

INNOVATIVE INTERPRETATION OF HAKKA VISUAL SYMBOLS AND THEIR APPLICATION IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCTS

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Abstract

Hakka's intangible cultural heritages, such as knowledge, way of life, and rituals, were also highlighted in the exhibition. Hakka's wedding ritual was creatively designed and displayed among the exhibited rituals. Taking the wedding in southern Gannan as a case, this paper discusses the origin, development and cultural innovation of Hakka culture. As a huge special ethnic group, Hakka has a large market development space, while southern Gannan is home to nearly 10 million Hakka families, which is the largest gathering place of Hakka families in the world. With an area of nearly 40,000 square kilometers and 20 counties and urban areas, it has very rich cultural resources and geographical advantages, which provides extremely favorable research and creation space for the project. Hakka Folk Cultural Relics Museum of Gannan Normal University has the largest collection of Hakka folk cultural relics in China. It has collected more than 30,000 sets of Hakka folk cultural relics in eight series, including Hakka architecture, ancient books, paintings, ceramics, clothing and furniture. It collects and extracts Hakka cultural elements from these cultural relics. The study on Hakka culture has a history of more than 100 years since Luo Xianglin, a scholar in the Republic of China. The research and development of Hakka folk art is still in the initial stage, the relevant applied research results are relatively scarce, and the excellent works are rare. Especially with the continuous development of society and the continuous progress of human civilization, people's marriage concept and aesthetic are constantly changing, and the visual elements in Hakka traditional marriage customs are also experiencing cultural loss. In this research, Hakka's marriage rituals and culture were studied, revealing and reflecting people's pursuit of happiness through stages of life, from marriage, reproduction, and childbirth. From this Hakka wedding ritual, the researchers were able to analyze and synthesize the essence of the ritual in the forms of auspicious patterns and art design. Such elements can appropriately be used to design Hakka's modern wedding concepts and innovative Hakka's wedding-related products with aesthetic and cultural values and could be the way to prolong the Hakka heritage to the next generation.

Keywords: Hakka Visual Symbol, Hakka Culture Innovation Interpretation, Hakka Wedding.

1. INTRODUCTION

Hakka wedding, as an important part of Chinese traditional culture, contains rich historical information and unique cultural value (Huang, 2022). It not only embodies the unique ethic, family and social values of the Hakka people, but also is a living fossil for the study of folk customs, social changes and cultural inheritance. With the acceleration of globalization and modernization, traditional wedding practices are at risk of being marginalized. At present, the research on Hakka wedding is mainly concentrated in the fields of folklore, sociology and anthropology (Wang, 2021). Through field investigation, literature analysis and other methods, scholars have carried on a more comprehensive discussion on the ritual process, etiquette, customs and symbolic significance of Hakka wedding (Ardizzoni, 2021). However, most of these studies focus on descriptive analysis, and there are relatively few studies on the internal cultural changes, modern adaptability and cross-culture comparison (Pang, 2020). In recent years, the Chinese government has attached great importance to the protection of intangible cultural heritage and introduced a series of policies to support

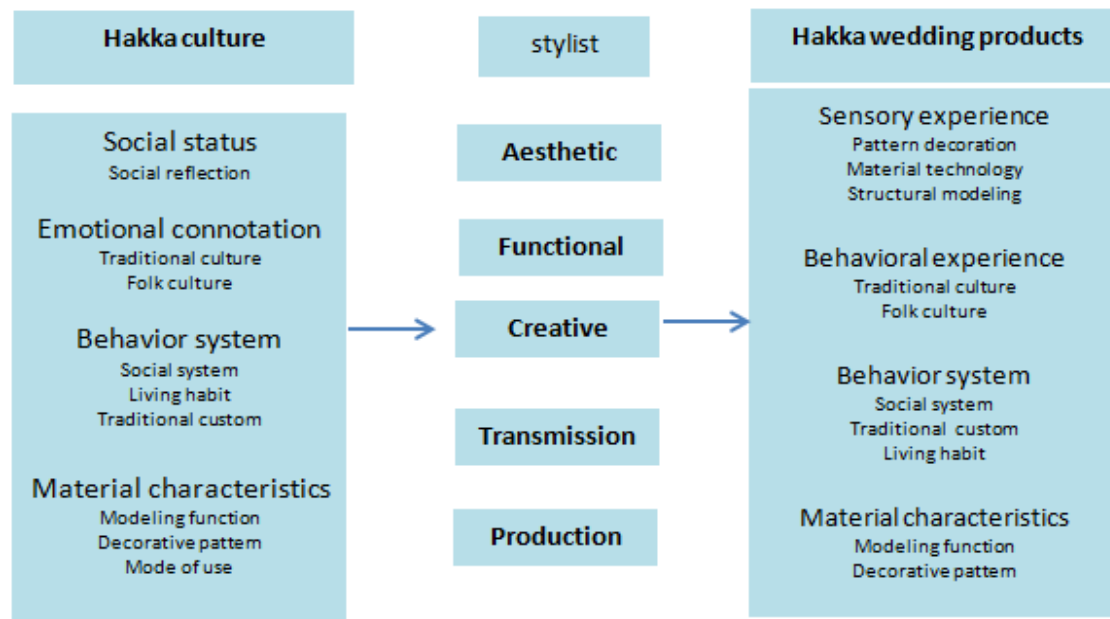
the research and inheritance of folk culture, providing policy soil for the research of Hakka wedding (Yu et al., 2023). However, the research gap is mainly reflected in the lack of in-depth discussion on the inheritance and innovation mechanism of Hakka wedding in contemporary society, the cognition and acceptance of the young generation, and the communication strategy of Hakka wedding culture in the digital era s (Lin et al., 2019). Discuss the origin, development, status and inheritance of Hakka wedding in Hakka culture. Analyze the patterns, patterns and their symbolic meanings used in Hakka weddings to reveal their cultural connotation and national spirit.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

History and development of Hakka culture : The ancestors of Hakka people originally lived in the Central Plains, from about the Eastern Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, due to war and political turmoil, a large number of Han people moved south to Jiangnan, Fujian and Guangdong, and gradually formed the Hakka people with unique language, culture and living habits. After the Song Dynasty, Hakka people moved further to the southeast coast and inland mountainous areas, especially in Fujian, Guangdong, Jiangxi, Guangxi and other provinces and regions to form a relatively concentrated settlement (Tao et al., 2020). During the Ming and Qing dynasties, Hakka culture was fully developed and matured in these areas, forming its own unique social structure, religious beliefs, folk art and architectural style (Ying & Huang, 2023). This process also promoted the spread and diversification of Hakka culture. The study of Hakka culture has made some achievements, but there are still many fields to be explored. Strengthening the study of Hakka culture is of great significance for inheriting and promoting Hakka culture and promoting national unity and social development.

Related research of visual symbol theory: Visual Symbol Theory posits that visual symbols are not just aesthetic elements, but rather carry deep cultural significance and are used to convey complex ideas, emotions, and social messages (Qian et al., 2024). Explore the application and challenges of visual symbol theory in recording, protecting and disseminating intangible cultural heritage such as Hakka weddings, especially among the younger generation. In the context of Hakka wedding customs, Visual Symbol can be applied to analyze the visual symbols used in wedding rituals, such as the traditional Hakka wedding costumes, decorations, and accessories (Chou & Lo, 2022). For example, the colors, patterns, and designs on the wedding costumes may convey cultural values such as fertility, prosperity, and good luck (Rasika, 2024). The traditional cultural symbols, patterns, totems and so on are used in the design of clothing, jewelry, household goods and other products, giving the product a unique cultural charm (Wang & Kang, 2023). Hakka embroidery uses traditional crafts such as embroidery, weaving, carving and other skills, combined with modern production techniques, to create novel and artistic products, such as the combination of traditional crafts and modern home decorations (Liu et al., 2023).

3. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY



This research mainly aims to study the relationship between the perceptions toward the willingness of the young generation in adopting Hakka wedding rituals, experts in Hakka weddings and professions were involved as a sample apart from young generation in general. The researchers found that the proper sample size for the population of this study was 306, which was enough to provide a 95 percent confidence level for statistical significance or, in other words, it would generate a margin of 5 percent error for population interpretation. This research has put the best effort into distributing questionnaires to cover the range of ages of the participants in different professions and education background to ensure sample diversity. This research collected data and information from primary and secondary sources. All of the independent variable data were directly collected from the survey and questionnaires, which were distributed to the visitors who participated in Hakka wedding Exhibition at Gannan Normal University located at Jiangxi province. In this research, the data analysis was divided into descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, which was run using the IBM SPSS program (IBM Corporation). Details on the data analysis will be discussed further in the following sections. The analytical measure described the main characteristics of the collected data and attempted to summarize the data set in the numerical data for comparison. This descriptive statistical analysis is generally used to report, explain, and describe the nature of the sample. In this research, the parameters for the descriptive statistical analysis, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were presented in the form of figures to provide general attributes of the samples and for inferential statistical analysis in the next step. Inferential statistical analysis is very useful for defining the probability of the characteristics of the population based on the collected samples. Inferential statistical analysis also assesses the strength of the relationship between the independent (causal) and dependent (effect) variables. Moreover, inferential statistical analysis can assess the relative impact of various program inputs on program outcomes or objectives. The methods of inferential statistics involve mainly the estimation of parameters and the testing of statistical hypotheses.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To ensure that the questionnaire is correct to quantify and qualify the targeted characters and properties. This study used SPSS to conduct a reliability analysis of the 306 collected samples. Cronbach's alpha statistics approach was adopted to provide internal consistency of the scales (Cronbach, 1951). Generally, a high degree of validity reflects the characteristic intended to measure and provides valuable and meaningful data for further comparison and analysis.

Validity and Reliability Measurement

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient exceeding 0.8 suggests excellent Reliability of the questionnaire, while a coefficient below 0.6 indicates inadequate. The verification results are shown in Table 1. Table 1 presents the reliability test of all items in the questionnaires from the pretest. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each construct showed a very high level, ranging from 0.817 to 0.855. This result indicates a high level of internal consistency for a set of items in this questionnaire reflecting a strong reliability (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 1: Reliability Test Result

Variable	Terms	Corrected Item Total Correlation (CITC)	Croncha's Alpha after Item Deletion Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha
Perception of Charm	ML1	0.678	0.793	0.839
	ML2	0.650	0.805	
	ML3	0.675	0.794	
	ML4	0.682	0.791	
Perception of Culture	WH1	0.681	0.777	0.831
	WH 2	0.647	0.792	
	WH 3	0.649	0.792	
	WH 4	0.660	0.787	
Perception of Tradition	CT1	0.660	0.831	0.855
	CT2	0.772	0.806	
	CT3	0.691	0.819	
	CT4	0.719	0.807	
Perception of Authenticity	ZS1	0.678	0.704	0.817
	ZS2	0.649	0.769	
	ZS3	0.681	0.736	
Emotion	QG1	0.653	0.790	0.826
	QG2	0.691	0.751	
	QG3	0.704	0.738	
Intention to hold a Hakka wedding reception	YY1	0.667	0.829	0.856
	YY2	0.724	0.805	
	YY3	0.703	0.814	
	YY4	0.698	0.816	

In order to further ensure the accuracy of the research, this study also conducted a validity test on the questionnaire. Validity testing, in specific terms, refers to the degree of accuracy which a measuring tool or method can accurately measure the intended variables.

The questionnaire data were subjected to validity testing using the Kaiser- Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's sphericity tests through SPSS statistical analysis software . The KMO value ranges from 0 to 1, and a KMO value exceeding 0.6 indicates acceptable . A value closer to 1 suggests suitability for factor analysis. Additionally, if the significance level of Bartlett's sphericity test statistic falls within the 5% confidence

interval, it indicates that the scale is suitable for further factor analysis (Bartlett, 1950). The validity test of this study was presented in Table 6.

Table 2: Validity Test Result

	KMO Statistical Values	Approx. Chi-Square	df.	Sig.
Perception of Charm	0.815	459.601	6	.000
Perception of Culture	0.803	440.365	6	.000
Perception of Tradition	0.825	520.473	6	.000
Perception of Authenticity	0.717	315.914	3	.000
Emotion	0.718	336.906	3	.000
Willing to hold a Hakka wedding reception	0.823	520.330	6	.000

According to the results of the validity tests for each variable in Table 6, the KMO values for the dimensions of perception of Hakka wedding image are 0.815, 0.803, 0.825, 0.717, and 0.718 respectively, and the chi-square values for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity are 459.601, 440.365, 520.473, 315.914, and 336.906.

The KMO value for the willingness to hold a Hakka wedding among respondents is 0.823, and the chi-square value for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is 520.330. The significance level for the validity tests mentioned above is 0.000, which means that the p-value is less than 0.01, indicating statistical significance.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the various parts of the scales used in this study have good validity and are suitable for further empirical analysis and testing.

The results of the survey

The author conducted a focus group survey on "Hakka-themed weddings" with 50 couples. The comprehensive statistics show that most people are not very familiar with Hakka culture, but the majority of the couples are willing to try a Hakka-themed custom wedding. In terms of wedding design, eighty percent of the couples chose a combination of traditional Hakka culture and modern wedding design. This indicates that the fusion of traditional Hakka culture and modern wedding design is very popular among young people today and should not be underestimated in the future.

Wedding visual design is a typical example of irrational consumption in the industry. In recent years, as people's material well-being has greatly improved, spending on weddings has been continuously increasing. According to reports from authoritative organizations, since 2013, approximately 12 million couples in China enter into marriage each year, with total wedding expenditures nearing 1.5 trillion yuan. This shows that it is an industry with huge demand. According to current survey statistics, it is found that:

Organizing a banquet	Holding a wedding	Wedding planning	Honeymoon on travel	Wedding photography	Purchasing a wedding dress	Personalized customization
78.4 %	85.6 %	74.5 %	54.3 %	86.7 %	32.3 %	78.6 %

Most couples have shifted their wedding demands from "material" to "non-material" consumption, indicating a promising future market for wedding visual design.

In the theoretical framework of rebuilding Hakka culture in modern society, Hakka visual symbol theory plays a key role. The research of this theory has made two

contributions to the protection and inheritance of Hakka culture, which are embodied in the following aspects:

Through in-depth research on the visual symbols in Hakka culture, such as the architectural features of Hakka huts, the patterns and colors of Hakka traditional costumes, and the symbolic elements in Hakka folk art, the cultural identity of Hakka ethnic groups is strengthened, and the cultural significance behind these visual symbols is understood, which helps the inheritors and future generations to better understand and cherish their own cultural roots. Under the background of modern media and digital technology, the study of Hakka visual symbols provides a new way and method for cultural communication. By combining traditional Hakka visual elements with modern design and media technologies, Hakka culture can be innovatively promoted, making it more in line with the aesthetic and receptive habits of modern audiences (Zhang & Fang, 2023).

To promote the preservation and appreciation of Hakka culture, we can formulate reshaping strategies that incorporate anthropological theories and principles (Lim & French, 2024). These strategies can be applied to cultural products and services, particularly in the wedding culture domain, while respecting tradition and meeting modern aesthetic and functional needs. This theory emphasizes the merging of different cultural elements to create new forms of cultural expression. In the context of Hakka wedding customs, we can use this theory to blend traditional elements with modern aesthetics and functional needs. For example, we can incorporate contemporary wedding venues and fashion trends while preserving essential Hakka rituals, such as the tea ceremony, hair combing ceremony, and the bride's red clothing. This theory focuses on adapting global products and services to suit local preferences, values, and customs. In the case of Hakka wedding customs, we can apply this theory by designing wedding products and services tailored to the specific needs of Hakka communities. This may include developing specialized wedding packages, localized wedding venues, and themed wedding decorations that showcase the unique elements of Hakka culture.

5. CONCLUSION

Important findings about Hakka cultural characteristics, changes in marriage customs and attitudes of the new generation were obtained in this study:

Modern interpretation of Hakka cultural characteristics: Hakka culture is deeply influenced by its migration history and unique social environment, and its characteristics have taken on a new look in the 21st century (Cao et al., 2024). Modern Hakka culture not only preserves traditional elements such as language, customs and art, but also incorporates the multi-cultural characteristics of modern society (Guo, 2022). Changes of marriage customs: The research reveals the changes of Hakka marriage customs over time. Although traditional marriage customs retain some core rituals, they have adapted to the needs of modern life in form and practice. These changes reflect the dynamic and adaptive nature of culture. Attitude of the New Generation towards Hakka culture: The new generation presents a complex and diverse attitude towards Hakka culture. They tend to innovate and personalize cultural expression while respecting tradition. This represents the modern interpretation of traditional culture and personalized needs. Challenges and opportunities of cross-generational cultural inheritance: The new generation faces unique challenges in

inheriting Hakka culture. They are more inclined to contact and learn traditional culture through modern technology and innovative ways, which provides new opportunities for the innovative inheritance of traditional culture.

These findings not only provide a new perspective for understanding and promoting Hakka culture, but also provide practical suggestions and strategies for modern inheritance and sustainable development of Hakka culture.

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