

Research on Cultural and Creative Product Design Based on the Wuhan City Image*

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Abstract—This paper studies the design of cultural and creative product for Wuhan city image, summarizes the research status of city image, and combs the relationship between cultural and creative product and city image. Cultural and creative product is the medium for communication of city image. This paper explores the positioning of Wuhan city image and its connotation, analyzes the problems of existing cultural and creative product in Wuhan, and carries out design practice with the theme of “water” and “design capital”.

Keywords—city image; Wuhan city image; product design

I. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of globalization and urbanization, the competition between cities is not only limited to economic scale, talents, and market, etc., but also extends into many aspects such as culture, environment, and quality, etc. Therefore, establishing a good city image is conducive to strengthening city competitiveness. In recent years, Wuhan has developed rapidly and achieved gratifying results. It has more demands for the shaping and dissemination of its own city image.

II. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ON CITY IMAGE

In the 1860s, the study of foreign city image theory was born. The study of city image with modern significance in China began in the 1990s. The city image is a comprehensive perception and evaluation of the various elements of the city formed in the brain of the public inside and outside the city through direct or indirect ways.¹ Generally speaking, the basic elements such as historical culture, regional

characteristics, natural features and economic foundation, together with the distinctive key content of residents' behavior, cultural atmosphere, customs and customs, constitute a specific city image. The emergence of city image is a complicated process and there is a wide discussion on its generation mechanism and process. In general, the three cores of city image generation: the objective existence of the city, the mass media and the subjective cognitive effect of the public are generally recognized.² With the modern information media, the public's cognitive effect is a result of psychological choices and psychological reactions of the public inside and outside the city.

Research on the city image can now be roughly divided into three directions: design, marketing and communication. The first is the positioning, planning and design of the city image. The positioning of the city image is a concentrated expression of the city's characteristics and connotations, such as the conference-type city — Geneva, the cultural city — Rotterdam, and the gourmet city — Chengdu, etc.; planners and designers choose distinctive content to symbolize through the exploration of material and non-material resources in the city to locate, plan and design the city image. The second is the marketing research of the city image. Regional marketing refers to planning and design made to meet the needs of the regional target market. Successful regional marketing should satisfy residents, tourists and investors' expectations of the region.³ The city image marketing is similar to product marketing. According to the selected theme of actual research, we continuously strengthen it while carrying out related activities, and spread it through the media to form a distinct city image. The third is the study of the communication of city image. Jin Yuanpu

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¹ [United States] Paul Knox, Steven Pinch, Chai Yanwei, Zhang Jingqiu, etc. Introduction to Urban Social Geography [M]. The Commercial Press, 2005.

² Yang Xuming. Research on City Image: Path, Theory and Its Trends [J]. Journal of Southwest University for Nationalities (Humanities and Social Sciences), 2013(3).

³ Guo Guoqing, Liu Yan. The Latest Development of Urban Marketing Theory Research and Its Enlightenment [J]. Contemporary Economy & Management, 2006(2).

believes that “the successful city image lies not only in the design process, but more importantly in maintaining and continuously promoting”.⁴ Today, with the rapid development of science and technology, various media have emerged as an effective tool to shape and spread a good city image. People obtain urban information through diversified and fragmented methods to form corresponding perceptions and contribute to the final cognitive results. The above research is used in practice and is constantly adjusted dynamically and supplemented.

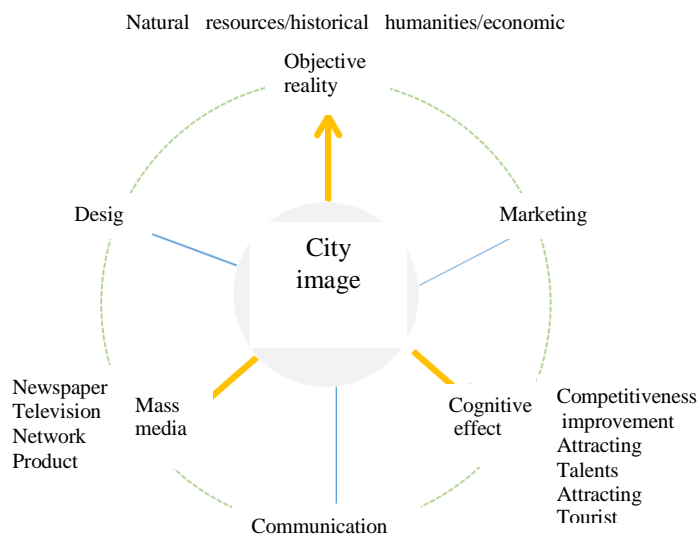


Fig. 1. Dimensions and research directions of city image (painted by the author).

III. CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCT AND CITY IMAGE

Culture is the soul of a city, and its image is a business card that leads development. The rapid development of cultural and creative industry is conducive to the realization of urban innovation drive and transformation and development. The combination of cultural and creative industry and urban development will help to create a sense of identity to regional culture, attract tourists and enhance regional economy. A good city image is conducive to enhancing the city's competitiveness, and products play an important role in promoting the city image.

People's perceptions and feelings about a city often start with products, such as Paris luxury, Tsingtao beer, and Wuhan duck neck. In recent years, cultural and creative product has appeared in large numbers. It not only meets people's functional needs, but also has the function of satisfying people's spiritual needs. As one of the media of city image communication, cultural and creative product is characterized by easy dissemination, strong influence and easy resonance. With the rapid development of network technology, cultural and creative product has spread more

quickly and extensively, and the related urban cultural image has also been more strongly promoted than before. For example, the New York travel advertisement and the logo "I love New York" are widely printed in various places and develop into a part of American popular culture; the "I know" tape introduced by the National Palace Museum in Taipei enjoyed popularity for a time in China and has become a must-buy for many tourists to Taipei. It has played a significant role in spreading the city image of Taipei and the promotion of the National Palace Museum in Taipei. Nanjing has also developed the cultural and creative products based on regional culture, such as Qinhuai Gifts, Nanbo cultural and creative product, and Lizhi cultural and creative product, etc., which has become an important part of the spread of city image, greatly expanded the cognitive range of the city image and promoted the value of city image.

At the same time, the characteristic of the mass production of cultural and creative product determines that its scope of influence is large population. Under the premise of meeting specific functions, it can also influence and guide people's psychology, cognition, and behavior, etc., and play the role of activating the cultural life of citizens, enhance their cultural quality and artistic accomplishment. The cultural literacy of the citizens is also one of the basic elements that constitute the city image. Good citizen literacy can also enhance the city image and make the city give out a lasting charm.

IV. THE CONNOTATION OF THE POSITIONING OF WUHAN CITY IMAGE

The historical, cultural and social characteristic of a city is the foundation and internal strength of urban development and together constitute the integrity of the city. Wuhan, located at the intersection of the Yangtze River and Han River, has rich natural landscapes, a long history, diverse cultures and strong connotation. It is a city combines classical and modern atmosphere.

In September 2014, Wuhan identified the slogan of Wuhan city image of "Wuhan, every day is different" and the logo of Wuhan city image with the main body of "Han" seal character as in "Fig. 2". It represents the rapidly developing and the ever-changing Wuhan, and contains the connotations of Jiangnan Chaozong, Chu and Han culture, and central city. In November 2017, Wuhan was officially selected by UNESCO as the fourth "design capital" in China; in 2018, the leaders of China and India walked along Wuhan East Lake... The design capital, and "East Lake of the World" became the new business card of Wuhan, which helps the positive spread of Wuhan city image.

⁴ Jin Yuanpu. The city image in the era of great competition (volume two) [J]. Beijing Planning Review, 2005 (6).



Fig. 2. The logo of Wuhan city image.

In the natural landscape, the two rivers flow together, with the Turtle Mountain and Snake Mountain standing on both sides. Wuhan has a unique mountain and water resource, which is known as the "Connection of Nine Provinces", "River City" and "The City of Thousand Lakes". In the history and humanities, Panlong Ancient City is the first known ancient city in the Yangtze River Basin. The story of lofty mountains and flowing water creates the culture of bosom friend. The landmark building Yellow Crane Tower forms the memory symbol of "White Cloud and Yellow Crane"; in modern times, it is one of the birthplaces of modern Chinese industry, representing the urbanization process from the agricultural civilization to the industrial civilization; the first revolt of 1911 Revolutionary Movement has made it a revolutionary center of China and promoted the development of democratic cities. In cultural diversity, the past of the famous commercial town has accumulated a unique wharf culture; the convergence of south and north has formed a number of special foods, such as hot noodles with sesame paste and duck neck that is famous around world; on the golden waterway, "the first bridge on the Yangtze River" laid the foundation for bridge culture and unique urban landscape; the gathering of universities and talents make it have an inclusive cultural atmosphere.

These natural, historical and cultural characteristics provide a rich cultural resource foundation for the construction and spread of Wuhan's city image, and together constitute the city image and connotation of "Great Wuhan with Great Lakes and Great River". The design, development and spread of cultural and creative product need to excavate the connotation and strengthen the characteristics to promote people to form specific impressions and memories, pointing to the image of Wuhan.

V. CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCT DESIGN THAT HIGHLIGHTS WUHAN CITY IMAGE

The process of reasonable extraction of connotation and characterization of Wuhan city image and applying to various types of cultural and creative products is not simply mechanical application and imitation. There are relatively successful scale production and commercialization promotion, as well as cases of outdated content and insufficient market conversion.

A. Analysis of Existing Cultural and Creative Product in Wuhan

The "In-depth Research Report on Wuhan Tourism Market" completed by the Wuhan Branch of the China Tourism Research Institute in 2013 mentioned that more than 60% of nonlocal tourists prefer the duck necks. The local product is only the "primary stage" representing the urban cultural image and can't be counted as a cultural commodity in the strict sense. The cultural and creative product that are truly representative and can promote the city image must be rooted in regional culture to carry out creative processing and complete marketing, and form a good reputation and cognition. Obviously, the existing cultural and creative product is not enough to visualize and commercialize Wuhan city image.

As the most representative "Wuhan gifts", those appear in the shops of various famous tourist attractions are mostly the products made of intangible cultural heritage skills as in "Fig. 3", such as lacquer ware, paper-cutting, and wood carving, etc. with high price; there are also some small daily necessities for sale, such as cups, bookmarks, and key chains, etc. in "Fig. 4", which still stay at the stage of tourist souvenirs, and lack of communication, influence and innovation.



Fig. 3. Bronze chime bells.



Fig. 4. Ceramic daily necessities.

The "Hand-painted China - Word Painting of Wuhan", launched by the teachers and students of Wuhan Technology and Business University, was once popular at that time. It selected 34 landmark buildings and landscapes in Wuhan, and used the form of calligraphy and painting to tell people

the story of river city Wuhan. AR technology was also added in it, which makes people see the vivid, three-dimensional animated image through the mobile phone scan in "Fig. 5". In the Collector's Edition of "Word Painting of Wuhan" launched in 2018, people can make the miniature statue model of the Yellow Crane Tower by themselves as in "Fig. 6".



Fig. 5. "Word Painting of Wuhan" AR effect display.



Fig. 6. Yellow Crane Tower miniature statue model.

On the whole, the responsibilities and functions of Wuhan cultural and creative product have not yet been exerted, and the characteristic cultural and creative products representing Wuhan's urban cultural image have not yet been formed. There are roughly the following problems: the products lack modernity. For example, the content and form

of some intangible cultural heritage products are mostly old and lack innovation in technology. In terms of content, the symbol elements are too concentrated and less attention is paid to the new symbol elements today; the awareness of brand promotion is not enough. Although Wuhan has a "Wuhan Gift" brand, it has not yet formed a wide-ranging recognition and brand image with Wuhan characteristics.

B. Design Practice

1) *Theme selection*: In recent years, Wuhan has taken the advantage of "water" and launched plans for "two rivers and four banks", "Yangtze River New City" and "Jiangnan Chaozong" to create a strategic image of the core city of the Yangtze River Economic Belt. In addition, in 2017, Wuhan became the "design capital" and the theme of the declaration was "New Life of the Old Town". With creative design as one of the key driving forces for sustainable development, the old city is constantly rejuvenating, indicating that Wuhan is transforming towards cultural creative industry and will gradually form a new Wuhan cultural image. Through the analysis of the latest government development measures and urban new business cards in Wuhan, "water" and "design capital" are selected as the themes of this design, so the design of cultural and creative product will be made from these two directions.

2) *Symbol extraction*: We need to follow the positive selection principle in choosing cultural symbols, show the latest appearance of the city, the level of economic development or the latest government planning, etc., promote the cultural communication of the region externally, and enhance the centripetal force and pride of the citizens internally. Relevant imagery and symbol analysis are carried out from the two directions of "water" and "design capital" to make previous preparation for the development of the subsequent design.

TABLE I. SYMBOL ANALYSIS

theme	Relevant images	symbol	Communication content
"water"	Great Wuhan with Great Lakes and Great River	Yangtze River, Han River, Donghu Lake	Urban natural environment, humanity history, multiple cultures and modern urban landscape and new city concept
	Great bridge culture	Yangtze River Bridge	
	Food culture	hot noodles with sesame paste, Chinese doughnut and Whchang Bream	
	Wharf culture	Hankow Customs, Jiangnan road and marshland	
"design capital"		The 1911 revolution memorial hall	
		Yangtze River Bridge in Parrot Cay	
		optical valley in Wuhan	
		Zhai Yage Museum	

3) Case Practice

a) *"Water" theme design of Wuhan*: "The First Bridge of the Yangtze River"—Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge is the urban landscape and memory closely related to "water" in the city image of Wuhan city. It is used as a prototype for stationery design to extract the unique steel frame structure and bridgehead shape of Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge. It is

vividly applied to the product as in "Fig. 7", through the material object — cucoloris — two-dimensional expansion — multi-directional change. We should also match the dynamics of the train passing through the Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge with the movements of using the pencil case to constitute an interesting experience.

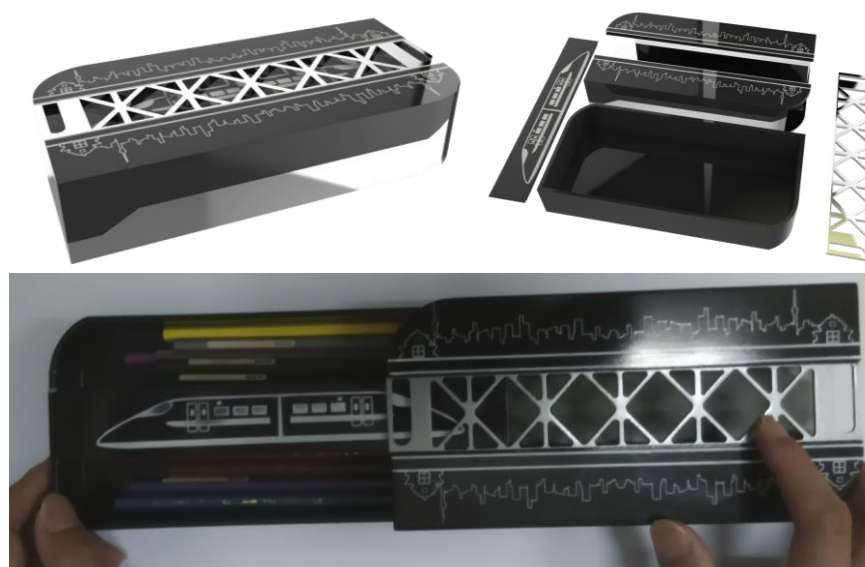


Fig. 7. Stationery design of Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge (Design: Zeng Li and Liu Changsheng).

b) The theme design of "Design Capital" Wuhan: The living room of "Design Capital" Wuhan – Zhai Yage Museum is the main body of design. Nowadays, Zhai Yage bears the function of brand publishing, disseminating and communicating of the design capital. It also has the function of historical and cultural exhibition hall and conference salon, which can be said that it is a new window for the city image of Wuhan. Taking Zhai Yage as a design object, we can expand the cultural connotation of advancing with the times and innovating creativity in the city image of Wuhan,

and embody the city image of Wuhan in a material and direct way.

Aiming at the existing personnel visit situation and functional use of Zhai Yage, we continue to carry out the direction of stationery design, develop the cultural and creative product of notebook and booklet, and extract the unique window form in the building as the main design element. Since the predecessor of Zhai Yage Museum is a gymnasium, it is also considered to incorporate certain sports elements in the design.



Fig. 8. Visual Symbol Extraction of Zhai Yage.

The design of the pattern in the inner selects the form of Zhai Yage building and makes flattening to retains its main features and information: the front side writes "Zhai Yage Museum 2016", which represents that Zhai Yage opened

officially after renovation in 2016; On the back, "Zhai Yage Fitness Center 1921" represents the completion of its construction in 1921.



Fig. 9. Commemorative album of Zhai Yage Museum.

VI. CONCLUSION

Today, competition among cities is becoming increasingly fierce, so shaping a good city image is one of the effective means to enhance the city's competitiveness. The cultural and creative product plays an important role as a medium for the spread of city image. Wuhan has achieved rapid development in recent years, and has begun to conduct new research on the means of city image promotion. Therefore, it also needs the matching cultural and creative product. Based on the latest developments of Wuhan, we will design the cultural and creative product of Wuhan city image from two different perspectives to create a distinctive Wuhan urban cultural image.

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