, porcelain, silk fabrics, sugar, ceramics, tea and so on, sailing to the South Seas, passing through the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia, South China Sea, the northern coast of the South China Sea, return to the sea in order to avoid the empty ship and the lead to the unstable center of gravity of sailing, so the crew would pick up a large number of oyster shells on the seashore as ballast to increase the load of the ship and ensure the smooth sailing and the crew would abandon the goods on the coastal shore of the area after arriving at CiTong Harbor. The Fisherwomen of Xunpu inherited the house-building tradition of the "ancient Min Yue tribe," and it became a trend to pick up and mix the oyster shells with the sea mud to build the local houses and residences. In the late Ming Dynasty, Song Yingxing recorded in his book *Tian Gong KaiFu*: "Where Wen, Taiwan, Fujian, and Guanghan seashore, where the stone is not strong enough to be gray, oyster shells are born to replace them." (Song, 2008) Therefore, the "oyster shell house" of Xunpu Village is also regarded as the witness of the "Maritime Silk Road." However, with the continuous advancement of urbanization, Xunpu village has experienced several times of old village renovations. Due to the lack of basic protection and repair consciousness, a large number of "oyster shell house" were demolished, and nowadays, only a few of them are left, replaced by new-style buildings. The preservation of traditional dwellings in Xunpu is uncertain.



Figure. 4 Headdress of Xunpu women (Photo by the author)

3.2 Characteristics of Dress of Xupu women

The dress tradition of the Xunpu women originated in the Eastern Jin Dynasty and reached its heyday in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties. Under the dual influence of long-term labor practice and social aesthetic concepts, this dress tradition evolved continuously but still adhered to the fine genes of Chinese Fisherwomen's decoration. Formed a unique headdress and dress style. This kind of clothing focuses on practicality, especially adapted to seaside labor, so the design is simple and loose. The upper garment is made of coarse cloth with a slanting bodice, wide sleeves, and right overlapping and is often called the "big train skirt." The lower body was made of loose black cloth pants, which were rolled up so that they did not get wet and were easy to walk in.

Table 3:Xunpu women characteristics of dress (drawn by the author)

Name Of Dress	Characterization		
Headdress Head-pinned flowers (Hair buns, wreaths and ivory buns)	1. Raw Flowers: Seasonal flowers arranged in a wreath of budding flower bones.	2. Cooked flowers: plastic flowers, silk flowers. Generally inserted between the outer ring of flowers and the second outer ring of flowers	3. hair tied into a ponytail, coiled into concentric circles bun, inserted ivory chopsticks, and various gold ornaments are inserted into the bun.
Earring	1. Dinghook earrings (unmarried)	2. Lilac pendant (married)	3. Old Mother's Clove Pendant (older Fisherwomen)
Outfits	1. The blouse is made of coarse cloth with a slanting lapel, wide sleeves, right-over-balance, round standing collar, slanting lapel covering the chest, and right-over-balance; the length of the blouse is between the waist and hip, the hem is in the shape of a round arc, and the two sides are open.	2. The lower body is a loose-fitting black cloth pants with a loose waist design and a deeper crotch that can be worn up to the abdomen.	

The traditional headdress of the Xunpu women of Xunpu is the Head-pinned flower wreath. (Figure 4) The structure is usually divided into three parts, namely, a hair bun, a flower wreath, and ivory matrimony. To comb the Head-pinned flower wreath, firstly, tea oil or aloe vera juice is evenly applied to the hair, and then the hair is tied into a ponytail, clenched into a strand of hair, which resembles the annual cycle of a big tree, and secured with a red rope to be coiled into a concentric-circle chignon. Subsequently, flowers made of (Table 3) raw and cooked flowers are decorated on the outside of the chignon, and the Head-pinned flower is then put into shape, and finally, various gold accessories are put on. The center part of the bun is an ivory Head-pinned flower in the form of a cone or a long flat strip. Around the bun, twine is strung into a wreath, forming concentric circles. Head-pinned flowers made of pure gold are inserted on the periphery of the garland, adding color to the overall shape. Among them, the Head-pinned flowers is the most distinctive. It is made of gold and meticulously crafted in a delicate triangular shape, decorated with butterflies, bees, and crescent moons that symbolize a happy life. It is also used as part of the dowry. The comb is another important headdress, divided into a forehead comb and a back of the head comb, which is used to fix broken hair and comb out hair blown by the sea wind during labor. In local marriage customs, the comb is also regarded as part of the dowry, with the fishbone or wave shape being the main shape of the comb and the butterfly and fish motifs decorating the back of the comb. Married Fisherwomen usually wear the "lilac pendant," which consists of two parts: a flower bud a petal, and a lilac earring. The buds and petals of the flowers form the head of the lilac pendant, while the dinghou part, which resembles a question mark, is set into the head of the pendant and has a swirling tail (Lin, 2022). The design symbolizes a prosperous husband and wealth, as well as the promise and desire for marriage. Older Fisherwomen wear the "Old Mother Clove Pendant," which is divided into two parts. The upper part has a gold dinghou that passes through the earhole, while the lower part is a small, tapered gold ingot decorated with wavy curves and auspicious clouds (Lin, 2022). At present, due to the government's policy support and the star effect, the traditional headdresses of the Xunpu women have attracted much attention. As a result, many cultural experience stores have been opened in the area for tourists to rent clothes, put on make-up, and take photos. However, due to the rapid development, these commercialized contents lack a unified brand image, and the haphazard cultural experience makes the tourists spiritually not fully satisfied.



Figure 5 : Xunpu women "Xun Xiang" Activity (Photograph by the author)

3.3 The Folk Beliefs of Xunpu women

Xunpu Fishing Village has more than ten palaces and temples of various sizes due to its multiple sea faces, developed port transportation, and diverse folk beliefs. The most widespread belief among them is Mazu, and the center of the village's faith is in the Shunji Palace, where Mazu is located. Worshiping the sea god Mazu, there are aunts, second mothers, and third mothers, accompanied by worshipping Guanyin and Holy Auntie. (Quanzhou Cultural Relics Management Committee, 2000) For Xunpu Village, the 29th day of the first lunar month is particularly important because it is the day for the "Mazu Xun Xiang" religious activity. (Figure 5), the Mazu faith is the spiritual

sustenance of the Xunpu people, with the intention of blessing the fishermen with safe sailing and smooth sailing.

The historical records of the "Mazu Xun Xiang" in Xunpu are quite limited. According to field investigations, more than 300 years ago, the ancestors of Xunpu went to Meizhou Mazu Ancestral Temple in Putian, Fujian, to "cut incense" and began the "Mazu Xun Xiang" activity in Xunpu in 1666. On the day of the event, men, women, and children of all ages gathered in teams in Xunpu Village, carrying the statue of Mazu and holding a devout and solemn sacrificial ceremony. On the day before the pilgrimage, each household needs to prepare all the necessary sacrificial supplies for the pilgrimage, such as fried vinegar meat, meatballs, wrapped meat dumplings, eels, shrimp and crabs. The village board of directors will provide eggs and noodles to each household, symbolizing peace and auspiciousness. Women in the village must wear a wide-breasted top and black wide pants to participate in the incense parade. Xunpu Fisherwomen pay special attention to headwear, weaving their long hair into a bun, wearing gold and silver jewelry, inserting ivory chopsticks, and placing flowers around the bun to form a floral wreath. As soon as auspicious times arrived, the villagers gathered at Shunji Palace to invite Mazu, who was sitting in Jinluan, out of the palace. The parade began with a formal ceremony, and the street performance team was divided into several square formations. The team was led by a colorful road flag, which led the pilgrimage route. Then, the sweeping team was carried out, and the Xunpu woman held a broom, symbolizing the removal of obstacles for Mazu's pilgrimage and the opening of a path for progress; Following that was the sound of gongs and the opening of the road, followed by the English song and dance, car and drum teams, and then the activity theme card team and the promotion of Mazu culture card; During this period, whenever passing by a fire, the men carrying the big flag gather their strength and shout to jump, which means adding more people and bringing good luck; Afterwards, there were more than twenty esteemed Xunpu holding a lit one meter high incense stick; Red plaques with fishing boat names written on them must be followed around the border, which is the most important thing for sailors; Next were the divine sedans of the Three Princes, Thousand Mile Eyes, and Wind Following Ears, and at the end were the three Mazu divine sedans (commonly known as Zhen Dian Ma, Er Ma, and San Ma), closely following the crowd of worshippers holding high incense. In addition, the incense procession also includes performing waist drum teams, dragon dance teams, niang umbrella drum teams, lotus teams, cymbal teams, etc., shuttling through the teams for over two thousand meters. Each household prepares a "fragrant mother table" with offerings such as flowers and fruits and prepares firecrackers and fireworks to light as the procession passes by.

In the incense patrol back to the Shunji Palace, a dozen young adults around the fire around the sedan chair, and then cross the fire rushed to the Shunji Palace, placed the statue. Local villagers said that the sedan chair shakes more vigorously, the more can bring peace and blessings. The sedan chair shaking in front of the fire implies the meaning of avoiding disasters and praying for blessings. Whether it is fishing in the sea or breeding in the inland sea, every year's harvest and safe return are inseparable from the belief in praying to Mazu. The Mazu Fisherwomen are also famous for their hard work, diligence, thriftiness, and ability to teach their husbands and children. They are busy with household chores, weaving fishing nets, raising children, marrying daughters and brides, and becoming the pillars of the family. When the tide goes down, they cultivate sea oysters and plant sea razor clams on the offshore shoals and work hard.

4. Symbol Application of Brand Image Design of Xunpu Women's Folk Culture

The architecture, dress, and beliefs of the region of Xunpu jointly constitute the culture of Xunpu women, which has profound characteristics of marine civilization. Its profound cultural precipitation and systematic characteristics have profound inheritance

significance and protection value. It is the core task of brand image design of Xunpu Women's Folk Culture to create a unique brand of Xunpu women by highlighting the characteristics of Xunpu women with the help of brand image building. Firstly, the brand image design should be compatible with the local traditional culture and adopt the strategy of adapting to the local conditions in order to highlight the unique national characteristics of the regional culture of the Xunpu women. Secondly, the cultural elements should be organically integrated into the design, and the symbols of the culture of Xunpu women should be comprehensively used to realize the multifaceted presentation of the culture. Thirdly, it is necessary to extract the representative elements from "oyster shell houses", costumes, and beliefs that are closely related to the life of the Xunpu women, redefine and graphicize them, and present them using modern design techniques and aesthetic concepts.

This society is filled with all kinds of brand image symbols, and the star symbol is also a part of the symbolism. The symbolic structure of the star alludes to the symbolic triangle mentioned by Peirce, i.e., the symbolic relationship of the triad of energy, object (the star himself), and referent (the symbol-idol), and accordingly, the structural value of the symbol also shows a triangular relationship, i.e., the exchange value, the use value, and the symbolic value (Li, 2005). The star symbol connotation has three main aspects, one is the symbol, the second is the alternative symbol, and the third is the social symbol. First of all, the meaning of the symbolic symbol is the image's comprehensive expression, the star's popularity in society through a series of works in the character image shaping in a certain audience group to obtain a greater impact. After forming a certain fan base, the star's external words and deeds and inner spirit in life will be given or projected by society to a certain extent to the image portrayed in their works and become a kind of symbolic symbol. Secondly, in advertisements, celebrities are usually consistent with the brands of the products they endorse, and some of the characteristics and cultural values of the products will be spread to consumers through celebrities, which is the substitutive characteristic. Finally, celebrities have become a symbol of consumer culture, and with the development and popularization of mobile social networks, the broadening of information dissemination channels, and the increasing participation of the general public in discourse and social life, the celebrity effect has been gradually amplified. It is pointed out in the book "Popular Culture" that "the public refers to the whole of the majority of social members who have the basic subjective and objective conditions of cultural acceptance and cultural participation, and who are involved in cultural activities at different levels and to different degrees in different ways and means in the conditions of a market economy."(Ye, 2004)

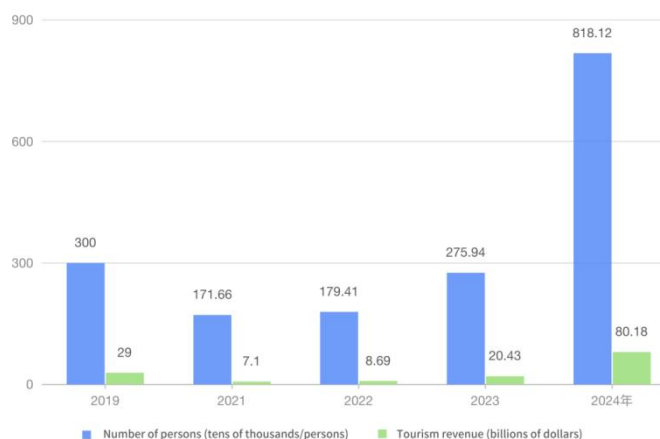


Figure 6: Total Visitors and Tourism Revenue in Quanzhou during the New Year's Spring Festival Holidays

(Data from Quanzhou Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television and Tourism, China)

From (Chart 6), it can be clearly observed that the number of travelers in 2024 far exceeds the previous level. The local culture and tourism company had invited famous movie star Zhao Liying to shoot the cover of the 2023 issue of "SHANG CHENG SHI" with the theme of Quanzhou Wulin culture and Xunpu Head-pinned flowers Fisherwomen, interpreting the Minnan heritage treasures. As a result, the beautiful pictures of "Xunpu Head-pinned flower circle" and "Zhao Liying's same style" spread rapidly on all major social media platforms. This phenomenon has not only gained wide attention among fans but also attracted many tourists to go to Xunpu, with most women experiencing the charm of Head-pinned flowers styling and a small number of men following the trend of wearing it and taking different photos as a souvenir. In the field study, local Fisherwomen of Head-pinned flowers Xunpu said that the traditional Head-pinned flower circumference needs to comb all the hair to the back of the head, revealing the prominent forehead, which is very testing for the face shape, so there is not many people dressing up locally in Quanzhou before 2023. The publicity of the beauty pictures of celebrities and netroots after 2023 will keep some bangs, which is in line with modern women's demand, so the non-heritage culture's star effect needs to cater to the demand of the modern women's love of beauty. In the Z generation in the small red book, shaking tone, KOL, KOC brand quickly out of the circle, from (Figure 7) (Figure 8) can be seen to open the market is unstoppable.

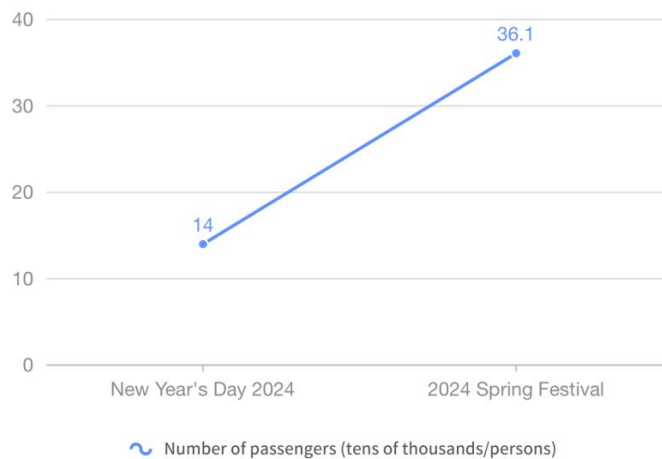


Figure 7: Number of tourists received by Xunpu Village in 2024

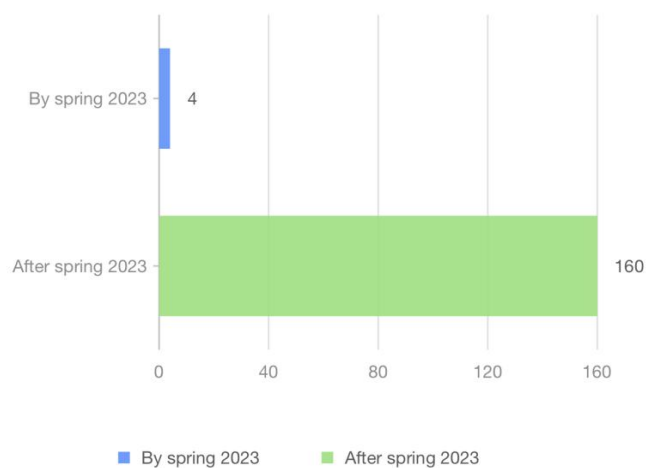




Figure 8: Growth of Head-pinned Flowers Shops in Xunpu Village

The brand image does not only rely on celebrity symbols to express itself, but brand IP image symbols are also equally important. In the 2018 China Cultural IP Industry Development Report, "a new definition has been given to cultural IP, which specifically refers to the connection and fusion between cultural products, and is a kind of cultural symbol that is highly recognizable, carries its own traffic, has a strong ability to penetrate into the cash, and has a long cash cycle." (Jiang, 2020) At the beginning of 2024, at the rehearsal of the opening ceremony of the "Hai Si - Xunpu" National Tide Non-heritage Cultural Festival in Fengze District, the "Little Xunpu Woman" digital tour guide appeared in the form of the offline all-in-one machine. The "Little Xunpu Woman" IP is now settled at the entrance of Xunpu Village, the IP wears Head-pinned flowers and half-squinted eyes, and the overall proportion of head and body is three heads, and the multi-curve and soft body features present a round, lovely and friendly image. The "Little Xunpu Woman" demonstrates the fun attribute that can trigger the audience's psychological emotions to resonate. From (Table 4), it can be seen that compared with the Head-pinned flowers rabbit in 2023, "Little Xunpu Woman" is more characterized by the characteristics of Xunpu women. In the era of information fragmentation, brand IP image marketing has more advantages in communication, and the brand IP image design of Xunpu women's culture realizes emotional and value communication by means of symbolization and cartoonization. When the emotional resonance of the public reaches a certain degree, then the content output around the culture of Xunpu women is more effective. Excellent IP image design will give the audience a strong sense of emotional substitution and then generate cultural acceptance and purchase motivation, realizing the transformation of the application of design symbols.

Table 4: Xunpu women comparison of IP images (drawn by the author)

IP Image	Vantage	Disadvantage
<p data-bbox="108 1200 316 1227">Little Xunpu Woman</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="427 1200 933 1357">1. It is more in line with the positioning of Xunpu women, easy to be recognized and remembered by people, prompting consumers to remain loyal to IP-related products. <li data-bbox="427 1375 852 1402">2. Convenient for fission type dissemination. <li data-bbox="427 1420 933 1487">3. Can be commercialized, laying a solid foundation for IP derivatives. 	<p data-bbox="965 1200 1453 1267">Requires significant investment of time, manpower and funds for development and maintenance.</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1592 384 1619">Head-pinned flowers Rabbit</p> 	<p data-bbox="427 1592 933 1794">The Rabbit IP was made in Quanzhou in the Year of the Rabbit, the whole of which is a combination of hairpin flowers and green leaves, highlighting the image of the raw and ripe flowers of the hairpin Xunpu women.</p>	<p data-bbox="965 1592 1465 1704">Audience favorites may change with the new year, and early popular IP designs risk losing their appeal in the marketplace.</p>

5. The Value of the Brand Image Design of Xunpu Women’s Folk Culture

The report of the 20th Party Congress points out, "Increase the protection of cultural relics and cultural heritage, strengthen the protection and inheritance of history and culture in urban and rural construction, and build and utilize national cultural parks." (Hao, 2022) The "14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Cultural Industries" issued by the State Council, the "14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Culture and Tourism" issued by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the "14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of Culture and Tourism" issued by the Propaganda and Ideology Work Leading Group of Fujian Provincial Party Committee, The "Implementation Plan on Promoting the Transformation and Utilization of "Fu" Cultural Resources and Branding Fujian's "Fu" Culture" formulated and issued by the Propaganda and Ideology Leading Group of Fujian Provincial Party Committee has provided an important guarantee for the complete excavation of the spiritual kernel of "Fu Culture." The implementation plan provides an important guarantee for fully exploring the spiritual core of "Fu Culture." The unique material symbols of Fujian culture, "Oyster Shell Houses", Head-pinned flowers and other cultures of Xunpu women as well as the long historical heritage of Quanzhou, carry the spiritual connotation of China's marine culture.

The design value of the brand image of Xunpu Women's Folk Culture is mainly reflected in the inheritance, development and dissemination of this unique image of Xunpu Women's Folk Culture. Shaping the brand image is not only the maintenance and extension of the culture of Xunpu women but also the sorting out and inheritance of its historical and cultural characteristics and the use of graphic design language and techniques combined with the aesthetic concepts of modern people to shape the brand image that meets the contemporary needs. From the perspective of brand image and culture, the digital era provides a new opportunity to study and reshape the local brand image of Quanzhou Xunpu Women's Folk Culture. How to seize this opportunity to make the culture of the Xunpu women become an indispensable part of the brand construction of "Fu culture" so as to enhance the brand influence of Fujian culture in the whole country and even in the world, and to boost the growth of its economic value, is an important issue to be solved by the culture and design workers in the next stage.

The brand image, as the visual carrier of the culture of Xunpu women, carries the inclusiveness and uniqueness in the historical and cultural characteristics of Quanzhou. Its charm is not only embodied in the exhibition in the museum but also in daily life, showing the folk characteristics and cultural essence of the Xunpu women. The design of the cultural brand image of Xunpu women can be divided into narrow sense and broad sense. The design, in a narrow sense, adopts such techniques as simple copying that stays on the surface to simply reproduce the cultural characteristics and brand image of Xunpu women. In contrast, the design, in a broad sense, is based on the in-depth understanding and research of Xunpu Women's Folk Culture to create a brand image with more connotation and creative value. It is not only to disseminate and expand the culture of the Xunpu women through visualization design but also embodied in the deep excavation of its personality and ethnicity, to disseminate the story of the Xunpu women, tell the culture of Southern Fujian, and further promote the development strength of the excellent traditional Chinese culture in the global scope.

Conclusion

In this paper, the Head-pinned flowers, "Oyster Shell Houses" and folk beliefs of Quanzhou Xunpu Women's Folk Culture have been comprehensively and deeply analyzed through fieldwork. These elements of the culture of Xunpu women show unique local characteristics in terms of shape and color, which have the unique attributes of marine culture and also present the traditional Chinese auspicious symbols. The author believes that the success of a brand image lies in its ability to be easily recognized and remembered in the market and that the culture of Xunpu women should be skillfully integrated into the design, highlighting visual elements such as the

Head-pinned flowers surroundings, "Oyster Shell Houses", and beliefs in the brand image, so that the consumers can quickly differentiate the brand from other competitors. The brand image of Quanzhou Xunpu Women's Folk Culture not only meets the needs of the brand image of Quanzhou City but also helps to pass on and carry forward the traditional Chinese culture to make positive contributions.

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