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Research on the Application of Grand Canal Intangible Cultural Heritage Symbols in Brand Visual Communication: A Case Study of "Xie Fuchun"

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Abstract:
As a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site, the Beijing–Hangzhou Grand Canal has fostered a distinctive intangible cultural heritage ecosystem along its route, establishing a profound cultural foundation and value core for the revitalization of traditional brands. Established in 1830, Xie Fuchun is a quintessential Chinese traditional brand. Not only has its proprietary powder-making technique been inscribed on the National Intangible Cultural Heritage List, but its nearly two-century evolution also positions it as a representative exemplar of Grand Canal-related ICH within the cosmetics sector. This paper adopts the lens of ICH-driven empowerment in brand visual communication to investigate the symbiotic relationship between the Grand Canal's intangible cultural heritage and the Xie Fuchun brand. Drawing upon a comprehensive methodological framework—including literature review, case analysis, and semiotic analysis—the study examines Xie Fuchun as a representative case. It analyzes the current state of visual communication practices employed by ICH-based brands, identifies persistent challenges in their communication strategies, and proposes a four-dimensional collaborative communication system comprising: (1) the Visual Symbol Layer, (2) the ICH Transmission Layer, (3) the Cross-sector Integration Layer, and (4) the Brand Activation Layer. This framework offers actionable insights for optimizing visual communication among Grand Canal–affiliated ICH brands, thereby supporting innovation in heritage communication and reinforcing regional brand influence.

Keywords:
Canal Intangible Cultural Heritage; Brand Visual Communication; Xie Fuchun

1. Introduction

As an important water conservancy project in ancient China, the Grand Canal, including the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, the Eastern Zhejiang Grand Canal, and the Sui-Tang Grand Canal, was officially inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2014. In February 2019, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council issued the " Outline of the Plan for the Protection, Inheritance and Utilization of the Grand Canal Culture, " proposing to fully tap the rich historical and cultural resources of the Grand Canal, protect, inherit and make good use of the cultural

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heritage of the Grand Canal, and create a cultural belt of the Grand Canal. [1] In November 2020, during an inspection tour of the Yangzhou Canal Sanwan Ecological and Cultural Park in Jiangsu Province, the General Secretary observed: “For millennia, the Grand Canal has nourished cities and communities along its banks, serving as a vital artery of prosperity and well-being for local populations. I urge all stakeholders to join hands in protecting this historic waterway, ensuring that it continues to benefit the people for generations to come.”[2] In September 2023, while visiting the Zhejiang–East Grand Canal Cultural Park, the General Secretary further emphasized: “Grand Canal culture constitutes a vital component of China’s outstanding traditional culture. We must redouble our efforts in protection, inheritance, and utilization—so that this ancient waterway may embody and radiate the spirit of our times with renewed vitality.”[3]

With the in-depth promotion of the work related to the activation of ICH and the proposal of policy documents such as the ' Plan for the Protection, Inheritance and Utilization of the Grand Canal Culture ', the visual empowerment brand communication of ICH symbols has gradually become an important way to enhance the cultural value of time-honored brands and build the integration and development pattern of traditional context and modern market. The relevant national cultural inheritance and development policies emphasize the need to innovate cultural symbols to empower time-honored brands to break through development bottlenecks. [4] However, in practice, there are some core problems in the application of the visual symbols of the Grand Canal 's ICH, such as shallow cultural mining, homogenization of visual expression and formalization of symbol application. [5]This study takes ' Xie Fuchun ', which is rooted in the Yangzhou section of the Grand Canal with a century-old beauty brand, as the research object, focusing on exploring how the ICH symbols of the Grand Canal fit the brand visual communication, and combing out a complete and feasible innovative application operation mode. It also provides a reference scheme for time-honored brands to realize brand visual communication innovation and brand circle breaking relying on ICH, which has certain practical significance for realizing the living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage of the Grand Canal and the long-term stable development of time-honored brands.

2. The Cultural Significance of the Grand Canal

As a world-class linear cultural heritage, the Grand Canal embodies the water transport civilization, folk customs and traditional aesthetics of Jiangnan, which is a historical and cultural corridor carrying Chinese culture. It runs through the north and south for thousands of years. It is not only an important traffic artery in ancient times, but also a cultural link that promotes the integration and symbiosis of Chinese civilization. Along the canal, Yangzhou, Suzhou, Hangzhou and other famous historical and cultural cities with north and south characteristics were also spawned, forming a cultural pattern of “Customs differ every ten li (a Chinese unit of length, 1 li = 0.5 kilometer), and traditions vary every hundred li.”

In the long-term development of the water transport industry and the accumulation of regional folk culture, non-heritage cultures such as powder production, paper-cut embroidery, and garden construction have been derived along the Grand Canal. These intangible cultural heritage projects are not only the concentrated embodiment of the canal 's people 's livelihood culture and craftsmanship, but also the cultural core of elegance and exquisiteness with unique Jiangnan charm. (1) The Dissemination of Yangzhou’s Brand Identity under the Influence of Canal Culture

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Yangzhou is not only the starting city of the Grand Canal, but also the leading city in the application for world heritage. It holds three bright business cards of the world canal capital, the world food capital and the East Asian culture capital. [6] [7] [8]It is the most representative city brand of the Grand Canal culture. Because of the rise of the canal and the prosperity of the canal, the city has the characteristics of the canal culture, which is the key window to understand the flow of Chinese civilization.

Yangzhou has 10 heritage sites and 6 heritage rivers, and the total amount of heritage ranks first in the cities along the canal. Its classical gardens—including the Slender West Lake and Geyuan Garden—epitomize the compositional sophistication and restrained chromatic harmony characteristic of Jiangnan garden aesthetics. Hydraulic engineering landmarks—such as Shaobo Wharf and Liu Bao Water Diversion Gate—preserve tangible evidence of the canal's historic role in grain transportation. Meanwhile, cultural landmarks Yucheng Post, the mansions of salt merchants, and the Salt Ancestor Temple embody the visual features of salt merchant culture and urban folk customs in the Jianghuai region. All kinds of heritage resources jointly construct a visual system of Yangzhou Canal with rich levels and strong recognition. At the same time, the diversified canal heritage features and local intangible cultural heritage skills are infiltrated and deeply integrated, forming the regional aesthetic characteristics of gentle and exquisite, simple and elegant, and also becoming the core context material of Yangzhou local brand visual creation.

The material heritage constructs the external visual texture of Yangzhou canal culture, while the ICH gives the unique spiritual core and skill temperature of urban culture. The jade carving of ' the world's jade, Yangzhou's craftsmanship ', exquisite and elegant fine embroidery, clever and simple paper-cut, warm and ingenuity fragrance powder to make these old crafts, condensed out of the warm and elegant, fine work of the canal intangible cultural heritage core. Relying on 486-item ICH gathering areas, many traditional crafts have gradually integrated into modern life scenes, realizing the transformation and development from static protection to dynamic activation.

In addition to the material and ICH, the canal food culture represented by Huaiyang cuisine and Yangzhou early tea carries the regional characteristics of the integration of North and South products. Yangzhou 's urban life paradigm of ' Have morning tea in the morning and take a bath at the public bathhouse in the evening ' has constructed a unique identification of the canal 's people 's livelihood cultural identity ; the ancient canal immersive cruise performance, stringing up a thousand years of history ; the World Canal City Forum has set up a platform for international cultural exchanges, allowing Yangzhou from a regional symbol to a globally recognized cultural destination.

The superposition of cultural resources, intangible cultural heritage skills and folk culture gradually shapes Yangzhou 's unique urban cultural character and spiritual core. This kind of pragmatic and hard work rooted in the water transport culture, the exquisite Confucian elegance in the salt merchant culture, and the open and inclusive integration of the north and the south, let Yangzhou not only continue the former glory of ' Yangzhou first, Yizhou second (with Yizhou referring to the ancient Chengdu region) ', but also live a new vitality in the new era, and become a model of symbiosis and co-prosperity of the Grand Canal culture and urban development.

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3. Xie Fuchun in the Context of Grand Canal Culture

'Xie Fuchun ' is a Chinese time-honored brand nourished by the Grand Canal culture. It is also the first cosmetics company in Chinese history. It has always had a good reputation of ' No fragrance or powder rivals that of Yangzhou '. [9] From the boudoir treasures of the salt merchant period to the current national tide representative, Xie Fuchun has always adhered to the century-old store motto of ' Never sell substandard goods; never mislead customers on pric '. With its gentle and elegant quality of ingenuity, the brand has become a vivid embodiment of the fine work and inclusive symbiosis of the Grand Canal culture, and it is also a business card connecting traditional and modern national makeup culture.

(1) Brand History and Evolution

Founded in the 10th year of the Daoguang reign of the Qing Dynasty by Xie Hongye, “Xie Fuchun” was established on Xiapu Street in Yangzhou. The brand name, evoking the poetic imagery of “fragrance permeating the air and spring returning to the earth,” reflects its deep-rooted cultural resonance. Capitalizing on the Grand Canal’s strategic transportation network—particularly its vital role in grain transport (caoyun)—the enterprise initially specialized in incense products, hair oils, and herbal medicines. Over time, it pioneered its celebrated “Three Treasures”: incense, powdered cosmetics, and aromatic oils. These were crafted through an innovative, proprietary process integrating floral infusion, ice-musk fragrance stabilization, and a dual-stage treatment of sun-drying followed by controlled fermentation. Complemented by meticulously formulated natural herbal ingredients, this distinctive craftsmanship rapidly elevated Xie Fuchun to prominence as a preeminent brand in Yangzhou’s traditional perfumery and cosmetic industry.

During the war of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in 1853, the founder Xie Hongye insisted on the unfortunate death of the store. The brand industry suffered serious losses. Mrs. Dai led her family to move to the Fairy Temple, relying on retained skills to maintain brand development and lay the foundation for subsequent revival. In the third year of Tongzhi, Xie 's family returned to Yangzhou, rebuilt shops in Yuanmen Bridge, set up workshops in bricklayer camp, and revived the brand by taking advantage of the recovery of canal shipping. In the late Qing Dynasty, peer stores closed down one after another, and Xie Fuchun developed into a leading brand in Yangzhou spice powder industry. In order to prevent counterfeit products, the brand designed five barrels as trademarks. From 1913 to 1915, after two years of litigation, he won the first trademark infringement lawsuit in modern Chinese history, which was recognized by the Daliyuan of the Beiyang Government and enhanced the brand awareness. In the same year, its three treasures of ' incense, powdered cosmetics, and aromatic oils ' won the silver medal of Panama International Expo, established the international status of the brand, and the products were exported to Southeast Asia through the canal, becoming a favorite beauty product of famous women in the Republic of China. In 2015, Jiangsu Xie fuchun National Cosmetics Co., Ltd.was established to build a classical beauty production base in Hangji, Yangzhou. At the same time, the living display points were set up in the 486 intangible cultural heritage gathering area and the China Grand Canal Museum, which successfully included the ancient legal techniques of the six generations into the national ICH.

In the past two hundred years of development, Xie Fuchun has always rooted in the cultural soil of the canal, guaranteed quality with ingenuity, adapted to the development of the times with innovation, and become

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a business card of national makeup culture connecting tradition and modernity, so that the beauty culture nourished by the canal continues to spread in the new era.

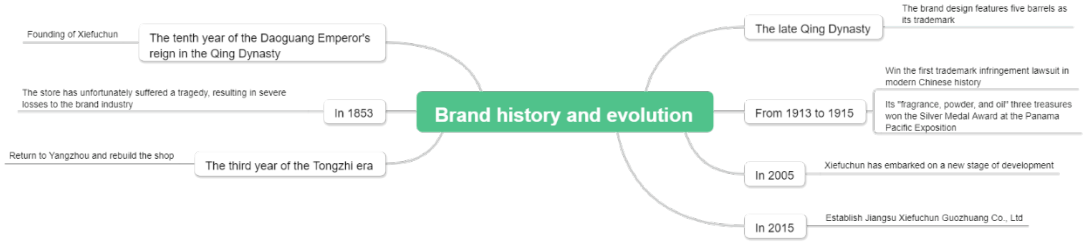


Figure 1 Framework of Xie Fuchun Brand Historical Development

(2) Brand Communication Advantages and Industry Influence

With the accumulation and development of nearly two hundred years, Xie Fuchun has created a brand system with online cultural value and market value. It has the characteristics of heavy weight, thick foundation, good reputation and distinct cultural characteristics in the domestic ICH beauty industry.

In terms of brand layout, Xie Fuchun has more than one hundred offline stores nationwide, adopting the development path of " concentrating on key cultural tourism hubs while maintaining broad, decentralized urban coverage." It focuses on Yangzhou 's local canal cultural and tourism blocks, Dongguan Street, and scenic business districts, and also radiates cities along the canals in Hefei, Nanjing, and Suzhou. The local area is deeply rooted and the country is slowly expanding. However, offline stores are different from ordinary beauty stores. They can not only sell products, but also display ICH, cultural experience, and popular science of skills. They have become the only choice for tourists to experience Yangzhou canal culture and traditional oriental beauty.

In terms of industry influence, Xie Fuchun is the pioneer of China 's beauty industry, creating a Chinese natural beauty development model. Xie Fuchun is different from the chemical formula and strong style of western beauty makeup. It adheres to the concept of natural, elegant and gentle beauty makeup in the east, and the differentiation advantage is more significant. In the selection of various awards, Xie Fuchun has been repeatedly selected as a typical case of innovation and innovation of Chinese time-honored brands, and has taken excellent cases with domestic head time-honored brands to highlight brand strength and industry status. At the same time, the brand also often participates in various cultural exhibitions and industry activities, and has won many honors in large-scale activities such as the Canal Culture Expo, the time-honored Carnival, the Cultural Tourism Industry Trade Fair, and the Intangible Cultural Heritage Achievement Exhibition, and continues to spread the brand image and the Canal ICH culture.

In terms of cultural communication, Xie Fuchun has long been not a simple commercial brand, but more like Yangzhou 's urban cultural business card, and has also become an important carrier of the ICH of the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal. Its iconic product portfolio—including duck-egg facial powder, osmanthus-scented hair oil, fragrant grooming pastes, and traditional incense—transcends mere cosmetic function: each item embodies Yangzhou’s canal-side folk customs, time-honored personal care practices, and the quintessential Jiangnan aesthetic. Through the exhibition and sale of products, foreign tourists can not only feel Yangzhou regional culture and canal customs, but also continue to promote the external dissemination of canal regional

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culture.

(3) Current Challenges and Root Cause Analysis in Brand Visual Communication

Although Xie Fuchun has a profound cultural heritage and a solid brand foundation, there are still obvious deficiencies in the brand visual communication system under the trend of new media communication and young consumption, which restricts the process of brand activation and the effect of cultural communication. Mainly attributed to the following four core issues :

First, the brand visual system is chaotic and the differentiation recognition is insufficient. Xie Fuchun sticks to tradition, lacks innovative consciousness, and the packaging has remained unchanged for many years. It is difficult to attract young groups from the contemporary consumer aesthetics. At present, the visual style of Xie Fuchun 's products is mixed with the old and the new. The packaging design of the general public series and festival series products is old, the pattern is cumbersome, and the overall visual texture is weak. Most products only use common national style elements, and rarely use exclusive geographical symbols such as water waves, ancient bridges, gardens, and water transport of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, resulting in a high degree of similarity between brand vision and ordinary national style cosmetics and cultural and creative products on the market. It is impossible to reflect the uniqueness of the canal ICH brand, and it is difficult for consumers to form exclusive brand visual memory.

Second, the brand 's new media visual communication ability is weak and the scope of communication is limited. Xie Fuchun mainly relies on the old channels such as offline stores and traditional exhibitions. The content of online new media such as Douyin, Xiaohongshu, WeChat Video and other official accounts is monotonous. Most of them are real products and simple promotional texts. There are few creative short films, popular science posters, ICH technology images, and scene aesthetics blockbusters that young people love to see. And the official account interaction is poor, the number of comments is small, the daily update frequency is slow and other issues, making it difficult for the brand to reach the young group, the pace of youth is also stagnant.

Third, the brand failed to dig deep into the canal context, visually unable to reflect the cultural value. Xie Fuchun 's existing visual design is mostly ancient flowers, which are surface elements of national style. It fails to dig deep into the core context such as the aesthetic integration of the north and south of the canal, the prosperous history of the canal trade, the folk customs of Yangzhou Water Village, the traditional dressing intangible cultural heritage culture and form the exclusive visual symbol and design language. As a result, the brand vision only has the appearance of national style, lacks the core of canal culture, and cannot form a unique cultural competitive advantage.

4. A Canal-Culture-Informed Visual Communication Framework for the Xie Fuchun Brand

This paper addresses current challenges confronting the visual communication of the Xie Fuchun brand by strategically leveraging the distinctive resources and symbolic richness of canal culture. Drawing upon theoretical frameworks for revitalizing ICH–based brands and contemporary principles of visual communication,

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the study proposes an integrated, four-dimensional visual communication framework—encompassing the Visual Symbol Layer, the ICH Transmission Layer, the Cross-sector Integration Layer, and the Brand Activation Layer. This synergistic approach aims to comprehensively elevate the brand's visual identity, deepen the dissemination and interpretation of canal culture, and holistically strengthen the brand's cultural resonance and market value.

(1) Visual Symbol Layer: Establishing a Distinctive Visual Identity System for the Grand Canal Intangible Cultural Heritage Brand

Visual symbols are the basic carrier of brand communication and an important support for the visualization of regional culture and the presentation of brand differentiation. In view of the problems of Xie Fuchun 's visual homogeneity, system confusion and lack of symbols, with the Jiangnan aesthetics of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal and Yangzhou regional culture as the core, the brand 's basic visual recognition system and application visual system are comprehensively optimized to create an exclusive canal intangible cultural heritage visual identity.

In the design of the basic visual system, the brand should retain the classic national style, follow the familiar brand font and classic logo, and achieve modernization and upgrading. First, optimize the proportion of LOGO lines, simplify complex patterns, and add simple canal cultural symbols such as reduced canal water wave lines, Yangzhou ancient bridge contours, and garden window lattice patterns, so that LOGO has both traditional characteristics and modern simplicity. Second, the color palette is rigorously standardized, drawing direct inspiration from the natural and architectural hues of canal-side water towns. Four signature colors are established: Canal Green, Jiangnan Deep Teal, Elegant Pink-White, and Warm Wood Ochre—replacing prior inconsistent chromatic choices and more authentically evoking the serene, refined ambiance characteristic of the Jiangnan canal region. Auxiliary graphics are likewise systematized, with recurring motifs—including rhythmic canal wave patterns, textured water-town facades, carved garden elements, and delicate floral abstractions—developed into a unified, scalable, and thematically coherent suite of visual assets deployed consistently across all brand touchpoints.

Simultaneously, the visual system is upgraded, and the product packaging, store space, promotional materials, and cultural and creative surroundings are iteratively updated. First, strategically segment and refine packaging into three distinct tiers: premium custom editions, everyday standard versions, and seasonal limited editions. For high-end intangible cultural heritage gift boxes, integrate sophisticated design elements—including panoramic Grand Canal motifs, silhouettes of iconic Yangzhou historic architecture, and ink-wash-inspired Jiangnan landscapes—elevated through premium finishing techniques such as foil stamping, debossing/embossing, and tactile textured substrates to underscore luxury, artistry, and meticulous craftsmanship. Everyday product packaging adopts streamlined, minimalist patterns and lightweight, functional designs that balance contemporary aesthetics with practical usability. Seasonal limited editions draw inspiration from Grand Canal folk festivals and time-honored traditions, translating them into cohesive, narrative-driven visual themes that collectively form a unified, collectible series. Second, the unified style of offline stores across the country, the use of new Chinese wooden national style interior decoration, with the canal culture exhibition board, intangible cultural heritage technology exhibition area, Jiangnan aesthetic scene, to create an immersive intangible cultural experience space. Third, e-commerce pages, posters, short video covers, and cultural

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and creative peripherals are optimized at the same time, so that the brand visual design system is unified.



Figure 2 Evolution of Xie Fuchun's Trademarks Through the Ages

(2) ICH Transmission Layer: Deepening the Cultural Narrative to Empower and Amplify Communication

Context inheritance is the biggest difference between ICH brands and ordinary commercial brands, and it is also the key to solving the superficiality and homogenization of brand vision. Xie Fuchun deeply excavates the multi-cultural context of the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal, avoids the accumulation of elements, transforms the abstract cultural spirit, historical memory and folk aesthetics into a real visual language, and integrates cultural empowerment and visual communication.

First, refine the canal trade, historical context, do exclusive cultural narrative visual design. First of all, combined with the millennium business prosperity of the Yangzhou Canal and the history of ' Yangzhou first, Yizhou second ', the visual series of the canal business theme is designed. Secondly, the historical scene materials such as the ancient Yangzhou canal wharf, water transport ships, salt merchants ' market wells, and old street shops are applied to gift box patterns, posters, and short films to visually reproduce the canal 's bustling that year. And let consumers feel the heavy history of the brand. Thirdly, combined with the historical accumulation of the brand for nearly two hundred years, the brand 's historical visual corridor is made in stores and ICH exhibition halls to tell consumers the story of the brand and the canal growing together.

Second, the integration of folk culture and lifestyle aesthetics indigenous to the canal region serves to cultivate emotional resonance among the public. Drawing upon localized customs—including grooming traditions, floral symbolism, festive rituals, and urban aesthetic sensibilities along the Jiangnan Grand Canal—the brand systematically incorporates these vernacular elements into its visual design framework. Like in the brand design combined with Jiangnan wedding dress, festival etiquette culture, do the national style dress aesthetic content, with the scene of the visual transmission of Oriental beauty culture and canal life aesthetics, so that the brand vision is not only publicity, but also can inherit the canal folk customs, ICH skills, Jiangnan life aesthetics, so that consumers have a sense of belonging to the brand.

Third, rely on the official cultural platform, the authority of the dissemination of context vision. Through the official platforms such as canal intangible cultural heritage exhibition, time-honored brand expo, regional cultural and art festival, cultural and tourism promotion meeting, the brand uses AR, VR and other virtual reality technologies to dynamically display intangible cultural heritage skills, and combines canal theme static

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exhibits, cultural visual exhibitions and other forms to fully display the brand 's canal cultural visual system. With the help of the authority and communication power of the official platform, the influence of brand culture is improved and the spread of ICH context is promoted..

(3) Cross-Sector Integration Layer: Diversified Collaboration as a Strategic Lever for Expanding the Boundaries of Brand Visual Communication

In the new media era, a single communication mode is difficult to meet the needs of the breakthrough development of time-honored brands. Multiple cross-sector integration has become the key path for brand visual communication to break through the circle, expand the audience and enhance the influence. Xie Fuchun can build an all-round, multi-level and young visual communication system from four aspects : cultural tourism cross-border, artistic cross-border, digital cross-border and public welfare cross-border, and constantly expand the brand communication scene and audience group.

From the perspective of cross-sector cultural tourism, we deeply dock the cultural tourism resources of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal and do scene-based visual communication. Through cooperation with the core scenic spots, cultural tourism institutions and ancient town blocks along the canal, the brand creates the canal theme joint gift box, cultural tourism and cultural creation, scenic spot limited products, and makes a differentiated cultural tourism visual product matrix. At the same time, we will create flash shops, non-heritage experience counters, and national style card points in the core scenic spots, bind brand vision and canal cultural tourism landscape together, and create immersive scenes. And under the guise of tourist traffic, high-frequency exposure, wide dissemination of brand vision.

From the perspective of art cross-sector, linkage of national style art resources, enhance the level of visual art. Through in-depth cooperation with Jiangnan national style artists, non-legacy craftsmen, national style IP, traditional calligraphy and painting institutions, brand designs joint posters, artistic limited packaging, organizes non-legacy painting exhibitions and national style photography exhibitions, integrates Jiangnan paper-cutting, Yangzhou lacquerware, garden aesthetics, traditional Chinese painting and other local art elements into brand vision, so that vision has both commercial value and artistic value, attracting more art lovers and national style lovers, and enriching brand culture connotation.

From the perspective of digital crossover, the brand relies on new media and digital technology to lay out a younger communication matrix. From the perspective of young audiences, the brand should comprehensively upgrade the visual content of platforms such as Douyin, Xiaohongshu, WeChat Video, and Bilibili, continuously release lightweight and creative non-legacy skills science popularization short films, national style beauty blockbusters, canal culture images, product evaluation and other videos to break the public 's stereotype of time-honored brands. At the same time, the brand should keep up with the development trend of digital cultural creation, through digital collections, virtual national style IP, online national style visual exhibition and other forms, fit the aesthetics and habits of the Z generation, and realize the breakthrough to the younger group.

From the perspective of public welfare cross-sector, brands should rely on cultural public welfare communication to shape brand image. The brand should establish a deep cooperative relationship with the canal culture protection agency and the non-genetic inheritance public welfare organization, and undertake the

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public welfare activities of the canal non-heritage protection, the popularization of traditional culture and the inheritance of time-honored brand skills. Through public welfare communication, the cultural responsibility and social value of the brand are transmitted, and the brand 's goodwill and reputation are enhanced.

(4) Brand Activation Layer: Upholding Tradition While Innovating for Sustainable Brand Development

The ultimate goal of visual communication of ICH brands is to make the brand develop for a long time and let the culture survive. Xie Fuchun should always adhere to the principle of " taking integrity as the foundation and innovation as the driving force, " balance the intangible cultural heritage and modern aesthetics, build a sustainable and optimized brand visual activation system, and enhance cultural value and commercial value together.

First, ' upholding tradition ' is to keep the characteristics of ICH and take root in canal culture. In the process of all visual upgrading and innovation of the brand, the brand always retains the core classic symbols of the brand, including the classic modeling of duck egg powder, the cultural symbols of ancient techniques, the aesthetic style of traditional perfume, the core characteristics of Jiangnan national style, and resolutely avoids excessive trending. Homogeneous design prevents the loss of the cultural heritage and ICH characteristics of the century-old brand. And always take the Grand Canal culture as the core, supported by intangible cultural heritage skills, consolidate the brand 's differentiated competitive advantage, and ensure the continuity of brand inheritance and the purity of culture.

Secondly, ' innovation ' is to fit modern aesthetics, and the trend of all-media communication continues to optimize. The brand should simplify the traditional complex visual patterns and design style to adapt to the modern simple aesthetic. And optimize the visual communication of online e-commerce and new media, and improve the visual adaptation and communication effect. Through innovative visual narrative methods, from the traditional single product display, to cultural narrative, scene aesthetics, skills science, emotional resonance of multiple visual expression, so that the brand vision more storytelling, appeal and communication. At the same time, the brand should be deeply combined with the annual trend of national style and the aesthetic preference of young groups, and carry out phased visual adjustment and content update to maintain the freshness and vitality of the brand vision.

Finally, the brand should establish a sound visual communication effect evaluation and optimization mechanism to ensure long-term operation and development. Aiming at different groups such as local residents, foreign tourists, online young consumers, and art lovers, through questionnaires, online comment analysis, user interviews, and communication data monitoring, the audience 's visual image of the brand is comprehensively collected. Feedback information on the content and form of communication. According to the data results, this paper systematically analyzes the aesthetic preferences and communication needs of different groups, optimizes the visual design and communication strategies, dynamically adjusts the content, channels and forms of communication, and continuously improves the brand visual recognition, communication effect, user recognition and loyalty. The closed-loop development model of ' design-communication-evaluation-optimization ' is formed to promote the long-term development of the brand and the continuous innovative communication of canal culture.

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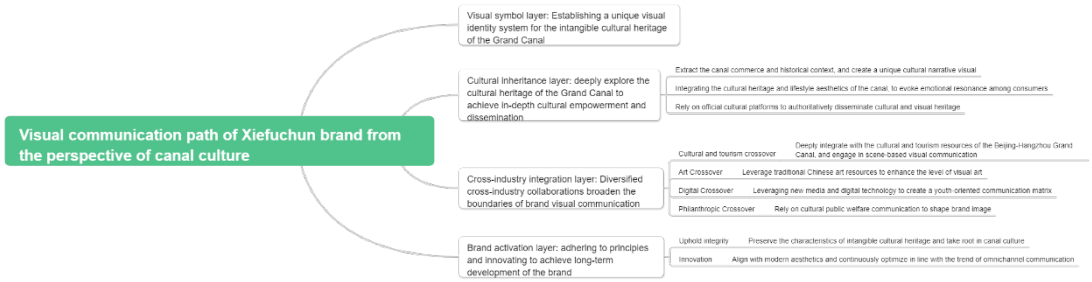


Figure 3 Visual Communication Pathway of Xie Fuchun Brand under the Perspective of Canal Culture

5. Conclusion

The Grand Canal culture integrates the six cultural belts of Yan-zhao, Qi-lu, Central Plains, Huai-yang and Wu-yue, and has the characteristics of inclusive and open, north-south integration and multi-symbiosis. Culture contains rich business context, folk aesthetics, handicrafts, landscape symbol resources. The protection and inheritance of the ICH resources of the Grand Canal is an important prerequisite for the cultural empowerment, visual upgrading and brand activation of the time-honored brands. It is also an important foundation for the ICH brands to highlight their characteristics and long-term development.

Under the current trend of national tide, popularization of digital communication and deep integration of culture and tourism, ICH brands should not only be limited to selling products and transmitting skills, but also integrate regional culture, intangible cultural heritage skills and brand image to reshape brand cultural value. And how to transform the heavy traditional culture into the modern aesthetic content that can be appreciated, spread and consumed in a visual way, so that the culture can be truly inherited as the primary consideration.

This paper takes the representative of the Grand Canal ICH brand ' Xie Fuchun ' as an example to sort out the symbiotic relationship and development status between the brand and the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal culture. The problems and causes of visual communication in cultural mining, new media communication and scene adaptation are analyzed. It puts forward a four-dimensional collaborative communication system of visual symbol reconstruction, context narrative empowerment, cross-border integration and breakthrough, and immersive experience landing. It provides reference suggestions for solving the problems of Xie Fuchun 's visual homogenization, cultural superficiality, single communication and old image.

The research focuses on the visual communication of the Grand Canal 's ICH cultural symbols in the brand, and clarifies that its core is based on the regional context, the visual symbol as the carrier, the multiple communication as the path, and the brand activation as the goal. It is concluded that only by basing on regional culture, adhering to the core of ingenuity, and innovating visual design and communication mode, can non-heritage time-honored brands effectively break through the dilemma of homogenization communication and realize brand upgrading and long-term development. Xie Fuchun 's communication practice shows that the canal regional culture can give the time-honored brand a unique brand heritage, and modern visual communication is the key path to reshape its brand image, reach young audiences, and adapt to market development. The communication strategy proposed in the research not only provides a practical plan for Xie Fuchun 's visual upgrading, all-media communication and brand audience rejuvenation, but also provides a reference

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for the optimization of visual communication of ICH brands along the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, helping the innovative communication of time-honored brands and strengthening the influence of regional brands. However, there are some problems in this study, such as single case and limited universality of conclusions. In the future, different types of intangible cultural heritage brand samples will be added to further improve the research system of ICH brand communication through comparative study of differentiated visual communication strategies.

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