

Research on the Visual Communication Path of Huai'an Ancient Poems under the "Picture Book + Cultural and Creative Products" Model

Xuejing Shi, Ziqi Yang, Ying Wu, Peiqi Chen

Huaiyin Normal University, Huaiyin, Jiangsu, 223300, China

ABSTRACT

As a national historical and cultural city, Huai'an boasts abundant cultural heritage and unique regional culture. This paper takes the culture of Huai'an's ancient poems about the Grand Canal as its research perspective, uses picture books and cultural and creative products to tell the story of Huai'an's Grand Canal culture vividly, conducts innovation based on traditional culture to promote the in-depth integration of Huai'an's cultural and tourism industries, and explores the visual communication path of Huai'an's ancient poem culture under the "Picture Book + Cultural and Creative Products" model.

KEYWORDS

Picture books and cultural-creative design; Classical poetry of Huai'an Visualized dissemination

1 Introduction

In January 2025, the General Office of the State Council issued the "Several Measures on Further Cultivating New Growth Points and Prospering Cultural and Tourism Consumption", which points out that it is necessary to enhance the ability of product supply and enrich consumption formats and scenarios through cultural empowerment and tourism-driven development, so as to better meet the people's diverse, multi-level and all-round spiritual and cultural needs. With the development of social economy and tourism economy, research on cultural and creative products related to ancient poems has gradually increased, but there is still significant room for improvement in the quality of cultural and creative products. We will take methods such as literature analysis, case study, and induction-deduction to investigate the cultural resource value and the potential of visual communication in Huai'an's ancient poem, as well as the communication logic of the "Picture Book + Cultural and Creative Products" integration model for Huai'an's ancient poems, and the design of visual communication paths.

2 The Value of Huai'an's Ancient Poem Cultural Resources

2.1 Historical Inheritance and Regional Cultural Foundation of Huai'an's Ancient Poems

Huai'an has always been a famous presence in the volumes of ancient poems. In the Tang Dynasty, Cui Guofu's *Piaomu Bank* used the allusion of Piaomu and Han Xin to outline the regional historical and humanistic background; in the Northern Song Dynasty, Yang Wanli's *Tasting Huai White Fish for the First Time* praised the quality of local products; in the Ming Dynasty, Yao Guangxiao's *Reflections on the Past in Huai'an* described ancient buildings, preserving a unique style of the region. These poems, from various dimensions, jointly confirm the profound regional cultural heritage of Huai'an.

2.2 Image Types and Content Characteristics of Huai'an's Ancient Poems

Ancient poems are mainly divided into geographical and humanistic image types, and elements such as Huai'an's Zhenhuai Tower, Huai White Fish, and Huaihe River have formed a unique group of images. When readers deeply explore the geographical images in ancient poems, they can interpret the content of ancient poems at a deeper level and form a more comprehensive understanding of the regional characteristics, cultural concepts, poets' emotions, and historical backgrounds behind the ancient poems (Zhu Xiaohui, 2005) ^[1]. Therefore, Huai'an's ancient poems present content characteristics such as diverse themes, distinct regional features, and rich emotions. For example, Yao Guangxiao wrote in *Reflections on the Past in Huai'an* from an overlooking perspective: "Mountains and rivers turn with the land, and the Huaihe River stretches reaching the sky." The inclusion of mountains and the Huaihe River in the scene implies the height of Zhenhuai Tower. The final couplet advocates forbearance and recalls Han Xin, a hero in Huai'an's history. Appreciating the images depicted by poets helps us understand the history and culture of Huai'an.

3 The visual communication potential of Huai'an's Ancient Poems

3.1 Dilemmas and Opportunities in the Contemporary Expression of Huai'an's Ancient Poem Culture

Nowadays, there is a gap between Huai'an's traditional poems and the public in terms of aesthetics and exam-oriented education; the public still acquires cultural knowledge in a "fragmented" manner, lacking systematic learning approaches and innovative methods; young people show a strong sense of alienation from traditional culture. The outdated culture features weak interactivity and obscure content, which hinders the widespread dissemination and

branding development of Huai'an's ancient poems.

However, dilemmas are often accompanied by opportunities. The digital wave has provided new media channels for the revival of classic culture. TV stations can launch programs related to Huai'an's ancient poems. Wang Youya (2018) proposed that as a public communication channel, TV media should actively assume the social responsibility of spreading excellent culture and play a bridging role in promoting mainstream social values ^[2]. Short video platforms and social media can collaborate with online influencers to introduce Huai'an's ancient poems. Professional poetry researchers can start from the perspectives of literature and linguistics, and accurately interpret the artistic conception, rhetorical devices, and grammatical structure of ancient poems in a simple and understandable way, enabling young users to appreciate the profound cultural connotation and aesthetic value of ancient poems in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere (Huang Aiping et al., 2024) ^[3].

3.2 Analysis of the Visual Communication Value of Huai'an's Ancient Poems

The visual communication of Huai'an's ancient poems essentially involves the transformation of the contemporary value of traditional culture—shifting from static text to multidimensional experience through interactive offline graphic display. In this process, traditional crafts, folk activities, and other elements can be presented in innovative forms to stimulate the public's enthusiasm for participation. This not only sustains the cultural heritage but also endows traditional ancient poems with new vitality. The creation of IP images needs to be based on the cultural genes of Huai'an's ancient poems. For instance, tourists can experience the atmosphere of "overlooking the layered city with magnificent momentum" at Longguang Pavilion, and an ancient poem IP park similar to the Pop Mart Theme Park can be constructed. The development of cultural and creative derivatives can further expand the value of IPs. Both IP creation and derivative development can enhance consumers' cultural identity and emotional resonance, create new hotspots in cultural consumption, promote the prosperity of the cultural industry, and enable excellent traditional culture to enter people's lives in a more dynamic form.

4 The Communication Logic of the "Picture Book + Cultural and Creative Products" Integration Model

4.1 The Visual Narrative Characteristics and Educational Functions of Picture Books

Visual narrative refers to a way of conveying stories and information through visual media. The visual narrative of picture books mainly involves the use of three elements: images, text, and expressive components. Through the ingenious combination of these elements, a story is told, or emotions are conveyed (Liu Liming et al., 2024) ^[4]. In picture books, images are the most impactful and direct element; an excellent picture book even conveys deep emotions through colors, composition, and details. The educational function of picture books extends far beyond knowledge transfer—they can also be used to transmit culture and provide aesthetic education. Taking Longguang Pavilion in a picture book as an example: the swaying flower branches and fallen leaves in the image echo the autumn atmosphere through warm colors, while the building, depicted in cool colors, highlights its solemnity. The contrast between warm and cool colors enhances the visual hierarchy. The sky is rendered in light beige, and when combined with the clear outlines of the pavilion and city wall, it creates a bright atmosphere of "sitting under a clear sky" and conveys the cheerful mood of "the grand feast of the ancients".

4.2 The Communication Attributes and Cultural Value Inheritance of Cultural and Creative Products

Cultural and creative products are creative design works based on cultural connotations, forming a dynamic and complex ecosystem through four dimensions: function, symbol, emotion, and experience. These products "activate" cultural relics that are usually admired from a distance, fulfilling the primary mission of cultural communication; when consumers use them, the products serve as advertisement, realizing the repeated dissemination of culture and expanding the scope of cultural influence; in daily life, they are often given as gifts, acting as material carriers of emotions and memories. A higher level of communication is achieved when consumers deepen their understanding through interaction and independently explore the cultural connotations of the products.

According to the "14th Five-Year Plan for Development" issued by the General Office of the State Council, the state strongly supports the strengthening of cultural relic protection and utilization, as well as the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. The most effective way to inherit traditions is to keep pace with the times, integrate traditional culture and art with modern science and technology and aesthetics, and create works with greater contemporary significance and value (Shi Huiqing, 2025) ^[5]. Cultural and creative products, by keeping up with the times and continuously innovating and integrating, can broaden the path of cultural communication.

4.3 The Synergy Mechanism of "Picture Book + Cultural and Creative Products" in the Communication of Traditional Culture

Picture books and cultural and creative products each play an irreplaceable role in cultural communication. Their greatest value lies not in the simple superposition of their functions, but in the "synergistic effect" generated by their deep integration.

Through stories, picture books can systematically construct a framework for cultural cognition, generate emotional

resonance with readers, and by depicting vivid cultural scenes and activities, plant the seed of “longing for experience” in readers’ minds. On the other hand, cultural and creative products extract the core elements of this framework and transform them into objects that appear frequently in daily life, converting short-term emotional reactions into long-term emotional connections. They even provide the most accessible way for people to participate in and experience culture, turning ideological longing into practical engagement and completing the in-depth communication of culture.

5 The Design of the Visual Communication Path of Huai’an’s Ancient Poems under the "Picture Book + Cultural and Creative Products" Model

5.1 The Integration of Ancient Poem Selection and Regional Cultural Elements

Huai’an’s ancient poems are deeply engraved with the “genetic code” of the region. The flow of the Grand Canal and the Huaihe River constitutes their core genetic gene; a large number of poems have passed down the collective memory and identity of Huai’an as the “Capital of the Grand Canal” from generation to generation; scholars of all dynasties have expressed their admiration for former sages in their poems, which has become an important symbol of the regional humanistic and cultural character; as a border area between northern and southern China, the collision and integration of different cultures have endowed Huai’an’s poems with a unique charm.

5.2 The Creation of Ancient Poem Picture Books and Methods of Visual Transformation

The theme selection and poem selection for this picture book creation are all based on *Three Hundred Poems of Huai’an’s Grand Canal*, which fully demonstrates the historical heritage and humanistic spirit of Huai’an over thousands of years. To cater to the target audience of picture books, while retaining the classic original text, the emotional sustenance of the poets is conveyed through poetic and narrative painting language. In terms of determining the visual style of the picture book, instead of adopting the traditional ink painting style, a painting style that combines traditional aesthetics with contemporary appeal is chosen based on Huai’an’s regional cultural characteristics, and this style also embodies “poetic charm” and “childlike innocence”.

Cultural and creative derivative products have also been designed for this picture book creation, featuring both aesthetic appeal and practical functions. In addition, a unified visual identification system has been established for brand positioning, with the design of core elements emphasized to form a set of implementable rules. This helps build the sub-brand “Poetic Huai’an Depicted in Pictures” and form a sustainable cultural product system for operation.

5.3 The Serial Development and Brand Expression of Cultural and Creative Products

The core value of the serial development of cultural and creative products lies in two aspects: unifying the visual language to enhance brand memory through repeated exposure; designing cultural products that cater to different scenarios to effectively meet diversified needs. Serial design aims to expand the product range, highlight the common characteristics of cultural and creative products, and align with the same cultural theme, thereby strengthening the image of the museum (Deng Yunbo, 2018)^[6].

Brand expression aims to go beyond the product itself; by shaping unique core values and a consistent brand image, it establishes a deep emotional connection with consumers. The core of branding for cultural and creative products lies in ensuring high consistency in aspects such as packaging, product positioning, and logos, so that consumers form a unified perception of the product image; in addition, products need to tell compelling brand stories to arouse consumers’ resonance and sense of belonging, connect products with consumers’ in-depth emotional needs (such as identity recognition), and cultivate customers’ consumption loyalty.

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