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DESIGN OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCTS FOR GUANGZHOU'S HE XIAN'GU BASED ON CULTURAL TOURISM INTEGRATION

KEY WORDS: CULTURAL TOURISM INTEGRATION, SPSS ANALYSIS, FOLKLORE, CULTURAL AND CREATIVE DESIGN

ABSTRACT

Objective: To identify the visual symbols and categories of cultural and creative products based on the legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou, and to find methods and pathways for integrating this culture into the tourism industry.

Method: Using quantitative analysis, we conducted a questionnaire survey among tourists visiting the He Xian'gu scenic area in Guangzhou. We aimed to identify the types of products that can be integrated into cultural tourism based on the legend of He Xian'gu. Guided by semiotic theory, symbolism theory, and consumer psychology theory, we designed images that best reflect the cultural connotations of the legend and applied them to the tourism products that tourists are most likely to purchase.

Conclusion: The categories of cultural and creative products for the legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou should focus on local specialty packaging, souvenirs, and promotional products. The main images that make up the design of these products should represent the cultural meanings of "Harmony," "Filial Piety," "Longevity," and "Love" inherent in the legend of He Xian'gu. By visualizing these stories and applying them to appropriate tourism products, the integration of culture and tourism can be achieved.



INTRODUCTION

The legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou is a folklore that radiates from southern China to parts of Southeast Asia. Originating in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), it has evolved and been passed down for over a thousand years, forming a narrative system primarily focused on "He Xian'gu of Guangzhou and Hanging Greens." This legend embodies the worldviews, philosophies of life, and values of the people in this region. In 2009, it was included in the third batch of Guangdong Province's Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

1. Analysis of the Current State of Development of the Legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou

Over the years, the legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou has evolved and slowly formed a narrative system that includes historical relics. The main content consists of stories involving He Xian'gu and the local area of Zengcheng as well as surrounding cities. These stories center around themes such as filial piety toward parents, healing the sick, love for one's hometown, and living a long, healthy life. Each story is rich in plot and linguistic description, specifically embodying the cultural meanings of "Harmony," "Filial Piety," "Longevity," and "Love" that are integral to the legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou. With the advent of the visual era, the modes of transmission for oral folklore have also changed. Particularly in the 21st century, with the nation placing increased emphasis on the protection of intangible cultural heritage, the legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou has entered the public eye through various "performances and exhibitions."

Since 2010, the Zengcheng District Government has organized multiple events in the He Xian'gu scenic area, including cultural performances, sacrificial ceremonies, and local snack exhibitions, under the titles "He Xian'gu Temple Fair" and "Guangzhou (Zengcheng) He Xian'gu Cultural Tourism Festival." These events focus on "cultural performances" as the core of cultural tourism. However, the product offerings of this kind of tourism are too narrow and time-limited, with just a few days of activities per year, making it hard to sustain interest. Moreover, there are no related iconic products for He Xian'gu, making it difficult to resonate with tourists visually and psychologically. Practical experiences have re-

peatedly shown that composite cultural tourism products have a stronger appeal to consumers¹. However, looking at the tourism market for He Xian'gu in Guangzhou, aside from brief performances during cultural tourism festivals, there are no significant flagship products. The essence of cultural tourism integration is for culture and tourism to realize value coupling in a shared market through product integration, industry formation, and element clustering. Product integration is the foundation of cultural tourism integration, and large-scale cultural tourism complexes that include dining, lodging, entertainment, shopping, sightseeing, and experiential activities around a single cultural theme vividly represent the product-level integration of cultural tourism². The cultural value of the "Legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou" needs to find suitable products for integration.

2. Positioning of Cultural and Creative Product Design Based on the Legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou

To more precisely design cultural and tourism products based on the "Legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou," the author conducted a survey using questionnaires among tourists visiting the He Xian'gu scenic area in Guangzhou. The survey collected information on tourists' "travel objectives," "shopping categories," "level of familiarity with the legend of He Xian'gu," and "willingness to purchase He Xian'gu cultural and creative products," among other aspects. A total of 108 questionnaires were distributed, and 108 valid questionnaires were received in return. Aside from questions related to gender, age, and region of origin, the questionnaire employed a Likert scale for question design. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 28.0.0.0(190).

1 Wang Xiuwei. From Interaction to Symbiosis: The Structural Dimensions, Evolutionary Logic, and Development Trends of Cultural Tourism Integration. *Journal of Southwest University for Nationalities (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition)*, Vol. 42, No. 5, 2021, pp. 29-36.

2 Wang Xiuwei. From Interaction to Symbiosis: The Structural Dimensions, Evolutionary Logic, and Development Trends of Cultural Tourism Integration. *Journal of Southwest University for Nationalities (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition)*, Vol. 42, No. 5, 2021, pp. 29-36.

2.1 Analysis of Tourist Survey Questionnaire in the He Xian'gu Scenic Area of Guangzhou

The data shows that the male to female ratio among tourists participating in the survey was 45.4% and 54.6% respectively. Tourists under the age of 45 accounted for 90.7%. When analyzing the age data of the tourists, there was no statistically significant difference compared to the corresponding data for China's overall tourism market from the Forward Industry Research Institute, which is 85.1%. This shows a clear trend toward younger tourists.

In order to analyze tourists' intention to purchase He Xianggu's cultural and creative products, first of all, we need to find out which variables are related to tourists' intention to purchase He Xianggu's cultural and creative products from all the questions. We combined the variables "familiarity (FAM)" for "the extent to which tourists know the legend of He Xianggu" and "the extent to which tourists hear the story of He Xianggu in the local area". The two variables "Story-telling (STO)" are added together to generate a new composite variable "comprehensive cultural familiarity (SYN)", which is used as a variable to measure the degree of tourists' knowledge of He Xianggu culture, It is used to ana-

lyze the relationship between tourists' knowledge of He Xianggu and their willingness to purchase cultural and creative products. Then, the variable "agricultural products' willingness (FAR)", which is a measure of "tourists' intention to purchase agricultural products with He Xianggu logo", and the variable "souvenirs' willingness (CUL)", which is a measure of "tourists' intention to purchase souvenirs with He Xianggu logo", are used to analyze the relationship between tourists' knowledge of He Xian Gu and their willingness to purchase cultural and creative products. The two variables are added together to create a new composite variable "willingness to purchase He Xianggu cultural and creative products (SYP)", which is used as a measure of tourists' comprehensive willingness to purchase He Xianggu cultural and creative products.

We used Kruskal-Wallis 1-way ANOVA and Mann Whitney U to test the variable "willingness to purchase (SYP)" as a Test Variable and other variables as Grouping Variables (Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1 Kruskal-Wallis 1-way ANOVA(N=108.df=4)
Test Variable: willingness to purchase He Xianggu cultural and creative products(SYP)

Grouping Variables	Original hypothesis	Significance ^{a,b}	Decision
age(AGE)	The distribution of the combined willingness degree of tourists to buy cultural and creative products of He Xianggu is the same in the category of tourists' age.	0.038	The original hypothesis is rejected.
region(REG)	In the category of tourists' origin, the distribution of tourists' overall willingness to purchase He Xian Gu's cultural and creative products is the same.	0.483	The original hypothesis is retained.
Purpose of travel(PUR)	The distribution of tourists' overall willingness to purchase He Xianggu's cultural and creative products is the same among the categories of tourists' purpose of travel.	0.019	The original hypothesis is rejected.
He Xianggu scenic spot intention goods (PRH)	In the category of He Xian Gu scenic spot intention goods, the distribution of tourists' comprehensive willingness degree to purchase He Xian Gu cultural and creative products is the same.	0.011	The original hypothesis is rejected.
Comprehensive cultural familiarity (SYN)	In the category of tourists' comprehensive familiarity with He Xianggu culture, the distribution of tourists' comprehensive willingness to purchase He Xianggu cultural and creative products is the same.	0.000	The original hypothesis is rejected.

a. Significance level is .050.b. Shows asymptotic significance.

Table 2 Mann Whitney U (N=108)

Test Variable: willingness to purchase He Xiangu cultural and creative products (SYP)

Grouping Variables	Original hypothesis	z	Asymptotic saliency (two-tailed)	Decision-making
Gender(GEN)	The distribution of the degree of willingness to purchase He Xiangu's cultural and creative products is the same in the category of visitors' gender.	-0.463	0.643	The original hypothesis is retained.

The post hoc test results were as follows: The purpose of tourism (PUR), the intention goods of He Xiangu scenic spot (PRH), and tourists' comprehensive familiarity with He Xiangu (SYN) are the factors related to the willingness degree of tourists to buy He Xiangu cultural and creative products, and we need to launch a detailed analysis of these variables in order to more accurately find the categories of He Xiangu cultural and creative products that meet tourists' psychological expectations.

1). Purpose of tourism (PUR):

We performed a chi-square test on the categories of tourists' tourism purposes to Guangzhou He Xiangu Scenic Area to test the randomness of the survey results, and the chi-square value of the test result was 49.5, with significance less than 0.001, suggesting that the data of each category were not randomly distributed. The survey data showed that nearly 40% of all tourists, who were young and middle-aged, had the purpose of learning about history and culture, occupying the first place among the various tourism purposes (Figure 1)

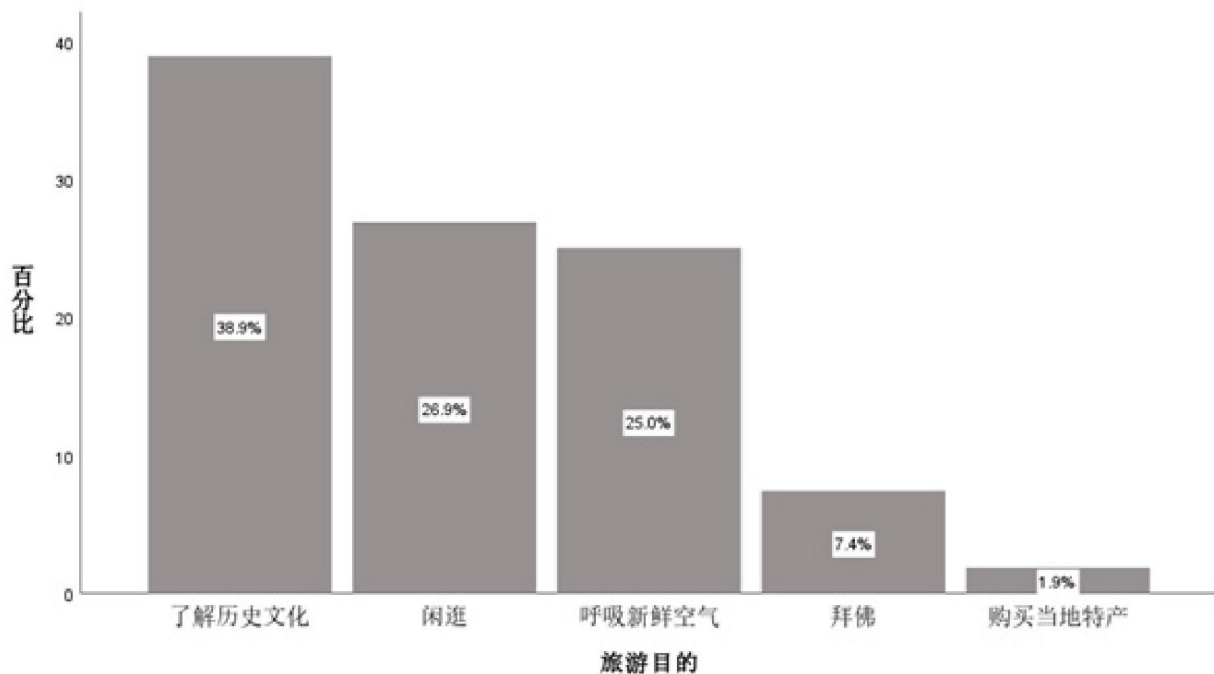


Figure 1 The proportion of tourists' tourism purposes in Guangzhou He Xiangu Scenic Spot

2). Intention to buy He Xiangu product categories (PRH)

The top three percentages in the selection of the types of goods intended to be purchased in He Xiangu scenic spot are, respectively, the local specialty dry goods category with 30.6%, the traditional snack category with 28.7%, and the sou-

venir category with 25% (see Figure 2). According to the results of Bonferroni test, the tourists who tended to buy local souvenirs in the first place were statistically significantly more willing to buy products with the He Xiangu logo than those who chose to patronize local snack stores in the second place; the tourists who wished to buy the desired souvenirs in the third place were not

statistically significantly different from those who tended to buy local souvenirs in the acceptance of products with the He Xianggu logo. There is no

statistically significant difference in the acceptance of products with the He Xianggu logo and those who tend to buy local souvenirs.

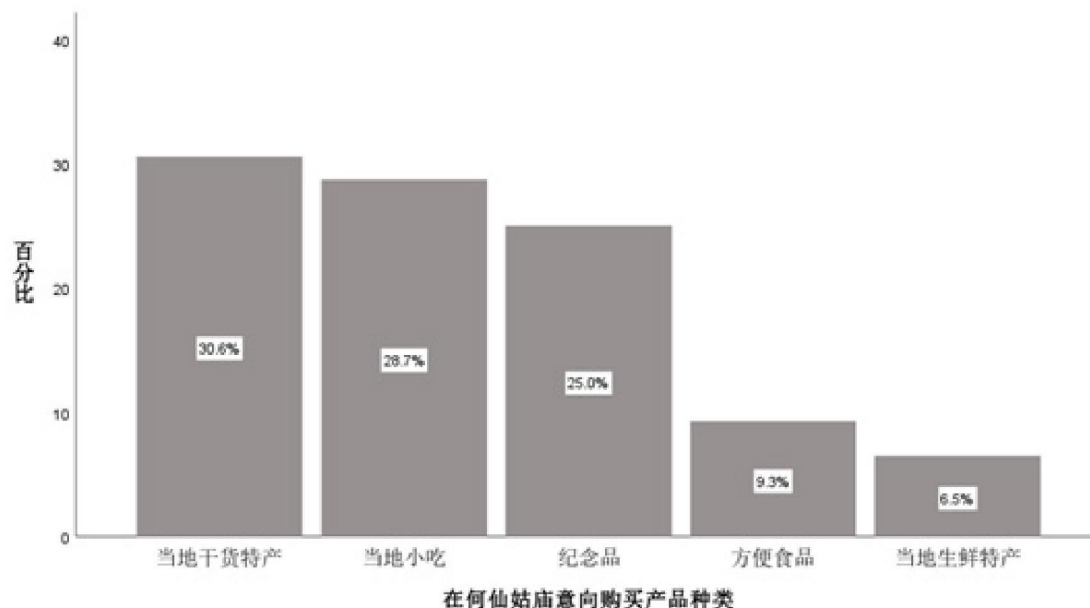


Figure 2 Visitors in Guangzhou He Xian Gu scenic spot intends to buy product categories

3) Visitors' comprehensive familiarity with He Xianggu (SYN)

Table 3 Spearman correlation test table

Tourists' comprehensive familiarity with He Xian Gu culture (SYN)	Correlation coefficient	Tourists' comprehensive willingness to purchase products with He Xian Gu logo (SYP)	.532**
	Significance (two-tailed)		0.000
	N		108

** .At the 0.01 level (two-tailed), the correlation is significant.

The results of the correlation analysis show that there is a positive and strong correlation between tourists' comprehensive familiarity with He Xianggu culture and tourists' comprehensive willingness to purchase products, suggesting that as tourists' familiarity with He Xianggu culture increases, tourists' willingness to purchase products with the He Xianggu logo increases accordingly (see Table 3).

Since there is a strong positive correlation ($r=0.532$) between the variable of tourists' comprehensive cultural familiarity (SYN) and tourists' comprehensive willingness to purchase products (SYP), we return the two calculated variables to the original variables and again use Spearman's correlation analysis to conduct cross-correlation analysis on these four original variables, and the results show that there are moderate to strong positive correlations between the two original variables concerning tourists' familiarity with the

culture of He Xianggu and the two original variables concerning tourists' willingness to purchase products with the He Xianggu logo, suggesting that as tourists' knowledge of the legend of He Xianggu (FAM) increases and/or as tourists hearing about the introduction of the story of He Xianggu (STO) locally increases, tourists' willingness to purchase cultural products with the He Xianggu logo (CUL) and agricultural products with the He Xianggu logo (FAR) will both increase accordingly (Table 4).

Table 4 Correlation Cross-tabulation

Awareness level of HeXiangu legend(FAM)	Correlation coefficient	Willingness level of buying Hexiangu logo cultural products(CUL)	Willingness level of buying Hexiangu logo farm products(FAR)
		0.36	0.452
Knowing locally introduced level of HeXiangu stories(STO)	Significance	< 0.001	< 0.001
	Correlation coefficient	0.523	0.453
	Significance	< 0.001	< 0.001
	N	108	108

2.2 Conclusions from the Questionnaire Analysis on Cultural and Creative Products Based on the Legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou

According to the results of the questionnaire analysis, the tourists show a trend towards youthfulness. They are relatively interested in the historical and cultural aspects of tourist destinations, and the culture of the destination is a major factor attracting them to visit and shop. This lays the foundation for the integration of cultural tourism based on the Legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou.

The main products that tourists purchase in the scenic area are local specialty dried goods, traditional snacks, and souvenirs. The culture of the Legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou can be integrated with these types of products.

There is a positive relationship between the level of understanding of the Legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou and the willingness to purchase cultural and agricultural products with He Xian'gu branding. The higher the level of understanding of the legend, the more willing tourists are to purchase products that bear the He Xian'gu branding. Therefore, when considering He Xian'gu cultural and creative products, the categories for promotional products should be taken into account.

3. Sources of Symbols for Cultural and Creative Products Based on the Legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou

American cognitive psychologist Donald A. Norman divides emotional design into three parts: "visceral, behavioral, and reflective." That is, the products we design must first be appealing at the visceral level to the user's cognitive perceptions in order to trigger purchasing behavior, thereby satisfying the user's emotional needs¹. Therefore, the cultural and creative design based on the Legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou needs to extract symbols that best represent the content of the legend.

¹ Norman D A. Emotional design: People and things[J]. Retrieved February, 2005, 1.

3.1 Symbol Extraction for Character Image Design

Character image design includes not just the design of the character's shape, but also the design of their clothing, hairstyle, and accessories. In the Legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou, the most core character is undoubtedly He Xian'gu herself. The cultural and creative products based on this legend must design a character image that best fits He Xian'gu's personality. Specific textual descriptions can be found in relevant historical literature. For example, in the stele inscription "Zengcheng He Xiangu Shenying Ji" by Li Deyang, the Deputy Governor of Guangdong during the Wanli period of the Ming Dynasty, he describes He Xian'gu whom he saw in his dream as "around 17 or 18, with neatly combed hair, a round face, wearing green and red garments, and having an exceptional jade-like complexion, unlike anything of this world"². This text not only describes He Xian'gu's age and face shape but also records her clothing and skin color, making it an important reference for the design of He Xian'gu's character image. Furthermore, many historical texts note that He Xian'gu was born during the Tang Dynasty, so the makeup styles of the Tang period can serve as important references for the design of He Xian'gu's character image.

3.2 Extraction of Scenic Symbols

In the Legend of He Xian'gu in Guangzhou, He Xian'gu is intricately intertwined with numerous local plants, scenery, and characters, forming multiple stories with local characteristics. If a story is to be explained with a single image, the content of the image must represent the most significant elements of the story. Therefore, the visual symbols in the cultural and creative products based on the Legend of He Xian'gu are the visualized results of its representative stories.

The legend of "Guangzhou He Xian'gu and Gua Lü" (Hanging Green) is the longest-standing and most widely spread story within the He Xian'gu legend sys-

² Jiangnan Tongzhi, Volume 150, People Chapter, 2005, Wenjing Pavilion Siku Quanshu, Volume 173, Beijing, China: Commercial Press.

tem in Guangzhou. It describes the origin of a unique local fruit variety in Zengcheng. According to the legend, after He Xian'gu became an immortal, she descended to her hometown Zengcheng one day. In the evening, she saw the beautiful scenery of the lychee orchard and sat on a lychee tree to embroider some shoes. She lost track of time while embroidering, and by the time she realized it, dawn was breaking. She quickly packed up her needle and thread and left a strand of green thread hanging on the lychee tree. Later, the fruits from this tree were found to have a green thread wrapped around them. This variety of lychee was named "Gua Lü" (Hanging Green), and locals believe it was a gift from He Xian'gu to express her love for her hometown. Not only does this variety differ in appearance from other lychees, but its taste is also exceptionally sweet and fragrant. During the Qing Dynasty (1636-1911), it became a royal fruit. In 2002, a "Zengcheng Gua Lü" was auctioned for 555,000 RMB and made it into the Guinness World Records, increasing its fame and influence. Therefore, this story is the primary source of visual symbols for cultural and creative products based on the Guangzhou He Xian'gu legend.

Of course, there are many other stories within the Guangzhou He Xian'gu legend system that express themes of "filial piety," "love," and "harmony." For instance, "Guangzhou He Xian'gu and the Immortal Peach on the Tile" represents the culture of "filial piety." We can fully explore the deeper meanings conveyed by these stories and extract relevant symbols to form the imagery of cultural and creative products.

4. Guangzhou He Xian'gu Legend Cultural and Creative Product Category Design

4.1 Local Specialty Packaging Design

As for local specialties, the external form of their culture can mainly be reflected in packaging design. The cultural resources or traditions that have accumulated within a region serve as an inexhaustible source of inspiration for local specialty packaging design. Mr. Gadd of the UK once said, "A successful packaging design can quickly convey product information to consumers and attract customers from 4 meters away." This indicates that in addition to its basic function of protecting the product, product packaging also plays a significant role in reflecting brand philosophy and conveying cultural connotations. Incorporating the legend of He Xian'gu into the packaging of local specialties not only enables the product to have the ability to "tell a story," but also reflects unique local culture, aligning with people's objectives for cultural tourism.

The legend of Guangzhou's He Xian'gu mainly targets the packaging design of local specialty dried goods like dried lychee and dried longan. Illustrations from the "Legend of Guangzhou He Xian'gu and Gua Lu (hanging green)" are applied to different sizes of dried lychee packaging boxes (see Figure 3). At the same

time, the Zengcheng District has been consistently dedicated to the industrial upgrading of specialty agricultural product processing. It has gradually transitioned from initial processing to deep processing, forming a series of specialty products like vegetable noodles, fruit jams, lemongrass hydrosol essential oil, and lychee wine. Using He Xian'gu cultural symbols for packaging is the best approach for promoting He Xian'gu culture in the region and facilitating the integration of culture and tourism at the grassroots level.



Figure 3 Dried Lychee Specialty Packaging Box Design in Different Sizes

4.2 Design of Specialty Souvenirs

While local specialties and local foods with practical use are often purchased by tourists as souvenirs, tourists usually also buy a type of narrow-sense souvenir that de-emphasizes practical use but highlights collectible or cultural value. The history of souvenirs may be as ancient as travel itself; they are the material outcomes of cross-cultural encounters involving trade, pilgrimage, and tourism³. Evidence confirms that as far back as the Hellenistic period (around 300 BC), travelers would break off small pieces of statues or buildings to take home as souvenirs. To protect the originals, early artisans invented substitutes made of clay and soil, selling them piece by piece⁴. This activity underscores the significance of souvenirs for travelers. They serve as tangible evidence of a visit to a specific place or as a display of the unique social and cultural aspects of a locale⁵ and stimulate memories and associations related to the tourist destination, providing psychological comfort and symbolism. Therefore, souvenirs must incorporate strong symbolic information from the tourism destination to transform intan-

3 Feijs L, Kyffin S, Young B. Design and semantics of form and movement. Northumbria University, Newcastle, 2007.

4 Museum für Angewandte Kunst Frankfurt (Ed.). Der Souvenir. Erinnerung in Dingen von der Reliquie zum Andenken. Frankfurt: Wienand Verlag, 2006: 72.

5 Olalere F E. Importance of product attributes for souvenir purchase preferences: A viewpoint of foreign tourists in South Africa. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 2017, 6(3): 1-10.

gible experiences into tangible memories.

Each era produces its own style of souvenirs, from mini industrial models of the Eiffel Tower in the early years, to plush toys featuring Disney animated characters later on, and more recently, blind boxes and collectible figures that have gained global popularity. The design of souvenirs based on the Guangzhou He Xianggu legends should also align with the aesthetic preferences of contemporary young people. Phone cases, blind boxes, and ornaments are all good choices.

4.3 Promotional Product Design

In the analysis mentioned earlier, there is a positive correlation between tourists' awareness of the He Xianggu legends and their purchase of related cultural products. This suggests that we need to design promotional categories for the He Xianggu cultural brand. Brand awareness represents the strength of the brand's presence in the target audience's mind⁶. When a product label becomes sufficiently popular, its promotion can spread like wildfire⁷. Therefore, promotional products are crucial.

Although our physical product designs have served a promotional role for He Xianggu culture to some extent, building a brand in tourists' minds still requires a multi-dimensional display of cultural symbols. Urry, in his book "The Tourist Gaze 3.0," posits that once an image of the tourist destination lingers in the viewer's mind, they will have the desire to visit the real scenes depicted in comics, animations, movies, live-action

shows, games, etc⁸. Therefore, the IP image of the He Xianggu legends can extend to various domains. For example, promotional brochures for tourist attractions, welcome signs, admission tickets, picture books, and comic books can all incorporate elements of He Xianggu's symbolism. Additionally, mascots can be designed to be displayed at tourism festivals, tourism trade shows, or other events to offer a more diversified presentation of the He Xianggu cultural brand.

5. Conclusion

The integration of culture and tourism is not merely about forcibly combining the two; the core of tourism development lies in the interpretation of symbolic elements⁹. Culture serves as the source of these symbols, and the scope and type of cultural symbols applied are key factors in determining whether cultural-tourism products will be favored by tourists. The creative product categories related to the legends of He Xianggu in Guangzhou should focus on local specialty packaging, souvenirs, and promotional products that tourists are interested in. The main imagery for these creative product designs should embody the cultural essence of the He Xianggu legends, which includes themes of "harmony," "filial piety," "longevity," and "love." By visualizing these stories and incorporating them into appropriate tourism products, the objective is to advance the integrated development of both the industry and value aspects of cultural-tourism, ultimately achieving mutual growth for both culture and tourism.

6 Occhi, D. Kumamon: Japan's Surprisingly Cheeky Mascot (A. Freedman & T. Slade, Eds.)[J]. In *Introducing Japanese Popular Culture*(Routledge). 2017:14-23.

7 Roger VANGS. *Attracting International Tourists through Mascot Awareness*[D]. Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, 2019.

8 Urry, J., & Larsen, J. *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*[M]. London: SAGE Publications, 2011.

9 Liu Yang, Xiao Yuanping. *Logic and Transformation of Cultural-Tourism Integration—Based on the Investigation of Tianlong Tunpu (1998-2018)*[J]. *Enterprise Economy*, 2020(04): 129-137.

