

The Impact of Chinese Element Packaging on Purchasing Decision Factors of Overseas Chinese: An Empirical Analysis Based on 100 Questionnaires

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ABSTRACT

The integration methods of Chinese elements in marketing and their influence on consumers' purchasing decisions, the mediating effect of identity recognition therein, and the role of packaging design in purchasing decisions are the contents reviewed and discussed in this article. Research shows that whether Chinese elements are integrated into symbols or connotations, they can significantly enhance consumers' purchasing intentions, especially when cultural identity is strengthened. The influence of social media on identity is significant in a cross-cultural context, and this is especially true among overseas Chinese communities. Packaging design is the combination of brand culture and consumer psychology. In the context of globalization, its cultural adaptability is becoming increasingly important.

KEYWORDS

Chinese elements; Purchase decision; Identity recognition; Packaging design; Cultural identity

1 Research status and progress

1.1 The integration methods of Chinese elements and their impact on purchasing decisions

In recent years, the application of Chinese elements in marketing has gradually attracted attention, and most research has focused on the integration methods of Chinese elements and their impact on consumers' purchasing decisions. Shao Manting (2022) pointed out that the integration methods of Chinese elements can be roughly divided into two categories: symbolic integration and connotative integration. Symbolic integration mainly conveys Chinese culture directly through visual symbols, patterns and other forms, while connotative integration focuses more on the in-depth expression of culture, such as the transmission of brand stories and values. Research shows that consumers' purchase intentions can be significantly enhanced by these two integration methods. Specifically, brands that incorporate Chinese elements can effectively improve consumers' perception of aesthetic value and national pride compared to those that do not, thereby promoting an increase in purchase intentions. This process is regulated by cultural identity, and the stronger consumers' sense of identification with Chinese culture, the more obvious the effect of integrating symbols on enhancing the perception of aesthetic value and national pride becomes.

He Jiaxun et al. further explored the application of Chinese elements in the localization strategy of global brands and found that the local symbolic nature of brands and the possibility of product purchase are significantly positively influenced by the consistency of stereotypical images of Chinese elements. This discovery provides a new perspective for understanding the impact of Chinese elements on consumer attitudes and highlights the importance of cultural identity in this process. CAI Jiali and Cui Liping (2024) also pointed out that Chinese elements are not only the bearers of China's national image but also can demonstrate national dignity and national interests. As China's status on the international stage continues to rise, the international development trend of Chinese elements with Oriental charm is becoming increasingly obvious. This kind of cultural dissemination promotes the Chinese nation onto the world stage and provides new growth points for the international marketing and promotion of brands.

Against this backdrop, how Chinese elements can be effectively integrated into design and marketing strategies by brands is something that brands should fully consider. This can enhance consumers' emotional resonance and cultural identity and increase the possibility of making purchase decisions. Yao Jianping's research in 2000 pointed out the role of consumer psychological phenomena in packaging design and their impact on the sales of product packaging, which provided psychological support for brands to integrate Chinese elements.

1.2 The mediating effect of identity recognition in purchasing decisions

In the era of new media, the identity recognition of cross-cultural mobile groups is profoundly influenced by social media. Research shows that the short video content of overseas Chinese bloggers on Douyin can affect the construction of cultural identity and thereby influence purchasing decisions. The display of Chinese cultural symbols by bloggers can evoke emotional resonance among domestic audiences and thus form a "virtual community". In this process, overseas Chinese bloggers not only showcase their cultural identities but also actively shape their self-images, achieving feedback on cultural identity.

This research highlights the mediating effect of identity in purchasing decisions, especially in a cross-cultural context where consumers' cultural identity greatly influences their attitudes towards brands and products. Moreover, overseas Chinese can re-establish connections with their home country's culture through social media, enhance their sense of

identification with Chinese elements, and thereby affect their own consumption behavior. Tao Jiajun's (2004) research shows that identity theory has evolved multiple times to form different identity models, which provides a theoretical basis for understanding the role of contemporary identity in consumption behavior, especially in a cross-cultural context where identity is complex and consumers' purchasing decisions are influenced by multiple factors.

1.3 The relationship between Chinese elements and cultural identity

The relationship between Chinese elements and cultural identity is increasingly valued. Wang Pei and Hu Fawen mentioned that the social psychological process by which individuals acquire, maintain and innovate their own national culture is national cultural identity. In this process, the identity of national trend culture influences consumers' purchasing decisions at the levels of cultural symbols, identity and value, especially among the Z generation. When consuming, what they care about is not material needs, but the expression of individuality and the realization of cultural values.

Research shows that the recognition of domestic trend brands by Generation Z is closely linked to the construction of their cultural identity. When consumers choose domestic trend products, it is actually a process of identity recognition and social identification, and this identification will further promote consumption behavior. Liang Yue and Shao Dan (2024) also pointed out that cultural identity plays a mediating role between the local symbolic nature of brands and consumers' purchasing intentions, thereby highlighting the importance of cultural elements among young consumer groups. Wang Jinying and Jiang Yilin (2025) explored the impact of cultural consumerism on the youth group. They pointed out that the youth group is an important demand group in cultural consumption and that consumerism mainly targets the youth group. The values of young people are impacted by cultural consumerism due to its tendencies of symbolization and entertainment, and their consumption behaviors are also affected. When brands formulate marketing strategies, they should consider how to enhance consumers' cultural identity through the transmission of cultural symbols and values.

1.4 The impact of packaging design on purchasing decisions

In consumers' purchasing decisions, packaging design plays a significant role. Liu Wumei et al. (2020) found that the element information on packaging is an important source for consumers to perceive environmental stimuli and has a significant impact on consumers' decisions. Moreover, packaging elements are divided into verbal and non-verbal types, among which the verbal type mainly influences consumers' behavioral tendencies. Rather, non-verbal types focus more on emotional preferences. In packaging design, non-verbal elements such as color, design style and function can directly attract consumers' attention and stimulate emotional responses through visual stimulation to influence purchasing decisions. Sun Yunhai and Liu Xiaobin (2014) also pointed out that the cultural adaptability of packaging design is increasingly valued in the context of globalization. Brands must take into account the emotional resonance of consumers from different cultural backgrounds in order to enhance the market competitiveness of their products.

Packaging design is not merely the external manifestation of a product; it is also the integration of brand culture and consumer psychology. When designing packaging, brands should fully consider incorporating cultural elements to enhance consumers' recognition and emotional response, and facilitate the formation of purchase decisions.

2 Empirical results and analysis

The questionnaire survey method was used for the analysis of this article. There were 102 valid questionnaires. The

Table 1 Distribution table of demographic characteristics

Name	Options	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Gender	Female	48	47.059%	47.059%
	Male	54	52.941%	100.000%
Age	18-25	10	9.804%	9.804%
	26-35	46	45.098%	54.902%
	36-45	25	24.510%	79.412%
	46-55	20	19.608%	99.020%
	56 years old and above	1	0.980%	100.000%
Duration of residence	1 to 5 years	36	35.294%	35.294%
	11 to 20 years	24	23.529%	58.824%
	More than 20 years	4	3.922%	62.745%
	6 to 10 years	31	30.392%	93.137%
	Less than one year	7	6.863%	100.000%
Educational attainment	Doctoral degree	17	16.667%	16.667%
	or above			
	Bachelor's degree/Junior college	41	40.196%	56.863%
	Master's degree	33	32.353%	89.216%
The degree of familiarity with traditional Chinese cultural elements	High school and below	11	10.784%	100.000%
	"General	19	18.627%	18.627%
	Not very familiar	7	6.863%	25.490%
	Completely unfamiliar	11	10.784%	36.275%
	Relatively familiar	40	39.216%	75.490%
	Very familiar	25	24.510%	100.000%

questionnaire survey showed that in terms of gender, the proportion of males was slightly higher than that of females (52.941% for males and 47.059% for females). In terms of age distribution, the proportion of respondents aged 26-35 was the highest, reaching 45.098%, followed by those aged 36-45, accounting for 24.510%. Those aged 18-25, 46-55, and 56 accounted for 9.804%, 19.608%, and 0.980% respectively. Respondents who have lived overseas for 6-10 years had the highest proportion at 30.392%, those who have lived for 1-5 years and 11-20 years accounted for 35.294% and 23.529% respectively, and those who have lived for less than one year accounted for 6.863%. The proportion of respondents with 20 years of education was the lowest at only 3.922%. The proportion of respondents with a bachelor's or junior college degree was the highest at 40.196%, followed by those with a master's degree at 32.353%, those with a doctoral degree or higher at 16.667%, and those with a high school education or lower at 10.784%. The proportion of respondents who are relatively familiar with traditional Chinese cultural elements is the highest, reaching 39.216%. Those who are completely unfamiliar with them, 6.863% are not very familiar with them, 24.510% are very familiar with them, and 18.627% are generally familiar with them.

Table 2 Chinese Element Cognition

What do you think are the typical representatives of Chinese elements	N(Count)	Penetration rate	Response rate(%)
7、(Chinese knot)	44	43.137	21.600
7、(Dragon and phoenix pattern)	31	30.392	15.200
7、(Blue and white porcelain patterns)	44	43.137	21.600
7、(Calligraphy font)	16	15.686	7.800
7、(Traditional colors(Such as Chinese red))	34	33.333	16.700
7、(Ink-wash painting style)	20	19.608	9.800
7、(Paper-cutting art)	12	11.765	5.900
7、(Others)	3	2.941	1.500

In the multiple response frequency analysis of "Which elements do you think are typical representatives of Chinese elements?", Chinese knots and blue and white porcelain patterns were the most popular and tied for the top spot, each selected by 44 people, with popularity rates and response rates of 43.137% and 21.600% respectively. Meanwhile, dragon and phoenix patterns were more favored, with 31 people choosing them, a popularity rate of 30.392%, and a response rate of 15.200%. The popularity rate and response rate of traditional colors (such as Chinese red) were 33.333% and 16.700% respectively, ranking third. The popularity rates of calligraphy fonts, ink-wash painting styles, and paper-cutting art were 15.686%, 19.608%, and 11.765% respectively, and their response rates were 7.800%, 9.800%, and 5.900% respectively, and they decreased in sequence. The popularity rate and response rate of other options were the lowest at 2.941% and 1.500% respectively. In the eyes of the respondents, elements such as Chinese knots, blue and white porcelain patterns, and dragon and phoenix designs have distinct visual features and profound cultural connotations, and are the most representative Chinese elements.

Table 3 Core variable description statistics table

Variable name	Sample size	Minimum value	Maximum value	Standard deviation	Average value
Chinese elements	102	1	3.333	0.486	1.886
Identity recognition	102	1	4.5	0.744	2.218
Purchase decision	102	1.4	5	0.701	2.906

The sample size of the variable "Chinese Elements" is 102, with a minimum of 1, a maximum of 3.333, an average of 1.886, and a standard deviation of 0.486. This indicates that the respondents' evaluation or cognition of Chinese elements has a certain concentration trend, with small fluctuations and an overall cognition at a moderately low level. The sample size of the "identity recognition" variable is also 102, with a minimum of 1, a maximum of 4.5, an average of 2.218, and a standard deviation of 0.744. This reflects that there are certain differences in the identity recognition of the respondents and it is generally at a medium level. The sample size of the "purchase decision" variable is 102, with a minimum of 1.4, a maximum of 5, an average of 2.906, and a standard deviation of 0.701. This indicates that the purchase decision scores of the respondents are relatively scattered and generally at an above-average level.

Table 4 Mediating effect test result table

Mediation model		Equation fitting index			Significance of the regression coefficient			
Model		R	R ²	F	B	beta	se	t
Result variable	Predictor variable							
Purchase decision	Chinese elements	0.043	0.002	0.190	-0.063	-0.043	0.144	-0.435
Identity recognition	Chinese elements	0.090	0.008	0.816	-0.138	-0.09	0.152	-0.903
Purchase decision	Chinese elements	0.430	0.185	11.203	-0.007	-0.005	0.131	-0.054
	Identity recognition				0.404	0.429	0.086	4.709
Influence path	Effect value	Boot Standard error	Boot 95%CI		Relative effect value			
			Lower limit	Upper limit				
Overall effect	-0.063	0.144	-0.348	0.223	/			
Direct effect	-0.007	0.131	-0.268	0.254	11%			
Indirect effect	-0.056	0.059	-0.185	0.04	89%			

The test results of the Bootstrap method show that the indirect effect of Chinese elements on purchasing decisions is valid, with a 95% percentile confidence interval of (-0.185 to 0.04) and this interval does not include 0. Moreover, the direct effect of Chinese elements on purchasing decisions is also valid, with a 95% percentile confidence interval of (-0.268 to 0.254) and does not include 0 either. Identity recognition plays a partial mediating role between Chinese elements and purchasing decisions. The mediating effect accounts for 89% of the total effect, that is, -0.056 divided by -0.063.

The direct impact of "Chinese elements" on "purchase decisions" is not significant, with a direct effect value of -0.007. A confidence interval (-0.268 to 0.254) containing 0 indicates that this impact is not significant. However, "identity recognition" plays an important mediating role between "Chinese elements" and "purchase decisions", with a total effect value of -0.063 and an indirect effect value of -0.056. Accounting for 89% of the total effect, it indicates that most of the effects are transmitted through the mediating variable of "identity". In terms of regression coefficients, the regression coefficient of "Chinese elements" on "identity" is -0.138, which is not significant ($t=-0.903$), but the regression coefficient of "identity" on "purchase decision" is 0.429 and significant ($t=4.709$). This further proves its key mediating role in the model.

Overseas Chinese people's perception of packaging with Chinese elements is at a medium level, and the direct impact of Chinese elements on purchasing decisions is not obvious. The mediating effect of identity recognition has not yet been confirmed and still needs further verification.

3 Limitations and critical analysis

The influence of Chinese element packaging on the purchasing decisions of overseas Chinese is what this study aims to explore. However, this research has limitations and potential biases.

The research may have limitations in sample selection, and the diversity and representativeness of the samples may be lacking. Shao Manting (2022) pointed out that most current studies on Chinese elements focus on the symbolic level, while the exploration of the connotative level is still insufficient. This might limit the universality of the research results. Moreover, the cultural background and regional differences of the samples may affect consumers' perception and acceptance of Chinese elements, thereby influencing their purchase intentions.

The influence of cultural consumerism should not be underestimated. Wang Jinying and Jiang Yilin (2025) pointed out that the values and consumption behaviors of the youth group may be affected by cultural consumerism, and the overseas Chinese group is no exception [12]. Future research should focus on the impact of cultural consumerism on the packaging of Chinese elements and explore the way it shapes consumers' purchasing decisions.

When this study explores the influence of Chinese element packaging on the purchasing decisions of overseas Chinese, there are limitations as mentioned above in aspects such as sample selection, variable selection, and cultural consumerism. Future research should delve deeper into these aspects to enhance the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the study.

4 Future outlook

Under the background of globalization, the application of Chinese elements is gradually developing towards diversification and internationalization. Moreover, the cultural identity of overseas Chinese is strengthening, making the application of Chinese elements in packaging design an important trend. The integration of Chinese elements with modern packaging art design is not only the inheritance of traditional culture but also an exploration of the creative transformation of traditional culture. A profound understanding of Chinese elements and their integration with modern design concepts are the prerequisites for their fusion, in order to promote the innovative development of China's fine traditional culture in the field of modern packaging design.

Several new fields may be the focus of future research. With the rise of Generation Z, consumers' demands for cultural identity and individual expression are increasing day by day. When consuming, Generation Z does not merely satisfy

material needs; they also choose domestic trend products for identity recognition and social identity. How to use Chinese elements for packaging to meet the needs of this generation of consumers will be an important research direction.

The phenomenon of cultural appropriation will become a research hotspot in the future. When global brands design, the use of Chinese elements may carry the risk of cultural appropriation. Such "other" behavior may lead to cognitive biases of Chinese elements and affect the brand image. An important topic for future research is to explore how to effectively conduct cultural exchanges under the premise of respecting culture.

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