



VILLAGE IDENTITY RESEARCH AND DESIGN: CASE OF STUDY ON ZHAOSHAN, HUBEI
PROVINCE, CHINA



A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Doctor of Philosophy Design Arts (International Program)

Silpakorn University

Academic Year 2025

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วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปรัชญาดุษฎีบัณฑิต
ศิลปะการออกแบบ แบบ 1.1 (หลักสูตรนานาชาติ)
มหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร
ปีการศึกษา 2568
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By

Mrs. Tao TIAN

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Title Village identity research and design:case of study on
zhaoshan,hubei province,china

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Keyword : Village identity, Identity design., Regional condition

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Against the backdrop of China's vigorous advancement of the Village Revitalization Strategy, village identity construction faces critical challenges such as severe homogenization and a lack of core values. This study takes Zhaoshan in Ezhou City, Hubei Province, as a case study, aiming to explore how to discover, organize, and apply regional characteristic elements to promote the effective construction of village identity. The goals are to gain practical experience in designing Zhaoshan's identity, foster a shared identity among local residents and officials, promote village cultural tourism design that integrates in-depth cultural and regional characteristics, and establish a universal methodology for village identity design and recognition to provide theoretical reference and practical guidance for the development of other villages.

This study uses a comprehensive approach that integrates literature review, fieldwork, questionnaire surveys, in-depth interviews and the dual-diamond model. It systematically collects and analyzes perspectives from local residents, township staff, tourists, and industry experts. The findings show that successful village identity design goes beyond visual system construction. Its core is the establishment of an integrated framework that combines regional knowledge, immersive experiences, and sustainable development.

Based on these findings, this study constructed a theoretical and practical model called "Village Identity Research and Design." The model includes analysis of the core elements of village identity, visual design solutions, experiential route planning, and a comprehensive process framework that integrates marketing communication strategies and long-term sustainable development mechanisms. This study provides specific design strategies and identity-building solutions for Zhaoshan in Ezhou City and offers references for similar village identity-building initiatives in China.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From 2020 to 2025, during my six-year doctoral studies, I endured the sudden loss of my father, my mother's three battles with cancer, and my own cancer journey. Each time before moving forward, I thought about giving up—but I persevered through it all. I hope to complete this academic odyssey with grit, as these six years have been filled with many misfortunes. I pray he will find closure with a peaceful conclusion.

First of all, I would like to express my highest respect and deepest gratitude to my mentor, Asst. Professor Dr. Jirawat Vongphantuset. From selecting the thesis topic and constructing the framework to conducting field investigations, applying research methods, and completing the final revisions, Asst. Professor Dr. Jirawat Vongphantuset has devoted significant effort, providing me with meticulous guidance and crucial inspiration. Whenever I encountered obstacles or confusion, Asst. Professor Dr. Jirawat Vongphantuset and Dr. Rueanglada Punyalikhit always encouraged me. Their encouragement and trust have been the driving force behind my perseverance. Dr. Rueanglada Punyalikhit also sends me supportive text messages when I am ill.

This thesis focuses on the core research theme of "Village Identity Recognition and Design," achieved through rigorous fieldwork, interviews, and extensive primary data collection. I would like to extend special thanks to the staff of the Zhao Shan Village Government and local cultural institutions for their tremendous support during field research. They made every effort to arrange detailed interviews, provide invaluable local historical materials, and enthusiastically assist me in exploring villages to understand authentic regional customs and development needs. Their practical experience and profound insights have not only laid a solid foundation for this study but also made my theoretical research more grounded and valuable.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to all the visitors who granted interviews and completed questionnaires during this research. Their willingness to dedicate valuable time to share authentic experiences, impressions, and expectations of village travel provided crucial market insights for understanding village cultural tourism brands. These vivid perspectives have significantly enriched user insights,

enabling me to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current status and future direction of village identity development in Zhaoshan.

Thank you to the professors at Silpakorn University: Professor Dr. Eakachat Jonesairatana for continuous encouragement; Assistant Professor Dr. Veerawat Sirivesmas, Assistant Professor Dr. Sone Simatrang, Dr. Thantorn Jiarakun and Dr. Supawinee Charungkiattikul for their invaluable advice and suggestions during my studies, which helped me broaden my horizons and improve my research. When I encountered difficulties, your companionship and encouragement brought me great warmth.

I hope my research will make a real difference for villages that are often overlooked but have valuable cultural and natural resources.

Tao TIAN

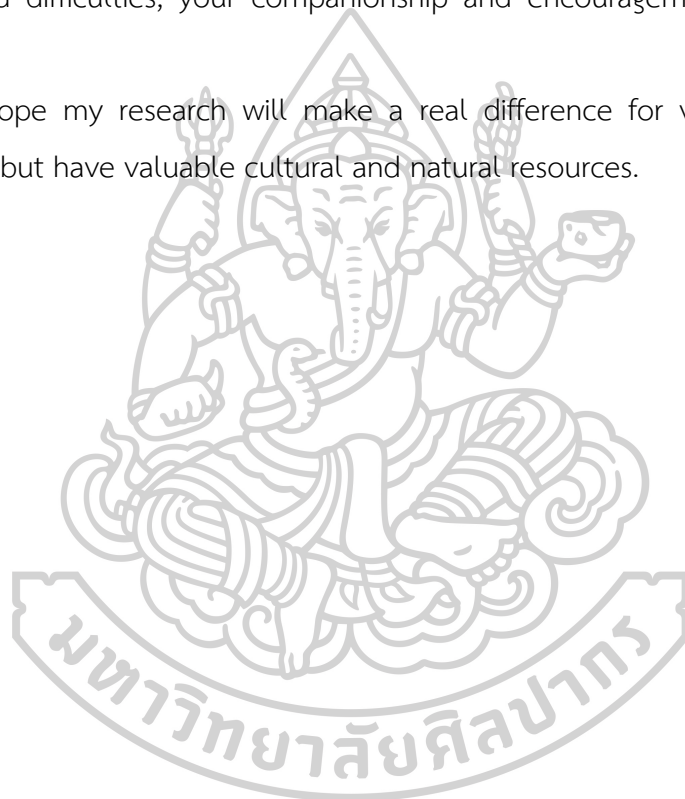


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Chapter 1

INTRODUCE

1.1 Background of the Research

1.1.1 The national strategic background of village revitalization and cultural tourism integration

In the current era of China's vigorous promotion of the village revitalization strategy, the integration of culture and tourism has become a crucial trend in rural development. By implementing this strategy and conducting the "Opinions of the CPC Central Committee and State Council on Key Tasks for Comprehensive Village Revitalization in 2022" (China, 2022 #22) the cultural industry is being leveraged to empower rural socioeconomic development. Prioritizing agricultural and rural development, we are systematically establishing distinctive agricultural cultural exhibition zones and culturally themed villages with unique advantages. This initiative aims to revitalize traditional crafts in rural areas and foster a vibrant rural cultural market.

Fundamentally, the roots of Chinese culture are found in rural villages. This culture serves as emotional support and spiritual sustenance, accumulated and created by farmers through long-term production and daily life, and is marked by strong regional characteristics and stability. However, many villages today face challenges related to identity recognition, resulting in ambiguous identities and homogenized village landscapes. The Village Revitalization Strategy seeks to address the imbalance and inadequacy in rural development by establishing experiential village tourism identities. This approach revitalizes outstanding village culture as a resource, allowing consumers to connect with their inner cultural values. At the same time, it promotes comprehensive agricultural upgrades, overall progress in rural areas, and holistic development of farmers, ultimately achieving modernization in agriculture and rural development.

In recent years, China has actively promoted the integration of culture and

tourism, emphasizing the organic combination of cultural resources with the tourism industry. This initiative aims to establish a distinctive village cultural-tourism identity by leveraging culture's guiding role in tourism development and tourism's role in spreading cultural values. By harnessing art and creativity to stimulate the intrinsic vitality of local cultures, it drives diversified economic growth in villages and provides sustained momentum for village revitalization.

1.1.2 Current situation and development needs of village cultural tourism resources in Zhaoshan, Ezhou

Zhaoshan, a distinctive "intangible cultural heritage" (ICH) town in Ezhou City, has prioritized the preservation and development of its intangible cultural legacy. Notable examples include the calligraphy of Zhang Yu Zhao, the iconic "Yu Lian Huan"(Folk performance), and traditional clapper gongs, all effectively preserved through local initiatives. The area also showcases vibrant folk traditions such as ballads, dance performances, and traditional operas. Zhoushan's natural and cultural resources are equally remarkable, featuring attractions like the lakeside greenway, Jin Lao Mausoleum Paleolithic Site, and Tai Zi Ecological Park, all offering prime opportunities for tourism development. Capitalizing on its mountainous terrain, lake, and lush forests, the town has cultivated unique village tourism experiences. The pristine landscapes of Zhaoshan Forest Park and Liangzi Lake further enhance the region's appeal as a premier destination for countryside getaways.

The village's current tourism model primarily focuses on sightseeing, with its identity positioning system still in its early stages and not yet fully developed. It mainly serves local residents and attracts visitors from nearby cities seeking culinary experiences. The offerings remain basic, lacking mass-market products and in-depth experiential options. To enhance visitor engagement, the town should prioritize its natural resources, cultural heritage, and agricultural cuisine to develop diversified tourism products, such as immersive folk culture tours and agrarian-themed educational trips. This approach would encourage longer stays and increased spending. Although the area boasts abundant local specialty agricultural products, the village development model faces significant homogenization issues: unclear identity positioning, limited tourism offerings, lack of distinctive regional features,

absence of a unified branding framework, and insufficient unique appeal. To achieve sustainable village revitalization, it is crucial to fully leverage Zhoushan's inherent characteristics through scientific planning and development strategies.

1.1.3 The necessity of village identity Construction in the era of experience economy

In the experience economy era, consumers' demands for tourism and cultural products have changed significantly. They no longer settle for traditional sightseeing tours but prefer immersive participation and personalized, in-depth experiences. The construction of village identity has become crucial for enhancing tourism appeal. Distinctive village identities reflecting local culture, natural landscapes, and agricultural products not only showcase regional uniqueness but also foster greater recognition and sense of belonging among residents and authorities, thereby promoting sustainable local tourism development.

Meanwhile, tourist demand has shifted from "functional" to "emotional" and "symbolic" fulfillment. To adapt, villages must construct identities that provide "engaging narratives" and "memorable scenes." Evidence indicates that more specific and culturally layered identities deepen experiences and prolong memories. Recognizable and memorable village identities are essential for market competitiveness, satisfying consumption upgrades, and sustainable development. They serve as both a "business card" and a nexus connecting nature, culture, tradition, modernity, tourists, and residents. Through identifying local distinctiveness, enhancing immersive interaction, and systematic management, villages can convert resource advantages into valuable identity assets, ultimately creating soulful, warm, and memorable places.

1.2 Significance of the Research

1.2.1 Academic Significance: Enriching Village Identity Theory

"Village identity positioning" serves as the core driving for village revitalization. However, traditional studies in this field has typically focused on individual resource development and image promotion, often neglecting the systematic creation of experiential value.

Drawing from the case of Zhaoshan Village in Ezhou City, which integrates

ecological, cultural, industrial, and community elements, this research proposes a five-in-one theoretical framework. This framework, encompassing resources, value, experience, promotion, and sustainable development, offers a multidimensional innovation that enriches the theoretical system of village identity design.

Expanding the theoretical dimension of village Identity Design: From "Visual Presentation" to "Value Construction"

Traditional village branding theories, based on resource endowment, focus on unidirectional visual imagery and packaging promotion, primarily aligning with consumer demands and mainstream aesthetics, while neglecting sustained development and cultural accumulation of residents and government. Building on this, Zhaoshan identity construction breaks the conventional outward-oriented brand mode, emphasizing the internal exploration of deep local cultural values, identifying the spiritual core of villages, and supporting the continuous management of rural brands. This approach transcends mere awareness or perceived value enhancement; it seeks to balance short-term benefits with long-term value, integrating "experiential value" into the identity design concept. It aims to promote cultural revitalization and sustainable development by shifting focus from "consumers, traffic, customers" back to the villages themselves, emphasizing the construction of a healthy, localized village identity rooted in genuine growth.

Refining the theory of village identity sustainability: from "static protection" to "dynamic symbiosis"

The Zhaoshan model present a practical approach for cyclical conversion of ecological value and economic returns, constructing a theoretical framework for "ecology–economy–society" sustainable village identity development. It designs stratified experiential pathways aligned with local residents' and tourists' demands, employing combinations of temporal and spatial dimensions to transform ecological and cultural resources into perceptible and memorable products. Through tourism itineraries such as two-day one-night and three-day two-night experiences, it facilitates the integration of ecological and cultural elements, promoting symbiotic coexistence of ecology, culture, and economy within interactive operational modes.

Integrating multidisciplinary theories: Constructing an interdisciplinary

research paradigm for village identity design

The practice of village identity construction in Zhaoshan Village moves beyond the long-standing reliance on single-disciplinary research perspectives such as "communication" and "economy," thereby enabling interdisciplinary integration in the study of the "village."

This study uses Zhaoshan Village in Ezhou City as a case to conduct an in-depth analysis of the evolution of village identity construction, aiming to provide valuable theoretical and practical experience for similar village identity design and implementation. Building on this foundation, and focusing on Zhaoshan's village identity, we examine its core constituent elements to reveal the distinct mechanisms by which village culture and natural elements shape identity, thereby supplementing and improving existing theories on village identity positioning. From the dual perspectives of experiential economy and consumer behavior studies, this research broadens the scope of village identity design theory by exploring tourism experience-oriented strategies for village identity development. These strategies encompass multiple dimensions, including brand image building, experiential activity planning, and service quality optimization. Regarding brand promotion and sustainable development strategies, this paper integrates theories from communication studies and ecology, offering innovative insights into evaluating brand value transmission effects and planning long-term sustainable development paths for village identities. This further enriches and improves the theoretical framework of village identity development, laying a solid theoretical foundation for future research.

1.2.2 Practical significance: Provide an operable reference for Zhaoshan and similar villages in Ezhou city

The construction of village identity is a crucial pathway to achieving village revitalization. However, the absence of systematic research methodologies has led many regions to experience fragmented resource development and homogenized branding. In developing village identity, Zhaoshan Village in Ezhou City has created a replicable implementation model. Building on this foundation, the village has established a six-part operational guide that includes resource diagnosis, identity identification, identity design practices, cultural tourism innovation, brand

communication, and sustainable development. This framework is designed to help villages transition from "anonymous resources" to "distinctive brands," offering a practical roadmap for similar villages to follow.

First, in most areas, village identity development remains focused on tourist attraction development and specialty product sales, failing to fully realize their resource potential. The development practices of Zhaoshan provide a series of methods for "resource integration" and "value transformation" in village economic development, breaking traditional models and driving village economic growth. Villages need to systematically organize local natural resources, cultural assets, and industrial resources to transform them into experiential scenarios. For example, Zhaoshan could revitalize Liang zi Lake Wetland by transforming it from an "ecological reserve" into a multifunctional tourism destination that offers birdwatching, flower viewing, and camping experiences, providing visitors with diverse options. Agricultural development in Zhaoshan has evolved from conventional planting and sales to an experiential industry chain that combines "harvesting activities, artisanal jam production, and adoption programs," steadily enhancing the value of agricultural products. Therefore, similar villages can adopt the strategy of "primary industry experiential, secondary industry cultural innovation, and tertiary industry service-oriented transformation," converting traditional agriculture into platforms for experiential economy development.

Second, village tourism currently faces the common challenge of "short stays and low spending". The Zhaoshan identity design model offers a systematic approach to address this challenge. By utilizing an "indigenous story repository" and "experiential routes," it enhances tourists' emotional attachment. This involves excavating local cultural narratives to create "warm" and meaningful IPs, thereby fostering greater visitor engagement and loyalty.

Third, the development of village identity often struggles to achieve sustainable progress because of insufficient villager participation. Zhaoshan Village has pioneered institutional innovations that enable deep community integration, providing replicable governance models for other villages.

In response to the current conditions of Zhaoshan Village in Ezhou City, this

paper aims to clearly define its identity positioning. By accurately identifying core elements, Zhaoshan can fully leverage its strengths to avoid homogenized competition with other villages and shape a unique village identity. The paper proposes a design concept for experiential village identity, advocating the planning, implementation, and promotion of diverse experiential projects to integrate local tourism resources and enhance the appeal and quality of tourist experiences. Through in-depth research on the promotion and sustainable development strategies of Zhaoshan's cultural tourism brand, this study guides the village in adopting effective promotional approaches to increase its visibility and reputation, attracting more tourists and investors to drive local economic growth. With sustainable development as the core strategy, it ensures rational resource utilization, environmental protection, and the protection of community residents' rights during resource development, thereby guaranteeing the village's long-term prosperity.

The findings of this study offer valuable references for similar types of village areas. In the context of China's village revitalization strategy and the rapid development of the tourism industry, many villages face challenges similar to those in Zhaoshan. The strategy framework proposed in this research addresses multiple dimensions, including key element identification, experiential brand building, and sustainable development path planning. It is designed to help these villages thoroughly explore and effectively utilize their unique resources based on local conditions, thereby creating distinctive identities with differentiated characteristics. This approach enhances the overall competitiveness of village areas and advances China's village tourism industry toward higher-quality development.

1.3 Research Framework

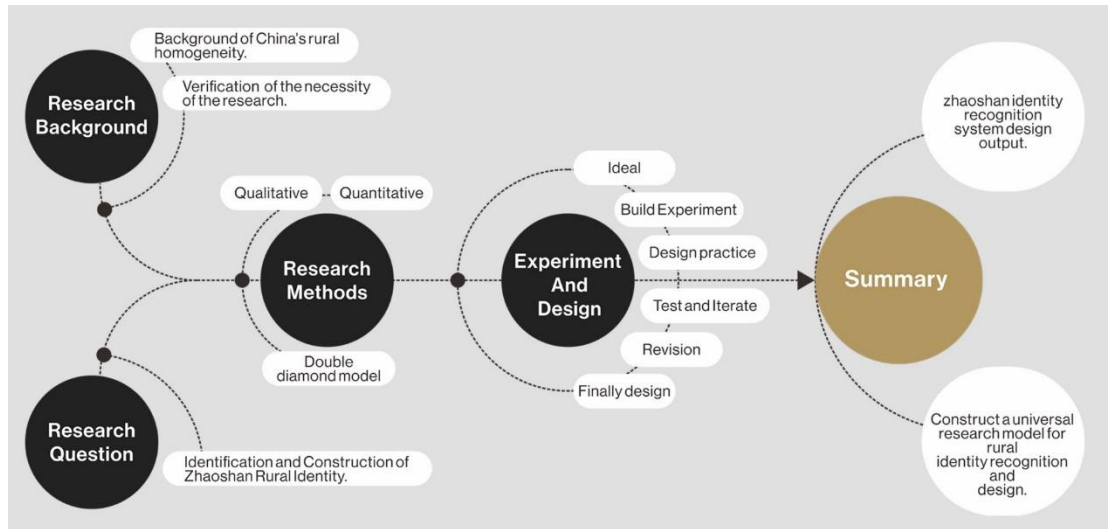


Figure 1 Research framework

1.4 Statement of the Problem

① **Homogenization of Village Identity:** In the broader context of China's rural revitalization, village identity construction often suffers from homogenization. Zhaoshan Village in Ezhou City, as an example, has not yet undertaken a systematic analysis of its unique geographical resources, cultural heritage, or local products, which exacerbates this issue.

② **Lack of a Coherent Identity System:** The development of Zhaoshan's identity faces systemic challenges. A lack of distinctive visual symbols prevents the government and villagers from effectively showcasing their cultural identity, leading to the vague public perception. Furthermore, key areas such as market positioning, visual branding, agricultural product designs, and tourism experiences lack uniqueness and cultural depth, making it difficult to establish a competitive edge.

③ **Fragmented Tourism Experience:** The tourism resources of Zhaoshan are not fully integrated. This lack of effective linkage prevents the creation of an identifiable and memorable visitor experience.

④ **Absence of a Universal Model:** With the national push for rural revitalization, there is a lack of universal replicable models for village identity design and practice.

1.5 Objectives of the Research

- ① **Analyze and Position:** To analyze the core elements of village identity in Zhaoshan, Ezhou city and define its position for market differentiation, thereby laying a foundation for identity construction.
- ② **Develop an Identification System:** To explore the identity elements of Zhaoshan village, catalog its cultural elements, regional symbols, and construct a village identity system that clarifies and strengthens its recognition among both visitors and residents.
- ③ **Build experience routes:** Research the linkage path of Maoshan tourism resources, design an integration plan, and distill distinctive experience routes.
- ④ **Propose a Replicable Model:** To construct a universal model for village identity design based on the integrated path of “resource analysis”, content refinement, visual identity design, brand communication, experience planning.

1.6 Research Methodology

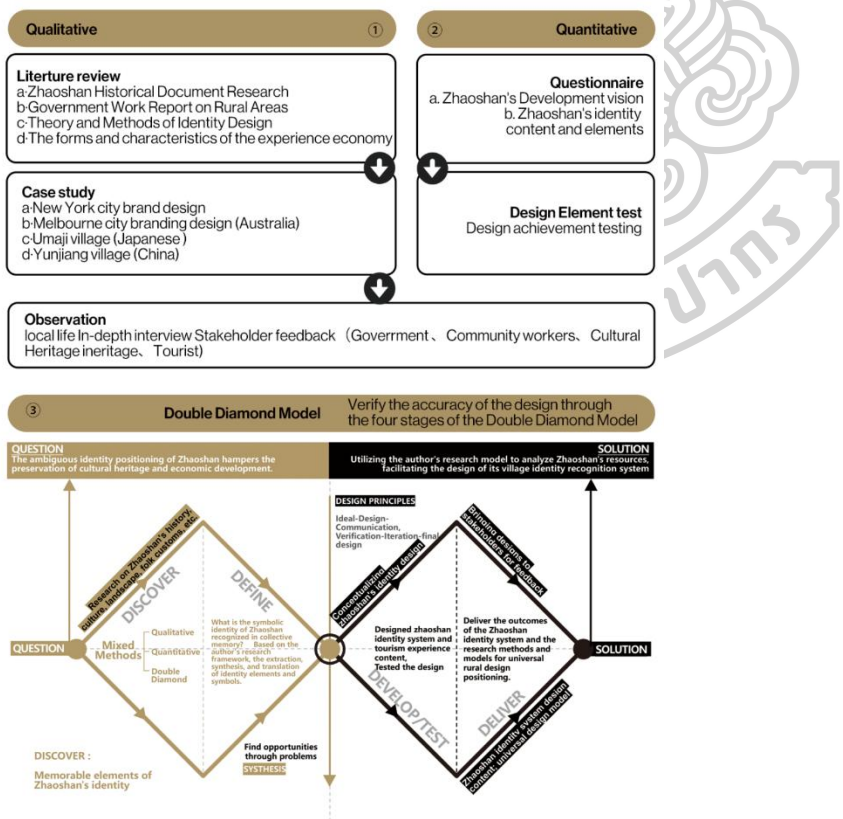


Figure 2 Research Methodology

1.7 Research Output/Outcome

Outputs

- ① Zhaoshan resources and soft power, refine the core elements that define its identity.
- ② Ezhou City marsh mountain identity identification application system and various derivatives design scheme: government promotion application system, agricultural product packaging design.

Outcomes

- ① The development design of cultural tourism experience routes designed to meet the needs of tourists, local residents, and other stakeholders. The effectiveness of these routes can be validated through feedback in future practice.
- ② A replicable model for village identity design that can be refined and optimized based on feedback from its application in other contexts.

1.8 Definition of terms

1.8.1 Super symbol

The "Super Symbols = Super Creativity" theory, proposed by Hua & Hua Marketing Company, is a groundbreaking methodology in marketing {Hua Shan, 2023.5 #42}. This framework advocates transforming culturally significant symbols—such as graphics, colors, sounds, and rituals with deep cognitive roots and emotional resonance—into exclusive identity assets. By privatizing these elements, businesses can significantly reduce communication costs while achieving instant recognition, immediate rapport, and viral spread. These symbols attain their "super" status through their ability to instantly activate consumers' collective subconscious, triggering instinctive cognitive responses that enable identity information to be naturally accepted and disseminated like cultural DNA within the organization.

Interestingly, the idea of symbols with profound emotional and cultural significance has historical roots dating back to the late 1970s with the creation of the "I ❤️ NY" logo (At a time when New York City was confronting crime and social decline. With a simple heart and three letters, this symbol activated collective

emotion and helped rebuild confidence in the city). It demonstrated that strength in identity relies more on emotional connection than on complexity. Inspired by this case, my project emphasizes that a village logo should be both recognizable and emotionally engaging.



Figure 3 Case study, I Love New York logo

From a broad perspective, "Super Symbols" can originate from all types of symbols. According to the original author's perspective, their sources can mainly be classified into two categories: public symbols and cultural symbols. Public symbols include traffic signs, the Red Cross and other signs with clear public orientation. Cultural symbols refer to the condensation of values and life experiences formed over a long period of history, such as the character "Fu" in traditional Chinese culture.

At present, although the symbolic academic circle has not yet formed a unified and clear definition of "super symbols", there is already a basic consensus. Some scholars have pointed out that "super symbols" should possess the strongest and most explicit expressive power, carry the densest and most accurate information, and at the same time have a high degree of behavioral guidance power, capable of widely and profoundly influencing people's behaviors. From this, it can be seen that scholars' understanding of "super symbols" not only involves the information content they carry, but also covers their social influence and scope of influence.

Furthermore, the value of this theory lies in its provision of an efficient toolset for concretizing and visualizing abstract cultural values. It is not merely a design technique but also a strategic mindset capable of rapidly establishing identity,

conveying values, and occupying mental spaces within the complex and competitive market environment. Furthermore, the value of this theory lies in its provision of an efficient toolset for concretizing and visualizing abstract cultural values. It is not merely a design technique but also a strategic mindset capable of rapidly establishing identity, conveying values, and occupying mental spaces within the complex and competitive market environment.

1.8.2 Experiential marketing

The theory of experiential marketing was introduced by American scholar Schmitt (2000), who argued that customer attention can be captured through both psychological willingness and emotional engagement. Researchers worldwide have conducted extensive studies on brand experiences across multiple disciplines and academic frameworks. However, because of individual differences and the subjective nature of human experience, the academic community has not yet fully understood its universal applicability. Building on this foundation, the author presents a new concept: experiential marketing, defined as the sensory impressions and brand perceptions that consumers form through multiple dimensions, including perception, emotion, cognition, and behavior. According to Schmitt's classification, brand experiences are divided into five dimensions: sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational. In market contexts, customer interactions are central to the formation of brand experiences.

The creation of experiential village destinations focuses on preserving the unique natural landscapes and cultural heritage of villages, with immersive visitor experiences as the core value. By skillfully integrating village production scenes, vibrant folk traditions, and ecological beauty, these destinations develop distinctive village identities. This approach emphasizes visitor participation, interaction, and emotional connection during village tourism, successfully moving beyond traditional sightseeing constraints. For example, travelers can participate in hands-on farming activities to experience the joy of cultivation and harvest, immersing themselves in the simplicity and authenticity of pastoral life. They may also explore traditional crafts such as pottery-making and weaving, gaining a deeper appreciation for the unique charm of village culture.

In the current context, the development of modern rural areas urgently requires the establishment of an immersive experience model, with its core focused on skillfully transforming regional characteristics into interactive scenes that tourists can personally experience. Through a series of innovative approaches, the cultural value of village areas has been successfully enhanced.

1.8.3 Cultural and tourism integration

The integration of culture and tourism fundamentally reflects the mutual penetration and coordinated advancement of these two dominant industries within the framework of economic and social development. This process includes not only the bidirectional integration of cultural elements into tourism and vice versa, but also the efficient consolidation of cultural resources with tourism assets while maintaining their harmonious coexistence. The core strategy for cultural-tourism integration is to deeply explore cultural connotations and implement creative transformations to enhance the intrinsic quality and value of tourism products. At the same time, through tourism platforms and methodologies, it facilitates the inheritance and promotion of outstanding cultural heritage. Research on cultural-tourism integration originated from early discussions about cultural relic preservation and tourism development. With the continuous optimization of socio-economic structures and significant improvements in living standards, public demand for spiritual and cultural enrichment has surged, driving deeper exploration and expansion of integrated cultural-tourism studies. Initial research focused on combining cultural relics with tourism, emphasizing the preservation and transmission of cultural values {Loulanski, 2011 #13}. Subsequently, the scope expanded to integrate cultural innovation industries with tourism sectors, leveraging innovative thinking and technological advancements to elevate tourism to higher-quality standards {Zhou Yang, 2025 #14}.

The deep integration of culture and tourism represents a comprehensive and profound synergy between these two industries. In this process, cultural elements permeate every aspect of tourism, while tourism serves as a vital platform for promoting cultural dissemination and heritage preservation. Abundant cultural resources give tourism products unique cultural appeal. Historical sites, folk customs,

and traditional arts are key factors that attract visitors to explore and experience these cultural treasures. Tourism not only facilitates the widespread dissemination and in-depth development of culture but also spreads regional cultures to broader areas through tourist mobility, providing a solid economic foundation for cultural innovation and inheritance. For example, incorporating culturally distinctive elements such as local folk tales and legends into tour route designs creates unique themed tourism products. Leveraging cultural festivals and celebrations can also engage tourists actively, further stimulating cultural consumption. This approach achieves coordinated development of culture and tourism across multiple dimensions, including industry, products, and market.

1.8.4 Village identity assets

The development of village identity branding requires careful exploration and clarification of brand equity components, which include many important intangible assets accumulated through long-term market operations. Village identity assets primarily consist of the following elements: brand awareness, cognitive depth, associative effects, customer loyalty, and related assets.

As consumer demands evolve, tourists have gradually shifted from seeking material satisfaction to pursuing spiritual resonance. The village tourism sector is transforming from the traditional "sightseeing" model to a new phase of "co-creation of experiences." In this context, building experiential identity assets becomes especially important, with the core focusing on tourists' sensory immersion, emotional resonance, and cultural identification. Through carefully designed systematic strategies, local cultural characteristics can be transformed into perceptible, communicable, and enduring identity values, providing strong momentum for the transformation and upgrading of village economies. This process elevates the spatial dimension of village areas, shifting from a singular "geographical space" to a culturally rich "space of meaning." When village land memories are transformed into interactive cultural symbols through innovative experiential design, village tourism moves beyond mere consumption experiences and becomes a sustained value co-creation activity. This serves as a critical breakthrough for the village revitalization strategy and vividly demonstrates China's cultural confidence in

local practices.

Consider a village community with distinctive identity assets: it enjoys widespread recognition among tourists and delivers travel experiences that receive high praise. Visitors vividly recall the village's serene and rustic charm, show strong willingness to revisit, and enthusiastically recommend it to others. These elements collectively form the community's identity value, generating sustained economic and social benefits. Looking ahead, as cutting-edge technologies such as the metaverse and artificial intelligence continue to permeate village areas, "digital twin villages" are poised to become a new frontier for identity asset accumulation. This immersive blend of virtual and physical experiences will further unlock the potential of the village cultural economy.

1.8.5 Intangible cultural heritage IP

Intangible Cultural Heritage Intellectual Property (ICH IP) refers to the process of transformation intangible cultural heritage into branded, industrialized cultural symbols that hold broad social influence. This process encompasses: Systematic Exploration: an in-depth investigation and organization of key cultural elements such as stories, techniques, and images; Innovative Development: The creative adaptation of these elements for contemporary application; Strategic Integration: The use of modern communication technologies and commercial strategies to create culturally competitive products or services {Wang Xian Chang, 2024 #15}.

As a communication medium, IP requires distinctive and scalable symbolic imagery to support cross-domain adaptation. While products may flow like water, symbolic representations endure. Intangible cultural heritage appears in various forms—such as craft art, performance arts, and traditional techniques—all preserved through images, videos, and texts that document production processes and performances. Although some heritage projects have used live-streaming platforms for mobile dissemination, their repetitive formats, fragmented content, and outdated narratives lead to poor user engagement and low traffic. Transforming traditional folk crafts, festivals, music, and dance into animated content, cultural merchandise, and performance programs can revitalize these heritage elements and enhance their communicative power.

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) IP refers to visual symbols and derivative products created by distilling elements from ICH cultural heritage. As an innovative brand communication model, IP serves both as a content source and as a high-traffic media platform, providing new methods for promoting ICH. In terms of content, it aligns more closely with contemporary youth tastes by presenting narrative-driven, performable, and cross-boundary IP characters that reflect consumers' values and aesthetic preferences. These characters evoke user associations and achieve emotional resonance through symbolic and personified external representations.

In selecting communication channels, both online and offline, we have moved beyond singular visual experiences. By leveraging intellectual property cultural creative products, a new content platform that integrates viewing, purchasing, and sharing can be established. This platform uses physical merchandise as a medium to narrate stories of intangible cultural heritage, tightly integrating them with people's daily lives to enhance public engagement and loyalty. Through the power of IP, these heritage narratives are vividly presented. Innovation in content and diversification of presentation formats effectively disseminate the spiritual essence of intangible cultural heritage. As visitors engage with, participate in, and consume these cultural elements, intangible cultural heritage becomes deeply rooted in people's hearts. Therefore, creating distinctive IP for intangible cultural heritage not only promotes its preservation but also attracts consumers through unique cultural appeal, generating economic value while achieving innovative development and creative transformation of this cultural legacy.

1.9 Structure of the Research

1.9.1 Chapter content overview

This study focuses on Zhaoshan Village in Ezhou City, conducting a systematic exploration of village identity recognition, design, and optimization. The paper is organized into six core chapters that progressively build a comprehensive research framework, moving from theoretical exploration to practical implementation. This study is based on China's national strategy of village revitalization and cultural-tourism integration. By analyzing the current status of Zhaoshan's cultural tourism resources in Ezhou City, it thoroughly examines the necessity of constructing village

identities in the era of the experiential economy. Currently, Zhaoshan faces challenges such as severe homogenization and insufficient core competitiveness. This research aims to identify key elements of village identity, develop an experiential design framework, and formulate sustainable development strategies. These efforts enrich village identity design systems and provide actionable guidance for similar villages. The study addresses two core questions: how to effectively transform cultural resources into identity assets, and how to enhance village loyalty through experiential design. By defining critical concepts such as "village identities assets" and "intangible cultural heritage IPs," this work establishes a conceptual foundation for subsequent research.

The literature review chapter systematically summarizes relevant research achievements both in China and abroad. It begins by examining policy support and market trends in the development of village cultural tourism in China, with particular attention to Hubei Province's policy orientation and implementation status. Theoretically, it analyzes super symbol theory, the four dimensions of brand experience, and identity positioning theory, while guiding identity recognition and design practices based on the dual diamond model. This study identifies replicable experiences by analyzing several key case studies, including: Japan's "One Village, One Product" model; the water management system of Giethoorn (the Dutch Sheep Horn Village) and the cultural IP construction of China's Yuan Jia Village. Drawing from these examples and focusing on the unique context of Zhaoshan, the research then constructs a theoretical foundation for brand building, structured around three core dimensions: historical and cultural heritage, the living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, and natural resource value.

The research methodology used a mixed-method approach to establish a comprehensive survey framework. Questionnaires were administered to tourists, villagers, and government personnel to collect data on brand perception, experiential needs, and route preferences. In-depth interviews were conducted with heads of cultural tourism departments, intangible cultural heritage inheritors, and cultural institution operators, using semi-structured interview outlines to gather diverse perspectives.

The data analysis and findings section presents substantial research outcomes. Questionnaire surveys revealed tourists' preferences for cultural exploration and eco-leisure themes, as well as prioritized rankings of various identity elements. Interview data analysis indicated that government perspectives focused on funding shortages and pomelo insufficient promotion, while villagers strongly expressed willingness for intangible cultural heritage revitalization and community participation. After data integration, the core element system of Zhaoshan identity design was distilled, highlighting the challenge of balancing commercialization and cultural preservation in experiential design.

The village identity design model is the central innovation of this study. At the identity definition stage, we proposed distinctive regional identity symbols and slogans, establishing a design process that includes problem diagnosis, optimization strategies, and iterative testing. The identity design system incorporates local cultural elements such as the landscape features of pomelo, Liangzi Lake, and Zhaoshan, as well as Zhang Yu Zhao's calligraphy art, while specifying color and font standards. The experiential path planning includes thematic routes featuring calligraphy appreciation and fruit-picking activities. Communication strategies focus on multidimensional activation of cultural IPs through omnichannel touchpoint design and data-driven community operations to enhance dissemination effectiveness. The sustainable development mechanism constructs an innovative collaborative system that integrates economic, cultural, ecological, and community participation.

The conclusion and recommendations section systematically summarizes the research findings. The study demonstrates the effectiveness of the Zhaoshan identity design model and provides new approaches for village identity development. It is recommended to establish a long-term tracking mechanism, conduct cross-cultural comparative studies, and continuously optimize Identification System. These outcomes offer practical pathways for village revitalization in Zhaoshan and contribute replicable theoretical frameworks and methodological systems for village Identity in similar regions.

1.9.2 The Relationship among RB, RQ, RO, RM and ROC.

Table 1 The Relationship among RB, RQ, RO, RM and ROC

RB	RQ	RO	RM	ROC
China's village experiences lack distinctiveness.	Zhaoshan's village culture is declining, and visual heritage preservation is needed.	Identify Zhaoshan's resources and soft power, and distill the core elements that define its identity.	1. Literature review: Super symbols, experiential marketing, the dual diamond theory 2. Case studies	Design results of Zhaoshan identity recognition system
China's village traditional culture has no positive cycle and faces a cultural fault line	The lack of experience in Zhan Mountain makes it impossible to attract tourists from surrounding cities and retain local young people	The output can promote the system design of the identification of Zhaoshan and the deep integration of local culture and industry	A mixed-methods research design that integrates questionnaire surveys, in-depth interviews, and cultural probe techniques	The design of village experience tour route and festival celebration in Zhaoshan has been recognized by young people and tourists

China's village development is seriously homogenized, and there is no effective identity identification design system	Identity confusion requires the establishment of an identity system to enhance the sense of identity and form a clear development orientation	Create a universal path of village identity recognition and design to help other villages	Double diamond model design and feedback to establish the right village identity design	Construct a universal village identity identification and design research model



Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1. Research on the Development of village Cultural Tourism in China

2.1.1 Policy support and market trend of village cultural tourism

With China's economic growth, public demand for high-quality living has surged in recent years, driving continuous expansion of cultural and tourism consumption. The development of village cultural tourism has attracted significant attention. As a comprehensive service sector with strong economic stimulus effects, tourism serves as a strategic pillar industry in the national economy. Promoting its high-quality development is a vital component of building Chinese-style modernization. By leveraging village advantages such as resources, ecological assets, and folk customs to develop tourism, these regions can effectively attract more capital, talent, and technological resources to village areas {Xu Can, 2021 #16}.

The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed, "We should promote the in-depth integration and development of culture and tourism by shaping tourism with culture and highlighting culture through tourism." To further advance the modern tourism industry, the Party and the government have strategically proposed the "cultural-tourism integration" development strategy: It has successively issued multiple policy documents, making comprehensive arrangements for the integration of culture and tourism, aiming to promote the integrated development of culture and tourism on a broader scale, at a deeper level and to a higher standard.

Meanwhile, the government has prioritized the development of village cultural tourism, implementing a series of policies to boost its prosperity. It has explicitly positioned village construction as a crucial component of socialist modernization. In supporting village revitalization, the tourism industry achieves dual objectives through deep integration with agriculture and culture: driving regional economic growth while preserving and innovating traditional heritage. This transformation

establishes tourism as a vital industry for building a new development paradigm and achieving common prosperity. To fully leverage village resources and promote integrated cultural-tourism development, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism issued the "Guidelines on Empowering Village Revitalization Through Cultural Industries." The document emphasizes utilizing cultural industries to enhance the protection and use of village humanistic and natural resources, foster tertiary industry integration, preserve agrarian civilization, and revitalize traditional village culture.

Guided by policy directives, regions across China are actively exploring innovative pathways and models for cultural-tourism integration, establishing robust institutional frameworks to transform collaborative development into a new driving force for the sector. At the same time, national ministries have launched key funding initiatives, such as the Central Government's "Key Project Funds for Three-Industry Integration Development," to support village tourism growth and provide strong backing for its prosperity. Driven by both policy incentives and market demands, the village cultural-tourism industry has recently exhibited three defining trends: diversification, integration, and technological advancement, gradually emerging as a vital engine for village revitalization. Synthesizing policy guidance and market realities, current trends in village cultural-tourism development can be summarized in three main directions:



Figure 4 Village cultural tourism market trend chart

Policies continue to increase, industrial upgrading accelerated

Currently, village industries are facing rare opportunities, primarily due to strengthened policy incentives. By prioritizing agricultural and village development and accelerating the implementation of the village revitalization strategy, more resources are being directed to village areas. The "new infrastructure" initiative has improved village information networks and other essential facilities, while the accelerated urban-village integration process has optimized the development environment for village industries. Market-driven momentum is also increasing.

At the national level, policies such as the "Cultural Industry Empowerment for Village Revitalization Plan" and the "Hundred-Thousand-Million Project" have promoted the transition of village cultural tourism from a single sightseeing model to an integrated development approach that combines culture, industry, and ecology. For example, the "Tour and Shop in Village Areas" Spring Festival consumption campaign launched by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2025 partnered with industry associations, e-commerce platforms, and financial institutions to introduce 90 premium village tourism routes. Through integrated online and offline marketing strategies, this initiative has increased sales of local specialties and cultural tourism consumption.

Technology enables the digital extension of experience scenarios

The integration of village cultural tourism with emerging technologies is driving innovation in service models. For example, Baidu's Wenxin Large Model has launched an "AI Village Tour" agent that customizes itineraries based on user preferences and served nearly 1,000 user requests during the Spring Festival. E-commerce platforms are also expanding sales channels for village specialties through live-streaming promotions and short video marketing. Notable examples include Douyin's "Tour and Shop in Village Areas" topic, which garnered over 4.88 million views, and Red Dot's "Local Flavors" feature, which achieved over 10 million impressions.

Diversification of consumer demand, the rise of market segments

The upgrading of the consumption structure is accelerating, with urban and rural residents' demands becoming more personalized, diversified, and high-quality. Leisure tourism and wellness consumption are gradually becoming mainstream

trends, while rural industries have vast market potential. Tourist preferences are shifting from traditional sightseeing to immersive experiences. The revival of traditional culture, the rise of niche destinations, and the growing demand for health and wellness programs, along with educational travel opportunities, all present valuable opportunities for rural cultural tourism development.

Intangible cultural heritage experiences have become the main attraction. During the 2025 Spring Festival, search volumes related to "intangible cultural heritage" on Tong Cheng Travel increased by 87% year-on-year, with projects such as the Zigong Lantern Festival and fire pot performances driving a 120% surge in cultural tourism bookings. Regions like Quanzhou and Chaozhou attracted young tourists with folk activities such as floral wreath-wearing and Ying Ge dance, while family trips and senior wellness tours experienced significant growth. Avoiding popular scenic spots and exploring distinctive village areas has become a trend. Ctrip data shows that niche destinations like Tong Ling and Huangshan saw a fourfold increase in Spring Festival bookings. Under the Healthy China strategy, village wellness tourism featuring homestay therapy and eco-farms, along with educational experiences such as intangible cultural heritage crafts and agricultural practices, have emerged as new growth drivers.

Although village cultural tourism has broad prospects, it still faces challenges such as homogeneous competition and inadequate infrastructure. In the future, it is necessary to promote the transformation of village cultural tourism from "traffic-driven" to "quality-driven" through policy guidance, technological empowerment, talent training, and IP building to achieve sustainable development.

2.1.2 Policy orientation and status quo of village culture and tourism in Hubei Province

Hubei, a major agricultural province, has long been celebrated with the saying, "When Hu Guang thrives, the nation prospers." Over the past two decades, urbanization and modern agricultural practices have driven continuous migration from villages to urban areas in Hubei, significantly impacting local socioeconomic development. As a key implementation zone for China's Village Revitalization Strategy, Hubei has pioneered a new village development model centered on

cultural-tourism integration through policy guidance and resource coordination. Since 2019, the provincial government has incorporated village tourism into county-level governance evaluations, conducting annual assessments of economic performance, festival activities, and cooperative operations to incentivize stronger support from local authorities. The "14th Five-Year Plan for Tourism Development in Hubei Province" outlines comprehensive strategies: establishing tourism infrastructure, creating distinctive regional clusters, developing branded tourism products, and innovating operational elements. Building on the experience of the "Ten Thousand Villages Project," Hubei prioritizes agricultural sightseeing, intangible cultural heritage experiences, and integrated village complexes as core offerings. This initiative establishes a collaborative governance framework involving government leadership, corporate partnerships, village coordination, and community participation.

Policy implementation for village tourism in Hubei Province has demonstrated significant industrial impact. In 2019, the province recorded 606 million tourist visits, generating over 692.738 billion yuan in revenue. These figures represent four-years annual growth rates of 4.42% and 12.6%, respectively.

This growth has been supported by substantial investment in cultural infrastructure. As of 2023, Hubei had established 927 township-level and 26,637 village-level comprehensive cultural service centers, achieving 86.7% coverage across all townships. This development includes innovative public spaces, such as intangible cultural heritage-themed villages and has been backed by a cumulative investment of 50 million yuan over the past two years (Hubei Provincial People's Government General Office, 2021).

In identity development, the region has successfully cultivated tourism city brands such as Wuhan and Yichang, county-level brand identities including Huangdi and Yiling districts, and renowned tourist towns like Wudangshan Town and Muyu Town. These efforts have resulted in eight national and eight provincial all-for-one tourism demonstration zones. Enshi Prefecture has strategically developed new industries such as aviation gliding and eco-wellness through its "Four Reds, Two Greens, One Blue, Five Village Areas" framework, while achieving intelligent upgrades in dining, accommodation, transportation, sightseeing, shopping, and entertainment.

In the ongoing integration of culture and tourism, Hubei Province prioritizes the protection and innovative transformation of local culture. The province has designated 10 provincial-level intangible cultural heritage villages, 8 "Hometowns of Chinese Folk Art and Culture," and 49 "Provincial Cultural and Artistic Villages," creating immersive cultural experiences through the "intangible cultural heritage + tourism" model. In exemplary villages such as Ba Gui Miao in Zi Gui County, innovative "Six Small" cultural projects—small plazas, small stages, small facilities, small teams, small activities, and small brands—have been developed, forming replicable models for village cultural practices. The synergy between agriculture and tourism has significantly increased. In 2023, total grain output reached 55.54 billion. By leveraging the "Integrated Grain Production" initiative, agricultural production has been combined with picking experiences, agritourism studies, and other tourism activities, achieving dual benefits of increased agricultural value and tourism revenue growth.

The enhancement of infrastructure and service quality has become a key focus. The province is advancing the "Jing Chu Village Greenway" initiative, integrating transportation, ecological, and leisure functions to establish a networked tourism support system. Enshi Prefecture has overcome administrative boundaries through coordinated village planning mechanisms, creating integrated village tourism IPs that combine eco-tourism, cultural innovation, and resort living while highlighting ethnic characteristics in landscape management. The homestay economy has flourished, with significant improvements in repurposing abandoned houses. Model villages such as Longping Village in Gaole Mountain Town, Xianfeng County, have received special awards for their Grade A homestay certifications, encouraging over 78% of villagers to return for employment.

The integration of technology and digital transformation has proven highly effective. Cloud computing, AR/VR technologies, and related innovations have been widely adopted in scenic area navigation systems and cultural exhibitions. Numerous smart agricultural parks and village service stations have been established, driving intelligent upgrades in tourism services. Through e-commerce platforms and new media marketing, annual online sales of specialty agricultural products such as Enshi

cured pork and Qianjiang crayfish increased by 32%, creating a new growth engine for the "backseat economy."

In ecological conservation, village tourism projects throughout the province strictly follow ecological red-line regulations. Scenic areas such as Mu Yu Town and Wu Dang Shan Town have achieved a virtuous cycle of visitor growth and environmental improvement by implementing the "Two Mountains" concept. Data show that village tourism practitioners now earn 2.3 times more annually than traditional farmers, with effective village governance reaching 91 percent. This has established a positive feedback mechanism that drives industrial revitalization and the return of talent.

2.2 A review of village identity construction theory

2.2.1 Theory of village cultural tourism brand

As a key competitive factor in modern market economies, the concept of a brand can be understood from multiple perspectives. Functionally, a brand is defined as a combination of names, terms, logos, symbols, or patterns that distinguish products or services from different manufacturers. Expanding on this, Li Guang Dou proposed that brands demonstrate bidirectional interaction: for consumers, they represent product experiences and expectations; for businesses, they serve as vehicles for cultural communication and quality assurance. This dual nature enables brands to embody both tangible symbols and intangible values, such as consumers' associations with international recognition and premium quality. Therefore, brands are fundamentally commercial identifiers that deliver differentiated value through symbolic systems. For a village, the village brand is a recognizable and unique identity asset.

As an extension of brand concepts in tourism, village cultural identity represent the collective image of a village region in tourists' minds, forming village Identification such as Anhui's "Village Painting" and Wuyuan's "Huangling Autumn Drying." These village identity branding derive their distinctiveness through the integration of resources, services, and cultural elements. Village cultural tourism identity recognition include five key components: core tourism resources, infrastructure and services, cultural essence, communication systems, and visitor-

perceived image. There is a fundamental difference between village tourism branding and village tourism image: the latter is a passive formation of tourists' comprehensive impressions that vary with individual perspectives, while the former involves proactive actions by local governments or enterprises—such as development, positioning, and promotion—to transform images into market-recognized symbols. A prime example is Yunnan Lijiang's brand repositioning from "ancient town" to "slow-life experience destination."



Figure 5 Five elements of cultural and tourism identity recognition

2.2.2 Four dimensions of tourism brand experience

Bernd Schmitt's brand experience theory posits that consumer-brand interactions are fundamentally multidimensional perceptual processes {Schmitt, 1999 #21}. In the context of China's rural revitalization strategy, this framework provides a crucial methodological foundation for developing village brands. According to the World Tourism Organization, village brand experiences encompass four progressive dimensions: sensory engagement, emotional connection, cognitive understanding, and behavioral adoption. These dimensions collectively form an "experience pyramid" model, with each tier demonstrating significant synergistic effects with the next.

Brand experience is the comprehensive feeling formed during the interaction between consumers and brands, encompassing four dimensions: sense, emotion,

cognition, and behavior. These four dimensions are interrelated and progressive, collectively shaping consumers' overall perception and experience of the brand.

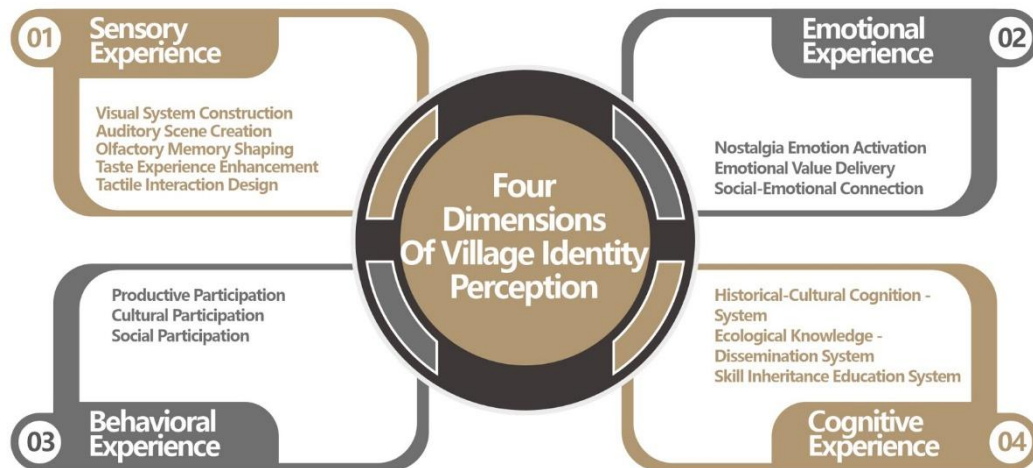


Figure 6 Four dimensions of village identity perception

Sensory experience: The physical interface that builds brand awareness

Sensory experiences form the foundation of village tourism and provide the physical basis for brand engagement. Through visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile stimuli, they create direct and lasting impressions on consumers. In building village identity, picturesque pastoral landscapes and well-arranged farmhouses are key visual elements; bird songs, murmuring streams, and distinctive local folk music form auditory experiences; fresh earthy scents, floral fragrances, and the aroma of farmhouse cuisine represent olfactory and gustatory sensations; while hands-on interaction with farming tools and the tactile feel of agricultural products provide tactile experiences. Together, these sensory elements create a unique village ambiance that captures visitors' attention and inspires their desire to explore further. For example, during the rapeseed flower season in Wuyuan, Jiangxi, the golden sea of blossoms covering the hills creates a striking visual impact. Combined with the earthy scent of soil and the hum of bees, this sensory feast leaves visitors with a lasting first impression of Wuyuan's village brand.

Emotional experience: establish the psychological bond of brand identity

Emotional engagement, rooted in sensory experiences, forms the cornerstone of brand value development. The tranquil, rustic, and warm essence inherent in village brands naturally resonates with consumers. These positive emotional connections strengthen brand affinity and recognition, fostering greater consumer loyalty and encouraging lasting relationships with the brand.

The design of village emotional experience should focus on three core mechanisms: nostalgia activation, which awakens collective memory through material carriers; emotional value transmission, which builds an "emotion-value" mapping model; and social emotional connection, which strengthens emotional belonging through community operations.

Cognitive experience: knowledge reconstruction to deepen brand understanding

Cognitive experiences involve consumers' understanding and perception of a region, serving as a key pathway for enhancing village identity value. Villages can highlight their rich historical culture, unique folk customs, and traditional farming wisdom to help tourists gain a deeper understanding of their essence and significance. For example, visiting village museums and folk exhibition halls enables visitors to explore local historical development and cultural traditions. Participating in traditional handicraft workshops showcases the exquisite craftsmanship and distinctiveness of village heritage. Such cognitive engagement increases brand awareness and respect among consumers, transforming them from casual travelers into culturally conscious individuals who see villages as destinations with profound heritage. This approach ultimately strengthens brand resonance in consumers' minds.

To design village cognitive experiences, three knowledge systems should be established. The first is a historical and cultural knowledge system based on the "living museum" concept. The second is the development of environmental interpretation programs for ecological education. The third is the creation of an intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and educational research framework to preserve traditional craftsmanship.

Behavioral experience: the practical path to achieve brand internalization

Behavioral experiences encourage consumers to actively participate in village cultural tourism activities, serving as a key factor in building loyalty. Through hands-on engagement, visitors deepen their connection with the countryside and create lasting memories. In village tourism, tourists can take part in agricultural activities such as sowing and harvesting, experiencing the joy of farm life and the satisfaction of labor. They can also try traditional crafts like paper-cutting and weaving, developing practical skills while appreciating the charm of these heritage practices. Additionally, cultural activities such as folk performances and traditional rituals enhance understanding of local traditions. These immersive experiences allow consumers to fully engage in village life, fostering a stronger sense of belonging. The memories and stories formed during participation become powerful storytelling materials that spread regional culture, ultimately boosting the village area's reputation and influence.

The design of village behavior experience should focus on three transformation nodes: productive participation, which realizes value co-creation through consumers' deep involvement in agriculture; cultural participation, which strengthens cultural identity through ritual design; and social participation, which builds a closed loop of "experience, sharing, and communication."

In general, the village experience system has the following implications for the construction of village identity:

- (1) The significant influence of cognitive experience on tourist loyalty cannot be overlooked. From the consumer perspective, advancing the implementation of "Internet + Tourism Destinations" enables tourists and village tourism destinations to learn together, achieving value co-creation between them. This shifts the relationship from being product-oriented to destination brand experience-oriented.
- (2) By enhancing sensory and behavioral experiences, we can increase tourist satisfaction and foster loyalty. As village tourism destinations face intensified homogenization, this trend risks causing visitor fatigue and increasing the likelihood of these places becoming one-time destinations. To address this, it is crucial to innovate tourism resources through projects rich in sensory and

behavioral engagement. By offering interactive participation and personalized brand experiences, we can strengthen visitors' willingness to return and recommend these destinations.

- (3) A multi-pronged approach enriches the experiential layers of village tourism destinations. Enhancing only a single dimension of experience results in diminishing marginal returns, making destinations more susceptible to imitation and weakening their core competitiveness. By triggering emotional resonance through sensory stimulation, driving cognitive exploration through emotional engagement, guiding behavioral participation through deeper understanding, and reinforcing sensory memories through practical experiences, this four-dimensional synergy elevates destination appeal. This differentiated charm sets village tourism destinations apart from others, ultimately strengthening their brand value {Luo Chu, 2016 #18}

2.2.3 Theory of identity positioning

Identity positioning theory serves as a cornerstone of village identity development, forming its core theoretical framework. This approach establishes distinctive identity recognition and value propositions within target markets through systematic strategic design. Philip Kotler's marketing theory defines positioning as "the process of designing corporate products and image to secure a unique position in the target market" {Keller, 2016 #24}.

In constructing village identity, differentiated positioning and emotional association form the two pillars of the theoretical system. They complement each other and together promote the realization of village brand value.

Differentiation positioning

Differentiation positioning originates from Michael Porter's competitive strategy theory, which emphasizes creating "unique value" to establish competitive advantages (Porter, 2014). In intense market competition, village brands must highlight their differences from competitors and seek distinctive market positions. These differences can appear in various aspects, such as unique natural landscapes, specialty agricultural products, and traditional folk culture. According to Glasgow City Council, the French town of Grasse has positioned itself as the "World Capital of

Perfume" by leveraging its core perfume industry. Through unique spice cultivation and sophisticated perfume-making techniques, it has distinguished itself in the global tourism market.

In the research and design process of village identity, decoding cultural genes is the primary task for positioning village identity. This involves exploring the connotations of geographical features, historical evolution, and cultural heritage to achieve a more comprehensive and in-depth positioning. By analyzing geographical features, we extract local topographical characteristics; by tracing historical evolution, we showcase the cultural accumulation of traditional villages; and by examining cultural heritage, we highlight distinctive folk customs. The key is to construct a differentiated identity system design to avoid the homogenization dilemma of "a thousand villages with one face."

Differentiation can be decomposed into three dimensions:

- (1) Resource-endowment differentiation: Building brand identity systems through unique natural and cultural resources. According to data from France's National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE), the Provence region has developed a "Purple Economic Belt" centered on lavender fields, integrating estate economies and aromatherapy industries. This initiative attracts tens of millions of visitors annually, with related industries contributing 5–8% to the region's GDP {region}, 2023 #26}
- (2) Cultural Symbol Differentiation: Developing exclusive cultural identifiers. According to 2021 data from the Japan Village Tourism Association, Hecuba Town in Gifu Prefecture achieved remarkable success by inscribing its Gassho-Zukuri (hipped-roof) architecture on the UNESCO World Heritage List and registering the "Winter Fairy Tale Village" brand trademark. Through seasonal light show events, the town increased winter tourism to account for 30–35% of its annual visitor numbers {Centre, 2022 #27}
- (3) Differentiating Experiences Through Scenarios: Creating Irreplaceable Consumption Environments. According to the Italian Ministry of Agriculture's village tourism statistics, Tuscany has pioneered a "Slow Food Movement + Manor Experience" model. Visitors can participate in activities such as olive

picking and traditional cheese-making for immersive cultural experiences. These projects contribute 15–20% of local tourism revenue (Ministry of Agriculture and Tourism, Italy, 2024).

In domestic practice, Wuyuan County in Jiangxi Province has successfully established the "China's Most Beautiful Village" brand through its composite positioning of "rapeseed flowers + Huizhou-style ancient villages." Its differentiation strategy is reflected in the following aspects: ① Spatial dimension, designating six core scenic areas such as Jiangling and Huang ling to create the visual uniqueness of terraced fields and flower seas; ② Temporal dimension, designing seasonal variations such as spring flower appreciation and autumn sun-drying activities; ③ Cultural dimension, integrating intangible cultural heritage performances such as Nuo dance and Huizhou opera. At a press conference held by the Jiangxi Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, it was announced that Wuyuan received 18.36 million tourist visits in 2023 (Jiangxi Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, 2024).

Emotional connections

The theory of emotional connection emphasizes the emotional resonance between a brand and its consumers. The experience economy theory highlights that we have entered an era in which consumers prioritize emotional engagement over the functional value of products and services. As a cornerstone of brand positioning, the theory of affective connection has become increasingly significant. Experiences are now recognized as tangible economic assets, comparable to physical goods and services. In today's society, people are willing to pay premium prices for unique experiences. Village branding initiatives achieve this by weaving compelling local narratives and preserving cultural heritage, which evoke deep-seated desires for authentic village lifestyles and cultural identity. By leveraging distinctive natural landscapes and humanistic resources, these efforts create immersive experiences such as hands-on farming activities, traditional craft workshops, and folk culture immersion programs. Through active participation, visitors gain unparalleled sensory experiences that not only increase interest in village tourism but also open new pathways for its sustainable development.

Take Japan's Gassho-Zukuri villages as an example. By preserving and showcasing traditional gassho-style architecture and hosting cultural festivals, these communities allow visitors to experience the historical depth and vibrant daily life of village areas. This approach fosters emotional connections that enhance brand appeal and loyalty. In village branding strategies, such emotional bonds strengthen consumers' sense of brand identity and belonging. As a result, visitors become active brand ambassadors and loyal supporters rather than mere tourists.

In the construction of village identity, emotional connection plays a role through three mechanisms:

- (1) Collective Memory Revival: Activating Cultural Identity Through Material Heritage. The restoration of Ming-Qing era post roads and the revival of "ball-throwing" wedding customs in Xi Di Village, Anhui Province, enable visitors to experience Huizhou merchant culture through immersive scene interactions. According to the 2022 White Paper on Tourism Development in Southern Anhui's Ancient Villages, Xi Di Village achieved a 28.6% tourist return rate, with intangible cultural heritage revitalization projects contributing 12% to this growth.
- (2) Building value resonance: Delivering lifestyle propositions that appeal to target demographics. The Moganshan Homestay Cluster in Zhejiang province has shaped the concept of "natural healing" through its "Yangjiale" brand, attracting urban middle-class groups.
- (3) Social capital accumulation: Creating channels for users to engage with the brand narrative. Huang ling Scenic Area launched the "Huang ling Window Open" short video on Tok-tok, initiated topics such as "Let's Show Autumn Together," and attracted travel bloggers, photography enthusiasts, and tourists through events like a grand competition to check in and create content, effectively enhancing the scenic area's visibility.

In international case studies, Tuscany's "Slow Life" brand has increased its value through emotional storytelling: ① Visually, it uses a warm-toned pastoral oil painting style to unify its brand identity; ② in narrative dissemination, it has published best-selling books such as *Under the Tuscan Sun* to establish the concept of "poetic dwelling"; ③ Experientially, it launched the "Week in the

Country" program, inviting tourists to deeply engage with village life. According to the Italian National Tourist Board's "Regional Tourism Competitiveness Index," Tuscany ranked first in Italy for 2023.

2.2.4 Tourism brand building

The development of tourism brands is a dynamic process that involves multiple stages to establish and mature. From a practical perspective, prioritizing brand building addresses three key challenges: first, using brand symbols to convey quality signals reduces tourists' decision-making risks; second, creating differentiated competitive advantages through unique offerings, such as the cultural IP barrier formed by the live mountain-water performance "Impression Liu Sanjie"; third, accumulating "identity assets" that drive a destination's evolution from cognitive recognition to emotional attachment and behavioral loyalty. Fundamentally, branding transforms abstract resources into recognizable market symbols, with the ultimate goal of achieving sustainable tourism economic growth through brand premium and visitor loyalty.

The construction of village identity can be transformed into experience capital with market value by thematic cultural presentation, systematic product design, immersive service experience, emotional marketing communication and continuous memory reinforcement.

2.3 Domestic and International village brand cases

2.3.1 The "One Village, One Product" Model in Japan

The "One Village, One Product" initiative, launched in 1979 by former Governor Morihiro Hiramatsu, originated in Oita Prefecture, Japan. During the 1970s, Japan faced widening urban-rural disparities and rural population decline. Through government guidance and community participation, Oita transformed its natural disadvantages—such as mountainous terrain and limited arable land—into distinctive resources. By developing local agricultural products, handicrafts, and cultural traditions, the initiative cultivated market-competitive regional brands that successfully revitalized village economies.

This model is guided by the core philosophy of being rooted in local culture, maintaining a global vision, fostering independent innovation, and cultivating talent.

Its success is based on a systematic industrial cultivation mechanism structured around four key pillars:

1) Developing distinctive products by leveraging local resources; 2) Establishing JAS-certified quality control systems; 3) Building regional revitalization teams for talent development; and 4) Innovating marketing strategies through compelling storytelling.

Case Study: Honjo Village Shitake Mushrooms

A prime example is Honjo Village's "shiitake mushroom branding" initiative. By establishing a fungal research institute to enhance product quality, the village developed 12 value-added processed products, which tripled the unit prices. The village's "Forest Tales" experiential route—featuring mushroom cultivation tours and forest walks—extended average visitor engagement time to eight hours. This "sixfold industrialization" model, which integrates production, processing, and tourism, has boosted population return rates, and made Honjo a model for rural revitalization in Japan.

Case Study: Fukuryu Beef

In response to idle grassland resulting from the decline of oxen in agriculture, Oita Prefecture successfully transformed its beef cattle into a premium brand known as "Fukuryu Beef". The program offers urban residents' opportunity for engagement, such as an annual adoption system and a "Fukuryu Roast Festival". These activities have elevated Fukuryu to a nationally recognized ingredient, receiving Geographical Indication (GI) Certification from Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in 2019.

Other Successful Cases:

Umaji Village Pomelo: Due to their imperfect shape, local Pomelo could not be sold as fresh fruit. The community began producing juice and jam, later expanding into cosmetics to create a circular economy. A "Special Villager System" was introduced, attracting over 50,000 "Honorary Villagers" from 50 countries who pay an annual fee for exclusive products, enhancing brand royalty. Currently, Umaji Village's annual revenue exceeds 230 million yen, with social media followers surpassing the number of tourists.

Yukiko Sushi: Homemaker Makoto Takahashi leveraged local resources like shiitake mushrooms and bamboo shoots to create an innovative Shushi. The regional delicacy evolved into a nationwide brand, winning a national food competition in 2001 and becoming a popular item that boosted local tourism and employment.

In summary, the "One Village, One Product" model enhance product value through independent innovation and strict quality control. By integrating cultural symbols with experiential design, it creates immersive consumption scenarios. This framework demonstrates a successful collaboration where local governments provide support, and community cooperatives manage production and sales, effectively preventing homogenized competition and fostering sustainable rural development.

2.3.2 Giethoorn (the Dutch Sheep Horn Village): A practice of brand building across the whole region driven by water management

Before the cultural tourism branding initiative began in the 1930s, Yang Jiao Village was a destitute settlement facing both ecological and economic crises. Its name comes from hundreds of wild goat horn fossils unearthed by 13th-century settlers, though this historical legacy was long overshadowed by the survival pressures of peat mining (Xu Jili, 2016). According to a 1932 survey by the Dutch Land Office, 78% of the village's land consisted of peat bogs, with house foundations sinking 4–7 centimeters annually. Villagers were forced to construct buildings using reed bundles as foundation rafts (Dutch National Archives, 1932). The canal system remained unmanaged, forming chaotic natural lakes; thatched roofs suffered widespread mold due to neglect; livestock waste flowed directly into water bodies. During summer algae blooms, dissolved oxygen levels dropped to 2.1 mg/L, while the maximum fishery tolerance was 4 mg/L. This "curse-ridden land" condition persisted until restoration efforts began with the 1958 water management project (Van der Heide, 2005).

Dutch Horn Village, known as a "motorless canal village," has systematically developed an integrated brand system that combines ecological governance with an experiential economy. This branding initiative dates back to the 1958 *Horn Village Water System Protection Act*, which established the "boat-for-vehicle" principle. The

legislation permits only electric boats (with a speed limit of 6 km/h) and bicycles, creating a comprehensive slow-traffic network (Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, 2021). To achieve ecological compensation, the village implemented an innovative "boat ticket-water management" linkage mechanism: €3.6 from each €12 cruise ticket is allocated to the canal maintenance fund. This fund has accumulated €4.8 million for dredging projects, increasing water clarity from 0.8 meters in 2005 to 2.3 meters in 2023 (Declares Institute, 2023).

Yang Jiao Village has developed distinctive tourism products deeply rooted in local culture. The Shipyard Company offers traditional flat-bottom boat rentals and ecologist-guided tours, where visitors can participate in water quality testing and bird banding activities in wetlands. Additionally, the village produces unique cultural and creative products made from water-pattern ceramics crafted from canal silt, with annual sales reaching €870,000.

The community participation mechanism ensures brand sustainability. Villagers formed the "Canal Guardians Alliance" by establishing the "Ship Noise Reduction Convention," which prohibits loudspeaker announcements from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM daily. They launched the "Window Flower Competition," requiring riverside residences to replace seasonal plants each quarter. A "Family Guide Certification System" was implemented, with 134 villagers completing professional training to become certified guides.

According to the Dutch Tourism Board, 930,000 tourists visited Yarmouth in 2023, with overnight visitors accounting for 41% of the total, up from 18% in 2015. The average daily expenditure reached 142 euros, 67% higher than the national average for village tourism.

2.3.3 Yuan Jia Village, China: Cultural IP Construction under Collective Operation Model

Before 2007, Yuan Jia Village in Shaanxi Province, was a small village of just 62 households with fewer than 300 residents. Lacking transportation advantages or significant natural and historical resources, the village began developing its cultural tourism industry in 2007. The transformation has been remarkable. By 2023, the

village attracted over 8 million visitors annually, generating more than 1.2 billion yuan in revenue and raising per capita income for villagers to over 150,000 yuan.

Positioned as an integrated destination for folk customs, cuisine, and leisure, Yuan Jia Village success is rooted in its strategy of showcasing Guan Zhong culture. After more than a decade of development, it has become a renowned tourism destination, earning designations such as China's First Village for Rural Tourism, a National 4A-Level Tourist Attraction, and one of China's Top Ten Beautiful Villages. During the 2024 Spring Festival alone, the compact 0.4-square-kilometer village received over 200,000 tourists.

The Village of Yuan Jia in Shaanxi Province was once a poverty-stricken "hollow village." Since 2007, it has focused on the "Guan Zhong Folk Customs Experience" to create the "Village of Yuan Jia · Guan Zhong Impression Experience Destination," an integrated model combining village tourism and modern agriculture, along with a "cooperative + cultural revitalization" approach. By restoring traditional architecture, establishing handicraft workshops, and developing distinctive snack streets, as well as reconstructing Guan Zhong's traditional architectural complexes, more than 200 workshops now recreate Ming-Qing era urban life scenes, establishing an immersive village cultural tourism brand. The key to its success lies in the "authenticity of scenarios" and "benefit-sharing mechanisms": villagers participate in operations through cooperatives to ensure authentic cultural experiences, while unified management maintains service quality. With an annual output value reaching 1 billion yuan, it has cultivated renowned brands such as "village <China>" and "Xiang ban Cultural Tourism," with the "Village of Yuan Jia" brand valued at over 2 billion yuan (Shaanxi Science & Technology Media, 2023). Data from the Ctrip platform show that online bookings for village tourism products increased by 67% year-on-year in 2022, with live-streaming sales conversion rates rising to 18%. This transformation has turned the hollow village into a national 4A-level scenic area receiving 7 million annual visitors. Its brand-building strategy encompasses three core approaches:

1. Collective Operation: Establish farmer cooperatives in which villagers contribute houses and land as shares (49%), while professional management companies manage operations (51%). This creates a "community-wide participation

and shared-risk" mechanism that maximizes benefit-sharing. Through shareholding reforms, collective assets are allocated to households, enabling cross-shareholding among villagers. This forms a "shared-investment and shared-benefit" community that enhances village vitality.

2. Product derivatives: The regional public brand "Village of the Yuan Jia" was developed, covering 138 products in three categories: food, homestay, and cultural creation. Among these, 10 individual products, such as chili noodles, had annual sales of more than 100 million yuan (Ministry of Agriculture and Village Affairs, 2023).

3. Business Model Extension: Through spatial narrative and industry integration, the area recreates Guan Zhong's urban life by combining "old alleyways, ancestral halls, and workshops." For example, oil mills and vinegar workshops provide live demonstrations of production processes, enhancing sensory experiences (Chen Zhen, 2018). Furthermore, the development has expanded from agritourism to include homestays, bars, and cafes, forming a comprehensive tourism framework that integrates "snack streets, folk culture zones, and creative districts" (Guo Zhan Wu, 2021).

The company has also excelled in IP-based operations and integration with tertiary industries. By transforming "Village of the Yuan Jia" into a super IP, it created brand value through derivative products such as yogurt and chili sauce, achieving nationwide market coverage via e-commerce (Chen Zhen, 2018). Through the model of tertiary industries driving secondary industries to boost primary industries, tourism has upgraded handicraft workshops into processing plants, thereby promoting large-scale agricultural cultivation (Shaanxi Science & Technology Media, 2023).

2.3.4 Summary

of collective memory, cultural meaning Within the ongoing negotiation between globalization and localization, the construction of effective village branding consistently demonstrates a fundamental principle: a sustainable village identity is typically anchored in a locally specific symbol that is perceptible, communicable, and capable of multi-layered extension. The case of Umaji Village in Japan offers a compelling example. By systematically expanding the value of an ordinary pomelo—from processed agricultural products to experiential programs—the village enabled

the fruit to transcend its material attributes and function as a cultural emblem representing local identity and community spirit.

A comparable approach can be observed in Yuan Jia Village, China, which positions “food” as its core strategic medium. Through curating an authentic and culturally grounded culinary environment, the village successfully converted everyday dietary practices into a robust tourism driver, illustrating how indigenous lifestyle symbols can be transformed into recognizable identity assets.

Giethoorn in the Netherlands presents yet another model. Capitalizing on its distinctive ecological feature—the waterway—the village formalized this natural element into both a mode of mobility and a cultural landscape, thereby constructing a unique water-based identity recognizable at an international scale.

Collectively, these cases indicate that a successful village identity symbol must possess the capacity for semiotic elevation: it must evolve from a purely material or functional element into a signifier, and shared values. Such symbolic transformation forms the foundation for building a coherent and enduring village identity system.

2.4 The Unique Identity of Zhaoshan Village in Ezhou City


6 Major Soft Power Pillars and 24 Identity Elements of Zaoshan											
Natural Resources		Product resources		Economy & Industry		Folklore & Heritage		Intangible Cultural Heritage		Humanity & Governance	
Liangzi Lake		Pomelo		Pomelo Industrial Park		Guandi Temple		Intangible Heritage Workshop		Village of Civilized Customs	
Zaoshan Mountain		African daisy		Liangzi Lake Eco-Park		Zaoshan Temple		Pai Zi Luo - traditional wind and percussion ensemble of Ezhou		Innovation in Village Autonomy	
Mineral resources		Aquatic products		Zaoshan Forest Park		Zhang Yuzhou Cultural Hall		Yuliangshan - Ezhou Folk Rhythmic Storytelling		Liangzi Lake Lakeside Greenway	
Wild animals		Agricultural and sideline products		Yuanjiawan Scenic Area		Nine Masters & Eighteen Craftsmen		Chuanhan Longzhou - Ezhou Ritual Dragon Boat Dance		Calligraphy Culture	

Figure 7 Analysis of identity elements in Zhaoshan village

2.4.1 Human and natural resources review

Zhaoshan Pomelo

Against the backdrop of China's Village Revitalization Strategy, village identity construction encounters challenges such as homogenization and a lack of core values. This study examines Zhaoshan in Ezhou City, Hubei Province, as a case study to explore discovering, organizing, and applying regional characteristics to construct an effective village identity. The aims are to: gain practical experience in designing Zhaoshan's identity; cultivate a shared identity among local residents and officials; promote village cultural tourism that integrates in-depth cultural and regional characteristics; and establish a universal methodology for village identity design and recognition, offering theoretical and practical guidance for other villages

Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park

Zhaoshan in Ezhou City boasts abundant and unique historical and cultural resources, among which the Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park is a significant example. Zhang Yu Zhao, a renowned calligrapher and educator in late Qing Dynasty China, pioneered an innovative calligraphy style and established the "Nan gong Style" system, known for its "vigorous and majestic character with strict adherence to rules." Kang Yuwei praised it as "the culmination of northern stele inscriptions" (Kang Yuwei, 1891). As the hometown of Zhang Yu Zhao, an expert calligrapher of the Qing Dynasty, Zhaoshan in Ezhou City serves not only as a physical cultural symbol but also as a living carrier of regional cultural heritage.

Leveraging this cultural intellectual property, Zhaoshan has developed a 120-mu (approximately 20 acres) three-dimensional cultural experience space featuring three core sections: the Calligraphy Stele Forest, the Nangong-style Calligraphy Workshop, and the Ancient Books Restoration Center (Ezhou Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism, 2020). The Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park showcases his calligraphic achievements, life story, and historical artifacts. Its Calligraphy Museum houses authentic works, manuscripts, and archival materials related to Zhang Yu Zhao, providing invaluable resources for enthusiasts and researchers. The Calligraphy Corridor displays his classic pieces, such as the "Thousand Character Classic" and "Eight-Part Script Studies," allowing visitors to appreciate the unique charm of his artistry up close. By preserving and presenting Zhang Yu Zhao's legacy, Zhaoshan not

only maintains its rich cultural heritage but also strengthens the cultural foundation of village branding initiatives.

Archaeological findings show that there are private school sites dating back to the Qing Dynasty in the site of the cultural park, and the unearthed "Nan gong style" writing bricks confirm that Zhang Yu Zhao taught here in his early years.

Liangzi Lake Ecological Park

Liangzi Lake Ecological Park is a significant cultural heritage site in the Zhaoshan region. Covering 420,000 mu (approximately 27,333 hectares), the Zhaoshan section of the lake accounts for 18% of the total area, forming an integrated ecological and cultural system that unites the lake, island, and town. Pollen analysis of sediments from the bottom of Liangzi Lake indicates systematic fishery practices dating back to the Han Dynasty. The ancient lake's rich history is further enhanced by legends such as the "Submersion of Gao tang County," which add layers of mystique to its story. By utilizing Liangzi Lake's abundant natural resources, the park effectively combines ecological conservation with cultural tourism development.

The ecological park has restored the Song Dynasty-era "Zhan Qiao Fishery Market," preserving its traditional "day fishing, night rest" rhythm. Visitors can take part in traditional activities such as casting nets and cormorant fishing. Notably, the park has also revitalized water warfare cultural heritage. According to the Wuchang County Annals, the southern foothills of Zhaoshan contain training sites from the Eastern Wu navy during the Three Kingdoms period. Building on this historical background, the park has developed an immersive "Borrowing Arrows with Straw Boats" experience. Through live performances combined with VR technology, it recreates the naval battle scenes of the Battle of Red Cliffs. Operational data show that participants' understanding of Three Kingdoms culture has significantly improved. This innovative model, which integrates ecological resources with historical memory, has made Liangzi Lake Ecological Park a rare village attraction in Central China.

Visitors can immerse themselves in the park's picturesque landscapes, marvel at rare birds and aquatic life, and experience nature's wonders. The ecological park also hosts cultural activities centered around Liangzi Lake, including photography

contests and exhibitions that showcase its history while enhancing visitors' understanding. The lake's abundant aquatic resources have cultivated a distinctive culinary culture, offering visitors fresh specialties like Wuchang fish and water chestnuts—perfect for savoring the charm of Liangzi Lake through their taste buds.

2.4.2 The living inheritance of folk customs and intangible heritage

The folk customs and intangible cultural heritage of Zhaoshan are rich and colorful, serving as an important embodiment of the uniqueness of its countryside. The brand gong, jade chain ring, and flower dragon boat are particularly representative, carrying profound historical and cultural connotations of the local area.

Brand rakes

Brand Guo: As a folk wind-and-percussion ensemble featuring freely connected musical pieces, Brand Guo combines wind instruments (suona, flute, three-section horn, and small pipes) with percussion (large sieve gong, Jing gong, large gong, horse gong, large cymbals, small cymbals, and drumsticks). The Zhaoshan Brand Guo, a crucial source of Chu Opera music, preserves the complete "Twenty-eight Suite Melodies" from the Ming and Qing dynasties. Ethnomusicological studies show that its "three wind and three percussion" structure reflects the local rice cultivation cycle of "three plowing and three harrowing." The ingeniously designed instrumentation features the main instrument, the "Zhaoshan Hao," hand-forged by local blacksmiths with patterns engraved for the twenty-four solar terms, spanning three octaves to simulate natural sounds such as thunderstorms (Hubei Provincial Department of Culture, 2016). In 2021, Zhaoshan established the "Brand Guo Cooperative," launching "Rice Field Concerts" that blend agricultural work with musical performances, quadrupling the frequency of intangible cultural heritage showcases (Ezhou Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center, 2022). This dynamic preservation model was recognized by UNESCO as an "Exemplary Practice in Intangible Cultural Heritage Preservation" (UNESCO, 2023). For inheritance mechanisms, Zhaoshan has developed a three-dimensional system combining "family apprenticeship, community performances, and school education." Handwritten gong Che notation preserved by

the Yang family, after digitization, became provincial-level intangible cultural heritage teaching materials.

In folk celebrations such as weddings, funerals, deity welcoming ceremonies, traditional festivals, and religious rituals, the clapper gong plays an indispensable role. The size of the performance team varies by occasion, typically consisting of 13 members, but expanding to 23 for significant events such as deity worship, festival competitions, or wedding receptions. There are over 60 musical patterns, most originating from northern and southern Chinese music traditions, with some derived from opera melodies and folk tunes. These musical forms serve as vibrant cultural memories that vividly reflect the integration and inheritance of culture across different historical periods. They have become vital vehicles for fostering community bonds and preserving regional culture, showcasing the unique charm of Zhaoshan's musical heritage.

Yu Lian Huan

Yu Lian Huan, a traditional Chinese percussion ensemble performance, originated from ancient Taoist ritual music. Folk artisans initially created it by mounting three small gongs on an iron frame to produce the distinctive "Ding Dang Dang" sound, and it was later named after this musical motif. As the tradition evolved, artists began arranging multiple instruments into symbolic patterns resembling the Chinese character "Ru Yi" (meaning "auspicious charm"), which led to the name "Yu Lian Huan." In the 1970s, Ezhou folk artists transformed this musical tradition into a storytelling performance art form, creating a new cultural expression. The ensemble features instruments such as "dang" cymbals, "Xiao Cui" small cymbals, "Dang Luo" gong cymbals, "Yin Qing" ceremonial chimes, "Mu Yu" wooden fish, and "Xiao Gu" small drums. In 2009, Yu Lian Huan was officially included in the second batch of Hubei Province's Intangible Cultural Heritage Representative List.

Yu Lian Huan, renowned for its lively melodies and distinctive rhythms, skillfully incorporates elements from Hubei folk songs such as paired rhymes and "Spinning Cotton" (a traditional spinning rhyme). This art form uniquely combines storytelling, singing, and dance into a cohesive performance. Performers may showcase their talents solo or create spectacular stage presentations through group

collaboration. The show features dynamic percussion, rhythmic beats, and musical interplay, blending humor with scenes from everyday life. Drawing from local folk tales and daily experiences, Yu Lian Huan vividly portrays the lives and spirit of Zhaoshan residents. While entertaining audiences, it preserves regional culture with profound artistic and cultural significance. With its brisk tempo, vibrant atmosphere, and seamless integration of singing, dancing, and fast-paced segments, this distinctive Ezhou-style folk art remains a vibrant presence on stage.

As a vital element of folk rituals and vegetarian feast traditions, this cultural practice is widely observed at weddings, funerals, temple fairs, house-building ceremonies, and longevity celebrations. It is an indispensable highlight of Zhaoshan's cultural activities and is deeply valued by local communities. While maintaining the ancient simplicity of Taoist music, it continues to flourish through innovative adaptations. Its preservation journey underscores the importance of "living inheritance" in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage, demonstrating the resilience and creativity of Ezhou's folk arts. The Yu Lian Huan performance troupe in Qiao Cun Village, Zhaoshan, remains active. Through ongoing cultural revitalization and educational promotion, Yu Lian Huan is poised to become a cultural icon for both Ezhou City and Hubei Province.

Wearing a dragon boat

The Flower-Drifting Dragon Boat Race at Zhaoshan is a long-standing tradition in which locals commemorate Qu Yuan, the patriotic poet, during the Dragon Boat Festival. This cultural practice holds deep historical significance and distinctive folkloric value. Since the Qianlong reign of the Qing Dynasty (1736–1820), the area has honored Qu Yuan as the Dragon Deity while preserving dragon boat racing traditions, a heritage that has lasted for over two centuries.

The flower dragon boat, a unique traditional craft, consists of four vessels: 1) The "Phoenix Boat" features phoenix-shaped decorations at both the bow and stern, with a white crane spreading its wings atop the mast cabin and holding a red dragon pearl in its foot—hence it is also called the "Pearl Boat"; 2) The two Dragon Boats are adorned with dragon heads and tails at their ends, flanked by silk ribbons of different

colors to distinguish them; 3) The Bodhisattva Boat displays decorations resembling Qu Yuan and his officials on either side of the center.

The flower dragon boat race follows strict protocols and rules during performances. After the Bodhisattva boat sets off, drummers play music as the phoenix-shaped vessel leads into the designated waters. Two dragon boats then launch, performing a figure-eight floral dance around the phoenix vessel. After completing three such circuits, they race straight to claim the trophy placed on shore, with the winner being the one who secures it first. This spectacular event, accompanied by thunderous drumbeats and gongs, draws large crowds. More than just a sporting event, this tradition is a vital way for the people of Zhaoshan to preserve historical culture, express patriotic sentiments, and strengthen community bonds, holding a significant place in local folk culture.

The flower-decorated dragon boat is not merely a racing vessel but also serves as a ceremonial vessel for rituals and performances. These boats share the same construction as local villagers' fishing boats, with the key difference being that before the Dragon Boat Festival, the event leader collaborates with veteran artisans to craft bamboo components such as dragon heads, phoenix heads, dragon tails, phoenix tails, and Buddha statues adorned with white cranes. During this period, these fishing boats are imbued with special significance. As the festival approaches, the village leader prepares essential items and arranges personnel for the event. The flower-decorated dragon boat tradition serves dual purposes: honoring the historical figure Qu Yuan while praying for blessings, and enriching cultural life through festive celebrations.

2.4.3 The multidimensional value of natural resources

Zhaoshan Forest Park: Ecological narrative of geological wonders

Zhaoshan Forest Park, a provincial-level forest reserve in Hubei Province, covers 19.98 million square meters with a forest coverage rate of 97%. Its main peak, at 418.5 meters above sea level, features the "Layered Verdure of Zhaoshan" as its core attraction. The Park includes over 40 natural and cultural sites, such as Bamboo Villa, Zhaoshan Temple, and Immortal Valley, and is home to abundant flora and fauna, including the "Three Wild Treasures": pine mushrooms, chestnuts, and kiwifruit.

Located in the northern Jiangnan foothills of the Mu Fu Mountain Range, Zhaoshan extends north to south with clustered peaks. Its summit includes Mount Fu Pan and Lion Rock, while crystal-clear marshes lie beneath the cliffs. The upper layers display layered greenery and dense forests (Hubei Provincial Federation of Literary and Art Circles, 2017). The region's geological advantages are evident in its favorable mineralization conditions and rich mineral resources. Distinct mineralization indicators, stratigraphic features, lithology, tectonic patterns, and topographic characteristics provide crucial references for mineral exploration. Fault systems facilitate groundwater migration and mineral dissolution, while spring outcrops in low-lying areas serve as surface clues for mineral prospecting {Yang Weiwei, 2016 #31}.

Ecological tourism attraction: The Park features four distinct seasons, offering activities such as spring outings, summer escapes, autumn climbing, and winter snow viewing. With outdoor facilities including a 10,000-meter mountain hiking trail and a camping base, it is suitable for forest exploration, ecological research, and other activities.

Cultural experience carrier: The ancient Zhaoshan Temple and traditional folk activities offer tourists a humanistic experience and enhance the depth of cultural tourism integration.

Science education function: By using geological wonders and ecological monitoring data, geological research courses or ecological protection practice projects can be designed to enhance tourists' sense of participation.

Regional linkage effect: complement surrounding attractions such as Liu Tong Wan Ancient Village and Liangzi Lake Wetland by creating a "nature + culture" tourism route and increasing tourists' length of stay.

Local transformation of agricultural resources

Boasting a unique subtropical humid climate, Zhaoshan Pomelo (a citrus variety) is a protected geographical indication product from Ezhou City. This fruit features a thin rind and abundant juice, delivering a sweet-sour flavor with subtle bitterness that leaves a lingering aftertaste. Rich in vitamin C, it has exceptional nutritional value. Genetic sequencing confirms it is a natural hybrid between pomelo

and citrus, containing 3.2 mg/g flavonoids—1.8 times higher than regular pomelo varieties {Institute, 2019 #32}.

Through the "cooperative + farmers + e-commerce" model, the Zhaoshan pomelo industry has established a complete industrial chain, from fresh fruit sales to essential oil extraction. The integration of agriculture and tourism drives growth: the annual November Zhaoshan pomelo Picking Festival attracts thousands of visitors and features folk activities such as making sticky rice cakes and arrow-throwing games, creating a village tourism model that combines picking, experiential activities, and consumption.

Agricultural tourism integration drive: The "Pomelo Picking Festival," held every November, attracts thousands of tourists. Combined with folk activities such as making sticky rice cakes and arrow throwing, it forms a village tourism model of "picking + experience + consumption," with sales of nearly 2 million yuan from a single event.

Industrial chain extension: develop deep-processed products such as honey pomelo tea and pomelo oil, and establish an "orange gene bank" experience workshop to integrate agriculture with science popularization and hands-on activities, thereby increasing added value.

Brand culture output: By achieving dual certification in "geographical indication + green food," the brand identity of "Zhaoshan Pomelo" is strengthened. The cultural heritage of "Xiao Wu Yuan" Liu Tong Wan ancient village is integrated to create the cultural tourism IP of "Fragrant Fruit and Ancient Charm."

Economic radiation effect: 80% of farmers participate in planting, driving the formation of cooperatives, e-commerce sales, and surrounding catering, form a virtuous cycle of "increased income for fruit farmers—industrial upgrading—tourism attraction."

The uniqueness of Zhaoshan Village in Ezhou City arises from the synergistic coexistence of multiple elements. On the historical and cultural level, the Chang You Zhao Cultural Park and Liangzi Lake Ecological Park create a dual narrative of "humanity-nature." In terms of folk customs and intangible heritage, the brand gongs, jade-linked rings, and flower-embroidered dragon boats form a three-dimensional

expression of "sound-art-ritual." Regarding natural resources, the organic interaction between forests and farmland embodies the development philosophy that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets." This distinctiveness originates not only from the profound accumulation of regional cultural heritage but also from contemporary innovative transformation capabilities.

In summary, the soft power pillars and representative elements of Zhaoshan Village in Ezhou can be categorized into six major dimensions: natural resources, agricultural products, economy and industry, folk culture and tangible heritage, intangible cultural heritage, and local humanities and governance. Through field research and interviews, these six pillars were identified and organized into a comprehensive overview of Zhaoshan's soft power assets. Each element represents a widely recognized local place, product, or cultural practice that carries distinctive symbolic value.

Drawing on the concept of the "super symbol" and the One Village One Product model from Japan, it can be concluded that the construction and communication of a village identity require the selection of a unique "tangible asset" or "cultural asset" as the core representative symbol. This symbolic asset must be distilled from the village's broader soft power elements



CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Methodology

3.1.1 Mixed research methods

This chapter systematically examines the research methodology and implementation process for developing the Zhaoshan experiential village tourism brand in Ezhou City. The study uses a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative analyses, and focuses on the characteristics of Zhaoshan’s cultural tourism resources and tourists' experiential needs. Covering the core scenic area and surrounding communities of Zhaoshan, the research employs multi-stage data collection methods, including questionnaires, field observations, and in-depth interviews, as well as the dual-diamond model validation design to clarify village identity positioning and strategic design, providing scientific evidence for sustainable development.

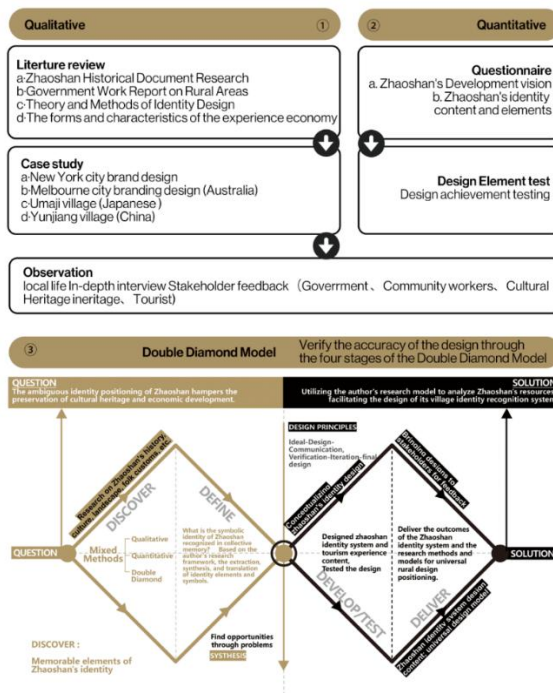


Figure 8 Qualitative and Quantitative method and the Double diamond model

3.1.2 Research framework

Using Zhaoshan in Ezhou City as a case study, this paper analyzes its natural resources, product resources, cultural resources, and regional characteristics. It then refines various design features and elements to propose a sustainable, recognizable, and memorable village identity design model.

First, based on the grassroots governance structure and the characteristics of village cultural tourism development, identify the stakeholders involved in the development of township tourism, including:

- 1、 County/township government
- 2、 Village-level self-governing organizations
- 3、 Local tourism enterprises
- 4、 Philanthropy Foundation and non-governmental organizations
- 5、 Tourism labor
- 6、 Professional consultants and think tanks
- 7、 Cultural heritage base
- 8、 Visitor
- 9、 Local residents
- 10、 Cross-boundary cooperation agencies

Table 2 Core stakeholders of township tourism industry

Top class	Stake holder	Roles and functions	Typical representative
Government and public sector	1. County/township governments	Formulate village tourism development plans, coordinate land use approval, financial support and infrastructure construction.	Township culture and tourism office, village revitalization bureau

	2. Village-level self-governing organizations	Coordinate villagers to participate in tourism projects, manage collective resources, such as ancient villages and ecological woodlands, and promote the development of "one village, one product".	Village committee, villagers congress
Businesses and industry groups	3. Local tourism businesses	Provide accommodation, catering, guide services, and develop experience products such as agricultural experience and intangible heritage workshops.	Farmhouse association, homestay cooperative, travel agency
	4. Public interest foundations and NGO	Funding ecological protection and cultural heritage projects.	Foundation for Cultural Heritage Protection, environmental NGO
Practitioners and professional groups	5. Tourism practitioners	Direct service to tourists, including tour guides, homestay managers and artisans,	Local tour groups, intangible heritage

		will affect the reputation of tourists' experience.	inheritors and village chefs
	6. Professional consultants and think tanks	Provide planning consultation and marketing planning services, and assist in applying for provincial tourism demonstration zone qualifications.	College of Tourism, village revitalization expert team
	7. Cultural heritage base	Teach traditional skills and cultivate "intangible heritage + tourism" composite talents.	Intangible cultural heritage workshops, village cultural halls
Tourists and local communities	8. Tourists	The consumption behavior and evaluation feedback drive the product iteration, which affects the popularity of village tourism market.	Nearby urban family tourists, study groups, photography enthusiasts
	9. Indigenous populations	As both a cultural carrier and a beneficiary, it is necessary to balance participation and benefit	Villagers, individual representatives of the clan and local elites

		distribution.	
Other related parties	10. Cross-border cooperation mechanisms	We will promote the integration of "tourism plus" such as culture and tourism plus agriculture to expand the value of the industrial chain.	Agricultural science and technology companies, health care institutions, cultural and creative studios

In quantitative research, we primarily measure tourists' awareness of and satisfaction with cultural tourism resources at Zhaoshan, including attractions such as Liangzi Lake, Zhaoshan Pomelo, Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park, and Intangible Cultural Heritage Workshops. We also identify market segmentation characteristics, such as family-oriented travelers and visitors seeking cultural experiences. In qualitative research, we focus on uncovering challenges in brand development and refining cultural experience touchpoints.

Table 3 Survey data collection

Method type	Implementation steps	concrete operations
Quantitative Analysis	1. Questionnaires	Online (Questionnaire Star): for tourists; Offline: local residents, cultural and tourism practitioners; Key indicators: Zhaoshan pomelo and Zhang Yu Zhao culture are the core elements of the brand.
	2. Behavioral statistics	Analyze the route recommendation data in the questionnaire;

		Statistics on the preference for revitalization of intangible heritage.
Qualitative Analysis	1. In-depth interviews	Interviewees: government representatives (cultural and tourism Bureau), cultural institution operators, intangible heritage inheritors (a total of 15 people);

Based on research findings from questionnaires and interviews, we identified key information. Using these analytical results, we developed route plans that incorporated cultural and ecological themes to meet diverse tourist needs. We then implemented identity design, including naming conventions, image branding, signage systems, promotional materials, and souvenir distribution. A comprehensive evaluation of Zhaoshan's identity resources was conducted, along with discussions on infrastructure development, promotional efforts, and service quality. These initiatives have helped establish Zhaoshan as a tourism destination with significant influence.

3.2 Questionnaire survey

3.2.1 Sample selection: tourists, villagers, government workers

The questionnaire survey is the most commonly used method in this study. It consisted of a series of closed-ended questions designed to elicit responses from participants. The online survey aimed to collect data to investigate, analyze, and summarize the basic characteristics and elements of the study area—Zhaoshan—thus providing a foundational basis for the development of its urban and rural branding features.

Sources of quantitative research data include various statistical data and structured questionnaires, among others. Questionnaires are considered the most important tool for obtaining materials required for quantitative analysis in tourism. Their characteristics include objective and standardized survey content that

facilitates processing and analysis, high anonymity and authenticity, as well as advantages such as large sample sizes and minimal interaction effects. A.J. Veal (1997) outlined six major contributions of questionnaire surveys: ① Tourism has become a mass phenomenon, and governments and enterprises require substantial quantified data for decision-making, making questionnaires an ideal method for providing such information. ② While absolute objectivity is unattainable, the research process using questionnaires remains transparent. ③ Quantitative methods can present complex information in a concise and understandable format. ④ Longitudinal surveys can be used to study temporal changes in phenomena. ⑤ Tourism encompasses numerous activities and characteristics, and questionnaires are an effective means to ensure complete participation patterns of individuals. ⑥ Qualitative methods are ideal for examining individual attitudes, meanings, and perceptions, while questionnaires provide tools for collecting and recording overall attitudes, meanings, and perceptions. Therefore, to obtain reliable data aligned with research objectives, carefully designed questionnaires are essential. The scientific rigor and objectivity of questionnaires directly determine whether the research findings are scientifically valid.

Sampling units are primarily categorized into two types: random (probabilistic) and non-random (non-probabilistic, purpose-driven).

In this study, to ensure data representativeness and comprehensiveness, the selection criteria for questionnaire respondents initially focused on limiting the participant scope. The research used a combination of stratified and non-random sampling methods, targeting three core stakeholder groups: tourists, villagers, and government staff. These groups differed in age, education level, and occupation. Most residents lived in Zhaoshan, Ezhou City, and are the primary drivers of tourism opportunities in the region. Currently, local communities remain the most critical factor in sustainable destination development, as they are essential to sustaining tourism destinations. Regardless of whether tourism projects succeed, residents will continue to live in these areas. However, they should support tourism development to preserve their living spaces and scenic attractions. Additionally, respondents were

required to provide feedback on urban characteristics and the sustainability of tourist sites.

Therefore, the survey recruited approximately 100 participants from two primary groups: Zhaoshan government staff and cultural institutions personnel as well as local residents and tourists. Most participants were identified through recommendations from scenic-area administrators and government departments. Recruitment concluded once 100 valid survey responses had been collected. The workforce consisted of 80% local residents and 20% non-local professionals. To ensure representativeness, we invited staff members with relevant expertise to participate in voting and provide recommendations.

3.2.2 Questionnaire structure: identity cognition, experience needs, route preference

The survey questionnaire includes both structured and unstructured formats. Structured questionnaires use closed-ended responses, allowing participants to select from provided options. This approach ensures high response rates and reliability while simplifying data collection for statistical analysis. Structured surveys are primarily used in quantitative research, whereas unstructured methods are more common in qualitative studies. Accordingly, this questionnaire adopts a structured approach, organized into three core modules: village identity perception, experiential needs, and route preferences. This structure maintains logical coherence while addressing key research objectives.

The village identity module of the questionnaire aims to assess tourists' overall perception and image recognition of the Zhaoshan cultural tourism brand. The question types and content address two key aspects: First, brand element identification (options include "Zhaoshan Citrus," "Zhang Yu Zhao's Calligraphy," and "Yu Lian Huan"), with supplementary open-ended questions to verify tourists' breadth of understanding of local cultural symbols. Second, brand image evaluation (using a voting system to assess existing identifiers such as "mountain-water + calligraphy" elements), ensuring data comparability. The design logic progresses from symbolic recognition to emotional identification, gradually building a multidimensional

cognitive map of tourists' brand perception.

The research objective of the experience needs analysis module is to investigate tourists' specific demands and preferences regarding cultural, ecological, and service-oriented experiential activities. The module is designed to prioritize cultural experiences and select ecological projects. Tourists are required to rank cultural activities such as intangible heritage craft-making, calligraphy interactive experiences, and red history scenario plays based on their personal interests.

The route preference module aims to optimize day-trip itinerary design by effectively aligning tourist preferences with tourism resource endowments. This study introduces the concept of thematic route selection, offering options across three dimensions: geographical resources, historical-cultural elements, and humanistic resources. By directly collecting tourists' actual demands, it establishes a design logic that progresses from theme selection to detailed optimization, ultimately driving innovative improvements in route planning.

Therefore, the structure of this questionnaire is designed with a hierarchical progression that successively covers the dimensions of village identity cognition, experience needs, and route preferences, which is consistent with the behavioral logic of tourists from perception to decision.

3.3 Depth interview

3.3.1 Interviewees: heads of cultural and tourism departments, intangible heritage inheritors, operators of cultural institutions and businesses

In qualitative research, we typically use theoretical sampling to explore research questions through multi-level and multidimensional approaches, purposefully selecting interviewees who can provide valuable insights for this study. By conducting in-depth interviews, this paper collects and organizes relevant materials to perform a deeper analysis of the brand design for one-day cultural tourism tours in Zhaoshan.

Therefore, this study conducted in-depth interviews with directors of cultural tourism departments, intangible cultural heritage inheritors, and cultural institution operators to obtain insights and information related to urban tourism. Interviewees answered questions and shared perspectives based on their roles and experiences.

Understanding residents' viewpoints can streamline policy-making, minimize potential negative impacts of tourism development, and maximize its benefits, thereby promoting community development and providing stronger support for tourism growth. The research demonstrates strong representativeness.

At the cultural tourism department level, we begin with macro planning and progressively address implementation challenges. By leveraging data to enhance persuasiveness, we guide stakeholders in evaluating policy effectiveness. For intangible cultural heritage inheritors, our approach evolves from recognizing the value of their craft to addressing practical obstacles, ultimately exploring innovative pathways through empathy-driven trust-building and case studies such as "successful models of integrating intangible heritage with tourism in other regions." At the cultural institution operator level, we analyze market conditions and operational strategies, emphasizing feasibility and focusing on concrete examples. The proposed interview content includes:

Table 4 In-depth interview framework

Interviewer	Core themes	Example of a problem	Interview purpose
Head of cultural and tourism department	Policy planning and resource integration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to implement the top-level design of Zhaoshan cultural tourism development? 2. How to find an identity that people will remember quickly. 3. What is the solution to the lack of linkage between foreground points? 	Understand the policy orientation and implementation difficulties, and explore the potential of resource integration.
	village identity construction and	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to reflect the difference in village identity positioning? 2. What is the direction of 	Evaluate the feasibility of village identity development

	communicate	publicity channel optimization? 3. How to improve the return rate of tourists?	strategies and explore innovative communication paths.
Intangible cultural heritage bearers	The dilemma of skill inheritance and revitalization	1. The inheritance status and challenges of intangible cultural heritage projects? 2. Reasons and countermeasures for low youth participation? 3. How to integrate intangible heritage into tourism experience?	The core obstacles to the revitalization of intangible heritage are identified and the integration plan of culture and tourism is put forward.
	Cultural identity and market demand	1. What do tourists think of intangible cultural heritage performances? 2. Market acceptance of intangible cultural heritage creative products? 3. How to expand the influence through festivals?	Connect cultural values with market needs and explore sustainable operation models.
Cultural institution operators	Product development and operational challenges	1. Current profit model and bottleneck? 2. How to design an experience project with high repurchase rate? 3. Suggestions on pricing and sales channel optimization of	Analyze market pain points and refine product innovation direction.

		cultural and creative products?	
	Tourist demand and service optimization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the focus of tourists' complaints about service facilities? 2. How to improve the attractiveness of local gifts? 3. How to evaluate the effect of social media marketing? 	Optimize service details to enhance tourist satisfaction and brand reputation.

This framework addresses the three perspectives of policy, culture, and economy. Through structured questions and flexible inquiries, it can systematically obtain in-depth insights and provide a solid basis for thesis analysis and strategy formulation.

3.3.2 Design of semi-structured interview outline

This study uses semi-structured interviews conducted primarily through face-to-face conversations. To ensure authenticity and data credibility, three representative respondents from different industries were selected. The interviews consist of one-on-one discussions focusing on innovations in the "Zhaoshan One-Day Tour" initiative, current developments in Zhaoshan's cultural tourism market, and emerging trends in folk culture.

The semi-structured interview outline is designed to address policy planning and resource integration, specifically targeting the heads of township cultural tourism departments. The in-depth interview outline includes: (1) What specific measures have been implemented to position Zhaoshan as a "demonstration town for agricultural-cultural-tourism integration"? (2) How is the balance between ecological conservation and tourism development managed? Are there clear standards for delineating "red line zones"? (3) In the tripartite collaboration among government, enterprises, and villagers, how can villagers' interests (such as dividends and employment) be protected from marginalization? (4) Given the current lack of coordination between scenic spots, what is the next integration strategy? (5) How can

village identity avoid homogenization with neighboring towns? Are there plans to develop differentiated intellectual property? (6) Regarding promotional channels, will cooperation with platforms such as Tik-Tok and Xiao Hong Shu be strengthened beyond traditional media?

The second aspect concerns integrating intangible cultural heritage (ICH) preservation with tourism development, specifically through interview frameworks designed for ICH inheritors. The in-depth interview outline includes: (1) Current challenges in skill transmission: What do you consider the greatest challenges facing local ICH projects (e.g., low youth engagement, funding shortages)? (2) Youth engagement initiatives: Have efforts been made to attract younger generations through programs such as "Intangible Heritage in Schools" or "Craft Workshops"? How effective have these efforts been? (3) Tourism integration practices: Is there currently deep integration between ICH performances and tourism experiences? What feedback has been received from visitors? Are more interactive programs being considered? (4) Revitalization strategies: How should governments or enterprises support the dynamic inheritance of ICH? (5) Market acceptance of regional ICH cultural products: How can market recognition be enhanced? Should pricing strategies be adjusted?

The third focus area is market operations and product innovation for cultural institution operators. The in-depth interview framework includes three key questions: (1) What are the current primary profit models, and what challenges do they face, such as low per-customer spending and insufficient repurchase rates? (2) How can more engaging experiential programs be designed, and are there any successful case studies? (3) How is local souvenir sales performance, and does this require adjustments to packaging or marketing strategies?

The current theoretical framework consists of five key components. First, Stakeholder Theory analyzes the power-interest matrix among governments, enterprises, and villagers to optimize collaborative mechanisms. {C, 1984 #33}. (Freeman, 1984). Second, Experiential Economy Theory develops a "Five-Sense Experience Model" to enhance tourist immersion {Bill Gaver, 1999 #34}. Third, the "Four-Step Approach for Intangible Cultural Heritage Revitalization"—Protection →

Display → Interaction → Derivation—addresses the conflict between cultural preservation and commercialization. Fourth, the framework establishes a "Village Tourism Interest Community" that emphasizes multi-stakeholder resource integration under government guidance. This interview outline balances academic rigor with practical orientation, providing systematic qualitative data support for research on village identity construction in Zhaoshan.

3.3 Travel data statistics

Proposed by Graver and colleagues in 1999, the cultural inquiry method is a user-centered qualitative research approach. It encourages participants to actively document their behaviors, emotions, and cultural experiences within natural settings, thereby revealing deeper underlying needs and cultural significance. This method captures unstructured data through participants' self-expression and is commonly employed in fields such as tourism studies, product design, and cultural heritage preservation. Cultural inquiry aims to gather context-sensitive information to inspire innovative technological designs.

This study is grounded in practical experiments aimed at developing ideas and summarizing strategies for rural identity. Researchers collected subjective experiences and behavioral data from participants by providing toolkits and requesting them to complete creative tasks within specific scenarios, thereby exploring both tangible and intangible aspects of travel experiences. The results were analyzed and concretized to develop a conceptual experience brand model for urban and rural identity design, based on the traveler perspective. One key advantage of this research method is its participatory nature, which emphasizes users' initiative as "co-researchers" and breaks the passivity characteristic of traditional research paradigms. The second advantage is its focus on emotional design, which emphasizes the explicit expression of emotions and experiences.

The cultural exploration method utilized in this study is based on qualitative data self-recorded by participating users. Through their stories, experiences, opinions, emotions, and activities, the study aims to gain insights into participants' needs and propose design concepts for strategic touchpoints in the experience city. Additionally, the survey results provide deeper understanding of travel experiences,

offering valuable references for the development of itineraries in experiential towns. For example, an empirical analysis of Zhaoshan can clarify the town's identity image and facilitate sustainable development.

3.4.1 Tool Kit Design: Souvenirs and Online Vlog Sharing

The inquiry toolkit is designed to facilitate understanding of regions, environments, societies, cultures, and lifestyles through participants' travel experiences. The final goal is to analyze the results of cultural exploration to identify and articulate the identity highlights of Zhaoshan Village within the tourism dimension. The first step involves guiding tourists to systematically record their travel experiences and explore cultural touchpoints and behavioral patterns. Subsequently, personalized visual research methods—such as online browsing and seeking opinions from others—are employed to gather quantitative data about the trip, which is then used to plan and adjust travel according to individual circumstances. During their trip, participants are encouraged to document their travel experiences by capturing photos, videos, and descriptive thoughts and memories. Afterward, participants are asked to purchase postcards or souvenirs and send them to their chosen recipients, serving as tangible carriers of cultural memory and as data feedback tools.

The design of souvenirs emphasizes their commemorative attributes. When considering practicality, special attention should also be given to the experiential effect. Therefore, souvenir design primarily focuses on empathy—an approach rooted in emotional experience {Wang Chao Xia, 2019 #35}. Which consciously considers the intersection of subject and object situations and explores empathetic factors {Zhi, 2023 #40}.

The goal of online Vlog sharing is to capture dynamic behaviors via digital tools and extend the reach of brand communication. By leveraging data from online posts, souvenir purchases, and Vlogs, this approach overcomes the temporal and spatial limitations of traditional research. Furthermore, integrating sentiment analysis with visual narratives deepens the understanding of abstract concepts such as “local identity” and “nostalgia memories.” It also provides replicable toolkit templates for similar rural cultural tourism initiatives, enabling rapid diagnosis of product pain points. Ultimately, through the dissemination of user-generated content, a positive

feedback loop—encompassing social communication, visitor engagement, and brand enhancement—is activated at relatively low cost.

3.4.2 Participants: Target tourist group

In developing village cultural tourism, accurately identifying target audiences is crucial for achieving refined product design and optimized service experiences. Based on Zhaoshan’s cultural tourism resources and market demands, we segmented target tourists and identified their core needs and behavioral characteristics.

Table 5 Classification of target tourist groups

Group types	Core features	Typical scenario	Proportion estimates
Family visitors	Centered on children, focusing on safety and education Prefer short trips (1-2 hours by car) and weekend trips Needs: interactive experiences, parent-child facilities, sanitation	Picking of agricultural products such as Zhaoshan pomelo, intangible cultural heritage handicraft workshop, forest hiking, farming experience, farmhouse health food	35%
College students / couples	Pursue personalization and niche experiences Rely on social media (Red Dot, Tik Tok) for information Demand: photo check-in, cost-effective accommodation, free travel guide	Liangzi Lake sunrise photography, ancient village exploration, starry camping	25%
Silver-haired health group	Focus on comfort and slow pace Prefer cultural depth and healthy ecology	Calligraphy Culture Park, walking along the lakeside greenway, farmhouse health meal	20%

	Demand: barrier-free facilities, health food and beverage, cultural interpretation services		
The Study Tour Team	It is mainly organized by schools or institutions Emphasize knowledge and practice Requirements: curriculum experience, security control, team collaboration projects	Picking of agricultural products such as Zhaoshan pomelo, ecological study of aquatic plants, red history class, and interaction with intangible heritage inheritors	15%
shutterbug	High requirements for light, composition and scene Willing to get up early or wait for a unique landscape Demand: shooting guidance, equipment rental, recommendation of niche locations	Ling Jiao Tian landscape, ancient architectural complex, folk festival activities	5%

By accurately identifying the distinct needs of target tourist groups and integrating cultural exploration with mixed research methodologies, we can precisely define village identity and develop clear tourism products. Through systematic optimization, we aim to shift from a resource-oriented approach to an experience-driven model. This transformation will ultimately establish Zhaoshan as a culturally confident tourism destination that resonates with diverse consumer groups.

Chapter 4

Data analysis and discovery

4.1 Questionnaire findings

4.1.1 Tourist preference analysis

Hubei's village tourism has developed rapidly, leading to the emergence of many distinctive tourist villages. However, because most villages underwent spontaneous renovations, their tourism spaces were not adequately designed to meet the needs of both visitors and residents. This resulted in poor accessibility, uneven distribution, and suboptimal spatial quality and functionality, which did not satisfy tourists' requirements. These shortcomings not only hindered the growth of village tourism but also reduced villagers' sense of fulfillment and visitors' travel satisfaction {Jiawei, 2024 #36}. Tourism routes, as integral components of the tourism market, have characteristics such as comprehensiveness, immobility, and vulnerability. Multiple factors influence route quality, including tourism resources, facilities, services, and timing. Tourism resources refer to scenic spots available for exploration. When selecting specific routes, travelers engage in activities such as sightseeing, leisure, and recreation at designated nodes along the path, thereby fulfilling their personal interests and expectations.



Figure 9 2022 Compilation of Fieldwork photographs in Zhaoshan

The preliminary research, based on a systematic analysis of the cultural elements and regional resources characteristic of Zhaoshan, combined with contemporary tourist demands, establishes foundational designs for village identity to showcase the unique features of Zhaoshan's countryside. This design framework must also be developed using traveler-oriented approaches, employing questionnaire surveys to conduct feasibility assessments and iterative optimizations of the proposals.

























6 Major Soft Power Pillars and 24 Identity Elements of Zhaoshan											
Natural resources		Geography and Products resources		Economy & Industry		Folklore & Heritage		Intangible Cultural Heritage		Humanity & Governance	
Liangzi Lake		Pomelo		Pomelo Industrial Park		Guandi Temple		Intangible Heritage Workshop		Village of Civilized Customs	
Zhaoshan Mountain		Daisy		Liangzi Lake Eco-Park		Zaoshan Temple		Pai Zi Luo - traditional wind and percussion ensemble of Ezhou		Innovation in Village Autonomy	
Mineral resources		Fish		Zaoshan Forest Park		Zhang Yuzhao Cultural Hall		Yulianhuan - Ezhou Folk Rhythmic Storytelling		Liangzi Lake Lakeside Greenway	
Wild animals		Tea		Yuanjiawan Scenic Area		Nine Masters & Eighteen Craftsmen		Chuanhua Longzhou - Ezhou Ritual Dragon Boat Dance		Calligraphy Culture	

Figure 10 Classification and refinement of village culture and resource elements in Zhaoshan

The development of cultural tourism resources in Zhaoshan reveals significant variations in visitors' preferences for themed routes. A survey of 100 participants (The recruitment process was discontinued upon reaching 100 completed surveys) showed that 26% chose the Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park as their cultural exploration destination, while 16% identified the Intangible Cultural Heritage Workshop as the area's main attraction. Visitors also showed strong interest in cultural symbols such as calligraphy traditions and Yu Lian Huan jade craftsmanship. However, limited visitation time (typically 90 minutes) at Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park and higher prices of cultural products have resulted in low spontaneous purchases. To enhance visitor engagement, it is recommended to extend workshop hours and

introduce interactive programs, such as "calligraphy night tours with light shows," to deepen the immersive experience.

In eco-leisure activities, 30% of visitors choose the Pomelo Industrial Park, 21% prefer the Liangzi Lake Lakeside Greenway, and 11% recommend Zhaoshan Forest Park. During the 7–8-month water caltrop season, the "Mirror-like Lotus Pond" and red pheasants offer abundant tourism resources. However, inadequate facilities, such as closed rest stops and seasonal shortages of campsite guides, have hindered sustainable development. Urgent repairs are needed for greenway rest stations, along with themed packages that include lotus picking and cooking experiences to boost both tourism engagement and consumption.

Table 6 Summary of tourist preferences and optimization suggestions

Type of route	Preferential characteristics	Optimization direction
Cultural exploration	High cultural identity, low duration of stay	We will extend the opening hours of intangible cultural heritage workshops, introduce "calligraphy night tour + light show", and develop affordable cultural and creative products.
Eco-fallow	Nature is the leading factor; facilities need to be improved	The lakeside greenway station will be repaired, the parent-child camping area will be added, and the theme package will be launched.

This questionnaire is designed to provide tourists with personalized tourism products, help them minimize decision-making time, enhance travel enthusiasm, improve the travel experience, develop one-day tour routes that match tourists' preferences, offer higher-quality travel routes, and reduce decision-making risks.

4.1.2 Priority of identity elements

With the development of the national economy, the term "village identity" has gradually become deeply ingrained in people's minds. The cultural connotation of village identity elements serves as both a prerequisite for shaping brand image and a

theoretical foundation. Whether it is product branding culture or tourism attractions—especially village areas rich in folk culture—it is essential to explore their village identity cultural essence and elements, providing a theoretical basis for designing the overall image of these destinations {qi, 2018 #37}. Zhaoshan’s captivating tourism ecosystem makes it one of the most sought-after travel destinations. Therefore, this questionnaire survey focused on researching the village identity elements of Zhaoshan.

Among identity elements, Zhaoshan Pomelo (a type of citrus fruit) demonstrates the highest recognition, with 44% of respondents identifying it as the core identity element (Figure 3), significantly surpassing other options. Its strong commercial potential supports development into gift items such as gift boxes and preserved fruits, combining edible value with cultural symbolism. This economic impact directly connects to agricultural supply chains, boosting farmers' incomes through activities such as picking experiences and direct sales of farm produce, aligning with village revitalization goals. The next priority is Zhang Yu Zhao’s calligraphy, valued for its unique cultural significance as a representative of Hubei-Chu culture. This irreplaceable heritage could be developed into a premium "calligraphy study" IP. Additionally, calligraphy derivatives offer distinctive value at reasonable prices, effectively attracting cultural consumers.

Table 7 Statistical results of the research on the elements that best represent the brand of Zhaoshan

Element	Zambezi teak	Zhang Yu Zhao	Liangzi Lake landscape	Green tea
poll	13	10	3	3
proportion	44%	34%	10%	10%



Figure 11 The most representative elements of the brand of Zhaoshan

To enhance brand recognition for the Zhaoshan visual identity, we incorporated common elements from its landmarks while maintaining distinct stylistic variations. Survey data show that 29% of respondents preferred the first logo (Figure 4), which features a striking combination of Zhaoshan's natural landscapes and Chinese characters. This innovative approach creates an instantly recognizable visual identity with strong recognizability. Current branding practices at Zhaoshan primarily draw from village development models rich in cultural heritage, often substituting distinctive navigation systems and basic public design elements for their own brand culture. While this approach provides foundational support, it does not showcase unique cultural characteristics. Additionally, although independent visual identifiers based on cultural traits are being developed, the lack of a unified visual system results in insufficient brand recognition within village communities, making it difficult to establish representative symbols for village branding. Therefore, we propose systematically integrating Zhaoshan's cultural elements into brand identity design to create a distinctive, personalized visual identity.

Table 8 Which brand image is easier to remember Results statistics

Option					
Poll	10	12	9	3	3
Proportion	27%	32%	24%	8%	8%



Figure 12 Feedback from the first design survey: Which brand image is easier to remember

According to the survey, 90% of respondents believe that the visual image of the logo has unique characteristics of the local landscape, folk culture, and related elements. This design case demonstrates how to fully explore the distinctive atmosphere of the theme and form unique visual image during the process of village brand visual image design.

Table 9 Whether the brand image makes full use of the characteristic elements of Zhaoshan Statistical results of the survey

option	yes	deny
poll	10	1
proportion	90%	10%



Figure 13 Whether the brand image makes full use of the characteristic elements of Zhaoshan

Therefore, a key objective of brand visual identity is to integrate the region's representative elements. When product visuals lack consistency, businesses struggle to establish their desired brand identity. Similarly, inconsistent branding in village cultural tourism—particularly for products such as cultural and creative items and local specialties within scenic areas—can lead to visual confusion and even

counterfeit goods, resulting in consumer confusion. In competitive markets, effective brand image design and promotion can minimize target customer attrition and stabilize market share. When evaluating and developing tourism market prospects, the scalability of brand image design helps reduce the risks and costs associated with introducing new products. By strategically designing and promoting brand identities, consumers develop strong recognition and trust in the brand, fostering emotional reliance that ultimately mitigates tourism market risks.

4.2 Interview results

4.2.1 Government perspective: pain points of brand building

At present, village tourism development faces intense market competition as localities strive to establish distinctive regional brands. To attract more visitors, village tourism must increase its overall market share. The industry currently faces three main competitors: surrounding scenic areas, other tourism formats, and homogeneous competitors, creating significant market pressure. From the perspective of cultural-tourism integration, this study examines village tourism branding strategies through interviews with the Zhaoshan County government. By analyzing existing challenges and exploring effective solutions, it aims to address shortcomings in village tourism development {Wei, 2024 #38}.



Figure 14 Interview with staff in Government Office of Zhaoshan in 2024

Interview findings (Details of the interview can be found in the appendix C) reveal three major challenges in Zhaoshan's cultural tourism branding. In terms of identity recognition, industrial development, and cultural tourism construction in Zhaoshan, it is hoped that a recognizable, sustainable, experiential, and interactive rural identity can be established based on the Zhaoshan pomelo. Internally,

promote industrial development; externally, create a rural symbol that is conducive to dissemination. Financially, infrastructure projects face stagnation, with high closure rates at lakeside greenway stations and the suspension of Peony Valley operations due to budget constraints, while maintenance costs remain substantial. Cultural development is hindered by Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park's premium-priced merchandise targeting scholars and outdated equipment in intangible cultural heritage workshops. Talent shortages result from overreliance on local government funding for public interpretation programs and calligraphy classes, along with a lack of professional tourism management expertise. These issues stem from fiscal dependence on provincial allocations and inadequate mechanisms for attracting private capital, necessitating expanded applications for provincial cultural tourism funds and collaborative development models through village-enterprise partnerships. Additionally, revenue distribution remains imbalanced, with tourism profits failing to effectively support village collectives and villagers' motivation to participate. Optimizing fund allocation requires establishing a "cultural tourism income special account," allocating 30% of fiscal revenue to infrastructure and heritage preservation.



Figure 15 Interview in Zhaoshan Intangible Heritage Workshop in 2024

Culturally, three critical challenges persist: 1) Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) transmission gaps. The inheritance bearers of projects such as Yu Lian Huan jade beads and Cai Lian boat weaving are, on average, over 55 years old, with limited youth engagement; 2) Monotonous cultural experiences. Most ICH performances remain static displays with minimal visitor interaction; 3) Resource fragmentation. The Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park and the botanical garden operate independently, and

scattered attractions result in brief stays. Root causes include outdated revitalization models, underdeveloped cultural IP, and low community participation. Urgent solutions include establishing an "ICH Innovation Academy" to document techniques through short videos and offer startup subsidies to attract young talent; creating integrated "calligraphy + ecology" experiences, such as AR calligraphy tracing combined with forest hiking; and incorporating ICH preservation into village regulations to incentivize collective conservation efforts.



Figure 16 Interview in Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Center in 2024

There are three main issues with promotion: First, communication channels rely too heavily on traditional media, while new media platforms such as Red Dot and Tik-Tok are underutilized. Second, there is content homogenization, with undifferentiated promotional slogans. Third, traffic diversion is ineffective, as high-speed entrance display boards fail to reach target audiences, revealing weaknesses in digital capabilities and unclear brand narratives. It is necessary to establish a new media matrix by collaborating with local influencers and travel bloggers to launch the "Taste Zhaoshan" challenge; precisely target parent-child audiences at Wuhan subway and high-speed rail stations through targeted advertising and interactive campaigns; and build data-driven tourist profiles to deliver personalized route recommendations and coupons via WeChat Mini Programs.

Table 10 Problems and Solutions in the Construction of Characteristic Cultural Identity

Pain point dimension	Cross-cutting issues	Collaborative solutions
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Funding-culture	Intangible heritage workshops are expensive to run	Enterprises will be introduced to sponsor the development of "intangible cultural heritage blind boxes", and the profits will be distributed in proportion.
Culture-Promotion	Low awareness of cultural IP	The series of micro-documentaries "Intangible Heritage Guardians" were produced and distributed on the whole network.
Dissemination-funding	New media spending budget is insufficient	The provincial-level digital transformation subsidies for culture and tourism will be prioritized for short video production.

The core challenges in identity-building for the Zhaoshan area arise from the interaction of three main issues: funding shortages, insufficient cultural revitalization, and ineffective promotion. To address these interconnected challenges, the government should adopt a dual approach that combines policy support with market mechanisms. This includes overcoming financial constraints through innovative financing methods, unlocking cultural potential with youth-oriented strategies, and improving promotional effectiveness through digital solutions. Ultimately, this transformation will shift development from being "resource-driven" to "core-driven."

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) embodies the essence of traditional culture, characterized by unique expressions, rich cultural connotations, and distinct regional and ethnic features, providing an ideal foundation for integration with cultural consumption. The revitalization of ICH refers to incorporating its inherent cultural elements into contemporary life without compromising authenticity and integrity, thereby reinvigorating them. In the new consumption landscape, this revitalization can continuously drive improvements in cultural consumption value recognition, functional satisfaction, and industrial efficiency {Lan, 2025 #39}, Based on interview findings, this study analyzes existing challenges from two perspectives: the demand for ICH revitalization and community participation willingness, while proposing

feasible solutions.

The community faces several challenges in the preservation and revitalization of its intangible cultural heritage (ICH).

- (1) **Crisis of Inheritance:** ICH projects like Yu Lian Huan and Cai Lian Chuang are threatened by an integrational disconnect. The current generation of inheritors is aging, while young people show a low willingness to participate, primary due to low economic returns and weak social recognition. To address this, villagers suggest: Establishing an ICH innovation fund to support young entrepreneurs returning to the village; Implementing “ICH in schools” initiatives to enhance cultural identity among the younger generation.
- (2) **Insufficient Economic Transformation:** The economic viability of these ICH projects is weak. Performances rely heavily on temporary subsidies from traditional Chinese festivals, lacking a sustainable regular revenue model. Handicrafts suffer from low market acceptance due to lack of brand packaging and sales channels. Proposed solutions include: Establishing a "heritage workshop and e-commerce platform" linkage to integrate handicrafts into tourism souvenir systems; Introducing corporate partnerships to develop “ICH blind boxes” with a profit-sharing model based on sales.
- (3) **Challenges in Revitalization and Innovation:** Preliminary survey results indicate divided opinions on the best approach to ICH preservation: 46% of respondents favor protection and display, while 38% advocate for the promotion of culture symbols. Villagers also stress the importance of integrating ICH with modern life through practical applications such as: designing heritage-themed homestay decorations, developing ICH experience days" and seasonal activities, allowing tourists to participate in lotus boat performances or Yu Lian Huan making, and organizing village-wide ICH markets" to showcase and sell villager-created derivatives.

Table 11 Statistical results of the survey on how to protect and revitalize the Intangible cultural heritage in Zhaoshan

Protection and activation pathways	Conservation and display	As a cultural symbol of propaganda	Design and sell cultural and creative products
poll	6	5	2
proportion	46%	38%	15%



Figure 17 How to protect and revitalize the Intangible cultural heritage of Zhaoshan
4.2.2 Key experience design suggestions

Leveraging Shang Shan's cultural tourism resources and visitor behavior data, this study proposes two optimized tourism experience models: "Intangible Cultural Heritage Workshops" and "Eco-educational Tours." The heritage workshop design integrates nighttime performances with immersive scenarios, significantly increasing visitor engagement. Visitors receive personalized certificates, such as the "Heritage Master Certification," after completing tasks like jade chain weaving and embroidery. These certificates can be exchanged for limited-edition cultural products, enhancing participation and encouraging repeat visits. Through AR applications, scanning heritage exhibits reveals animated historical stories, deepening interactive experiences and attracting younger audiences. A dedicated "Heritage Vlog Studio" provides props and

script templates, encouraging visitors to create and share trending content; top creators receive discounted admission tickets. Social education initiatives include a "Village Mentorship Program" and "Family Workshop" models that subsidize heritage inheritors while enriching visitor experiences. A collaborative platform featuring "Heritage Blind Box" kits, which include materials and tutorials, ensures fair revenue distribution among villagers, scenic areas, and the platform, revitalizing local economies.

Centered around Liangzi Lake Wetland and Forest Park, the ecological study program features "Waterbird Observation" courses and a "Tree ID" project, where students document species and upload them to the scenic area database to earn corresponding honor badges. Technology-enhanced learning includes smart wristbands that track heart rates and hiking routes to generate health reports, while VR technology simulates mangrove habitat changes to provide immersive ecological education. For services, a "One-Stop Learning Hub" will be established in collaboration with Changyu Chao Cultural Park, offering "Calligraphy + Ecology" combo tickets. Visitors can practice calligraphy in the morning and take forest hikes in the afternoon, creating a seamless cultural and ecological experience.

This project aims to address monotonous traditional tourism experiences and cultural disconnection while enhancing tourist satisfaction, promoting the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), and achieving ecological sustainability. By implementing digital marketing strategies for local ICH and empowering communities through cooperatives, it tackles the challenges of repetitive travel experiences and cultural fragmentation. The initiative achieves multiple objectives, including improved tourist satisfaction (with 81% willingness to revisit), sustained ICH transmission, and eco-friendly conservation. This innovative approach provides a replicable model for advancing high-quality development in village cultural tourism.

The comprehensive optimization strategy focuses on unified brand storytelling, digital marketing, and community empowerment. First, incorporate intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and ecological elements into the core cultural tourism slogan, and design a series of IP images that appear in guide maps, promotional materials, and

online content. Second, use Tik-Tok live-streaming of ICH workshops for real-time interactions and Red Dot to publish "study guides," precisely targeting parent-child and youth audiences, while utilizing WeChat Mini Programs to offer reservation and feedback channels. Third, establish a "cultural tourism cooperative" where villagers can invest in study bases or workshop projects, with profit-sharing based on contributions. Regularly host "villagers' creative markets" to showcase handmade goods and agricultural products, increasing local participation. Through immersive interactions in ICH workshops and technological upgrades in ecological studies, the strategy addresses challenges of monotonous experiences and cultural disconnection, achieving multidimensional goals such as improved tourist satisfaction, dynamic inheritance of ICH, and sustainable ecological protection. This offers replicable, practical pathways for high-quality village cultural tourism development.

4.3 Data integration and discussion

4.3.1 Issues in the Perception of Village Identity in Zhaoshan, Ezhou City

Building upon previous discussion, it is evident that current research on village identity recognition in China remains insufficient. Existing practices predominantly focus on enterprises, products, and urban spaces, while the construction of visual identity systems for villages lags significantly behind. Although village tourism has been developing for several years and the government continues to promote tourism-driven economic growth, the development of visual identity systems for villages has not kept pace, and the visual transformation of cultural values within these systems requires systematic exploration (Gao Guofu, 2013). In this context, the application of scientific visual identity design to craft a distinctive, recognizable, sustainable, experiential, and interactive.

The process of establishing village identity in Zhaoshan faces multiple structural contradictions, notably: the tension between cultural preservation and commercial development; the disparity between cohesive identity expression and fragmented experience provision; and the disconnect between traditional symbols and contemporary modes of recognition. These contradictions are manifested in three specific aspects:

Firstly, there is a conflict between cultural authenticity and commercialized

identity. Currently, intangible cultural heritage performances rely excessively on festival settings, with commercialization diminishing the intrinsic qualities of the culture; similarly, creative cultural products pursue mass production, leading to the loss of traditional craftsmanship details. Constructing a village identity fundamentally involves ascribing meaning—transforming abstract local characteristics into perceivable experiential forms. This process must adhere to a people-centered principle, deeply exploring the internal value of local cultural resources to achieve a transition from tangible representations to spiritual connotations. Material cultural resources should not only embody regional symbolism but also possess aesthetic value, functional attributes, and cultural expressiveness—serving as essential foundations for village identity construction.

Secondly, there exists a contradiction between the demand for in-depth identity recognition and superficial presentation. Traditional craft workshops are limited in operational hours and offer limited interactive formats, making it difficult to foster sustained identity recognition. Ecological educational activities are constrained by incomplete interpretive systems, failing to meet the cognitive needs of families and students. Currently, most signage systems primarily transmit information in a unidirectional manner, lacking interactivity and immersive experience. Particularly for natural resource-based attractions, seasonal limitations prevent year-round identity display, resulting in monotonous visitor experiences that undermine the educational function and appeal of the village identity.

Thirdly, a gap exists between identity promotion and actual perception. Although emphasis is placed on immersing visitors in a “millennial culture,” there is a lack of effective linkage between Zhang Yu Zhao Culture Park and ecological attractions. Insufficient service facilities lead to fragmented recognition of the village identity. Survey data indicate that re-visit rates are below 20%, and some visitors report a significant discrepancy between their experiential perception and the promotional promises.

4.3.2 Strategic Directions for the Development of Zhaoshan Village Identity Perception

Through a systematic field investigation and in-depth interviews conducted in

Zhaoshan Town, a highly consistent consensus has been identified: among diverse stakeholders—including government officials, local cultural institutions, residents, and incoming tourists—"Zhaoshan pomelo" is widely regarded as the most foundational and emotionally resonant entry point for the construction of Zhaoshan's village identity.

At the government level, pomelo not only benefits from its established status as a product with a national geographic designation, providing authoritative support for industry development, but is also regarded as a crucial link connecting ecological conservation, cultural preservation, and economic growth. Cultural practitioners emphasize that pomelo embodies local memories, seasonal rituals, and folk wisdom, serving as a natural medium for revitalizing intangible cultural heritage and promoting local education. For residents, pomelo is more than a primary livelihood resource; it is an emotional symbol of local identity. The processes of planting, harvesting, and processing are deeply embedded in community routines and collective memory, fostering a strong sense of belonging. Feedback from tourists further affirms the rationality of this choice: with its perceptible, experiential, and portable qualities, pomelo is the most immediate symbol for their recognition, memory, and dissemination of "Zhaoshan impressions." This broad consensus indicates that "Zhaoshan Pomelo" has transcended its material attributes as an agricultural product and has been elevated to a "super symbol" that embodies the emotions, interests and expectations of multiple parties. It effectively Bridges multiple dimensions such as culture, ecology, economy and community, providing a solid social foundation and powerful emotional energy for building a cohesive, infectious and sustainable rural identity of Zhaoshan. Therefore, choosing the pomelo as the strategic fulcrum for identity construction is not only a rational judgment on the local resource endowment, but also a profound response to the collective will of the local group.

Therefore, on the basis of clarifying the priority of identity elements, it is necessary to systematically explore and transform the representative elements of Zhaoshan around the visual image of Zhaoshan pomelo. Based on resource endowment, tourists' demands and cultural characteristics, a four-in-one identity recognition system of "culture - ecology - product - community" is constructed.

The cultural dimension serves as a vital source of inspiration for identity construction, utilizing visual translation—such as vectorization and rendering—to distill characteristic symbols like Zhaoshan pomelo (agricultural product), Changhua Long Boat (intangible cultural heritage), and Liang Zi Lake (natural resource). This process extracts regional colors and patterns to strengthen identity distinctiveness.

The ecological dimension relies on Liang Zi Lake wetlands and Zhaoshan forests to develop a “metropolitan ecological garden” through combined offerings such as educational research and health tourism, emphasizing visual expressions rooted in local ecology.

As material carriers, the product system integrates the geographical indication of Zhaoshan pomelo, extending to derivative industries such as dried fruit, essential oils, and themed accommodations. Innovations at the Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Museum—such as calligraphy rubbings, bookmarks, and cultural souvenirs—realize an organic transition from agricultural produce to cultural branding, promoting the integration of tradition and modernity.

The community dimension fosters participation via equity-sharing models and cultivates intangible cultural heritage inheritors and tourism talents through collaborations with academic institutions, establishing a co-constructed identity recognition mechanism.

This system highlights Zhaoshan’s unique identity as “the origin of calligraphy, the homeland of intangible heritage, and a window to ecology,” addressing homogenization and hollowing-out challenges, and providing an innovative, culturally driven paradigm for rural revitalization.

Chapter 5

Design Experiment

5.1 Village identity definition and design process

5.1.1 Village identity positioning

First, the cultural dimension serves as a vital source of inspiration for identity construction, utilizing visual translation—such as vectorization and rendering—to distill characteristic symbols like Zhaoshan pomelo (agricultural product), Changhua Long Boat (intangible cultural heritage), and Liang Zi Lake (natural resource). This process extracts regional colors and patterns to strengthen identity distinctiveness.

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homogenization and hollowing-out challenges, and providing an innovative, culturally driven paradigm for rural revitalization.



Figure 18 Brand experience closed loop

Applying the "Super Symbol" theory to village identity recognition and brand building in Zhaoshan can establish a clear practical framework. The process begins with comprehensive exploration and systematic organization, which requires anthropological fieldwork examining Zhaoshan's geographical features, historical legends, folk festivals, local specialties, architectural styles, and dialects. Through this research, we identify cultural symbols that best represent the region and evoke both local pride and foreign curiosity. For example, Zhaoshan pomelo and its nurturing symbolism, Zhang Yu Zhao's calligraphic brushstrokes, and Liangzi Lake's water ripple patterns all serve as potential prototypes for super symbols.

The second phase focuses on in-depth insights into visitor needs, utilizing user journey mapping tools to conduct detailed analysis of target audiences. By tracking visitors' behaviors throughout the entire process—ranging from "cultural exploration" to "ecological leisure" and "consumption experience"—two typical demand scenarios emerge: urban professionals tend to seek "nature healing" experiences, demonstrated by preferences for activities such as pomelo forest hikes and lakeside meditation; meanwhile, cultural enthusiasts show higher engagement in "intangible cultural heritage interactions," such as calligraphy workshops and demonstrations of traditional farming tools.

It is important to note that these needs often exhibit emotional layering—outer layers reflect functional demands for relaxation and entertainment, while deeper layers contain a spiritual yearning for local identity. The design team should translate these findings into specific design guidelines, such as incorporating natural elements into visual systems to resonate with these needs.

Ultimately, the key lies in comprehensive implementation and sustained dissemination. The designated "super symbol" must be rigorously applied across every village touchpoint—from agricultural product packaging and tourism signage systems to public space decor, villagers' attire, festival activities, and online promotional content—creating an all-encompassing sensory experience. Through this continuous and unified presentation, we reinforce the connection between the symbol and village communities. This transforms the "super symbol" into a cultural identity marker for villages. When consumers encounter this symbol, they instantly associate it with the values, emotions, and experiences represented by the village. This enables efficient recognition, memorization, and dissemination of village identity, successfully converting cultural resources into brand assets.

5.1.2 Identity design iteration

Village identity design iteration is a systematic, phased, and dynamic optimization process that requires both strategic analysis and detailed refinement. The entire process can be divided into four key stages, each with distinct design objectives and methodological tools.

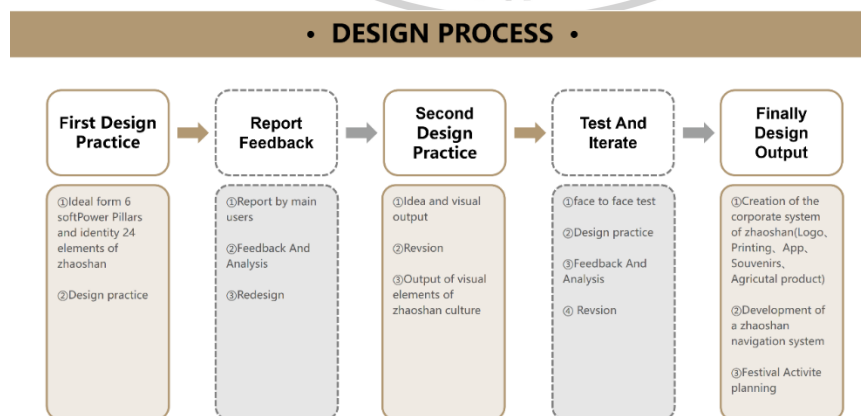


Figure 19 The author's design process

The primary task of the first phase is to conduct a comprehensive diagnosis of the current village condition, employing SWOT analysis to systematically review existing identity assets. Zhaoshan's strengths include abundant local products such as pomelo and silver fish, as well as rich cultural heritage exemplified by Zhang Yu Zhao's calligraphy culture and intangible cultural heritage. However, notable weaknesses include dispersed cultural symbols and a lack of visual focus, which impair clear recognition. In the context of the digital media era, the village brand identity requires focused refinement to facilitate rapid recognition. Within this diagnostic framework, the pomelo graphic has already been widely recognized by both local government and residents, serving as a key visual asset for branding efforts.

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The third phase transitions into the creative implementation stage, marked by a shift from divergent to convergent thinking. During brainstorming, cross-disciplinary workshops brought together local artisans, and UX experts to generate over 15 innovative concepts. The finalization phase used a five-dimensional evaluation matrix assessing cultural relevance, visual impact, practical applicability, technical feasibility, and cost-effectiveness, shortlisting three candidate designs: Design A features a

Zhaoshan pomelo cross-section as its visual foundation, using gradient orange tones to mimic pulp texture; Design B transforms calligraphic brushstrokes into water ripples, symbolizing cultural fusion with Liangzi Lake; Design C employs a dual-layer structure with an outer Zhaoshan pomelo-shaped contour containing calligraphy characters within negative space. Emphasizing "design minimalism," the selected design maintains universal recognizability across various applications, including scenic area signage and cultural merchandise.

The final phase centers on solution validation and implementation, assessing design effectiveness through quantitative and qualitative methods. Data analysis indicates that adjusting the Pomelo wood grain density to 60% spacing and increasing the main color's brightness by 15% led to a 37% increase in brand logo dwell time. In the qualitative research, villagers, tourists and government officials were invited to conduct emotional projection tests on the design plan, answered questions such as "Which season does this graphic remind you of?" to evaluate cultural resonance. For full-scale implementation, a "core touchpoint priority" strategy was adopted: a brand identity wall with weather-resistant steel carvings was installed at the Liangzi Lake Scenic Area entrance; an electronic version of the "Zhaoshan Village Identity Visual Standards Manual" was released, featuring standard color schemes and font combinations, along with a dedicated "Agricultural Product Packaging Application Guide" for small farmers. To support ongoing iteration, a long-term monitoring system was established to track annual visitor satisfaction surveys, social media brand noise metrics, and e-commerce visual search volumes.

5.2 Village identity visual system design

In developing the visual identity system for Zhaoshan's village, data-driven design strategies were pivotal. A three-month cross-regional survey revealed that Zhaoshan Pomelo was the most iconic cultural symbol, with 45% public recognition, significantly surpassing other cultural icons such as Zhang Yu Zhao's calligraphy, Liangzi Lake's landscapes, Bi Yu tea, and Zhaoshan silver fish. This cultural dominance is driven by two socioeconomic factors: its authoritative certification as a National Geographical Indication (NGI) product since 2008 and the cultural legacy established through twelve consecutive Pomelo harvest festivals. These annual

autumn events not only boost village tourism but also elevate the fruit from a simple agricultural product to an emotional symbol carrying collective memory, enhanced by interactive experiences such as family-friendly picking activities and farmer storytelling sessions. Historical analysis highlights two milestones: the 2004 Gold Medal at the Agricultural Expo, which validated product quality, and the 2008 NGI certification, which established legal safeguards. Both contributed professional credibility to the visual identity system.

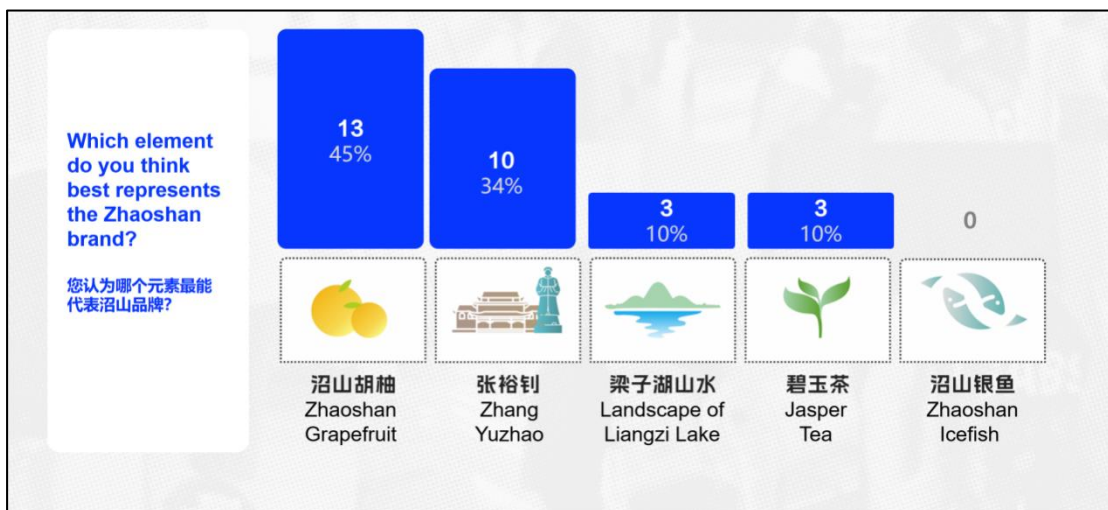


Figure 20 Preliminary survey results on the representative identity elements of Zhaoshan

Through in-depth analysis based on hyper-symbol theory, the design architecture unfolds in three progressive layers. The foundational layer features concrete physical symbols, with Pomelo as the central motif. By employing the symbolic representation of "nurturing hands," the design metaphorically conveys both ecological nourishment and cultural heritage preservation. The middle layer constructs cognitive symbols through negative-space integration between ancient village architectural outlines and yew leaf veins, evoking associations with local lifestyles. The topmost layer presents abstract emotional symbols, using orange-green gradient hues to depict the fruit's maturation journey from green to ripe, resonating with viewers' emotions of growth and harvest. A layered visual hierarchy ensures 60% focal attention on core symbols (yew fruits and ancient villages), 30% on supporting elements (rippled Liangzi Lake water patterns and calligraphic brushstrokes), and the remaining 10% reserved for breathing space. This systematic

approach effectively resolves the issue of disorganized elements commonly seen in early marketing communications.

5.2.1 Logo design

During the initial diagnostic phase of the village visual system, the design team systematically identified core issues in the first version through visual experiments and interviews. The most prominent problem was the imbalance in layout equilibrium. The original design mechanically allocated equal visual weight to three elements: Pomelo, landscapes, and calligraphy. This egalitarian approach prevented users from forming effective memory points during critical recognition periods. The scattered visual focus directly impacted brand recognition efficiency. In subsequent symbol recall tests, only 26% of respondents could fully recite the logo elements.

To address this core challenge, the redesign carefully establishes a layered visual system. The central tier highlights three signature elements: the distinctive Pomelo, African daisies, and ancient village eaves. The houtou's circular silhouette with warm orange hues creates natural visual magnetism that complements the daisies' vibrant colors. The eaves element skillfully addresses cultural depth, maintaining visual balance while guiding the viewer's gaze with its characteristic 45-degree angled lines. The supporting tier employs a strategic design: 15% of the composition features ripple patterns from Liangzi Lake, rendered in gradient blue abstraction. This approach avoids competing with the central elements for attention and subtly suggests regional characteristics through shimmering textures.

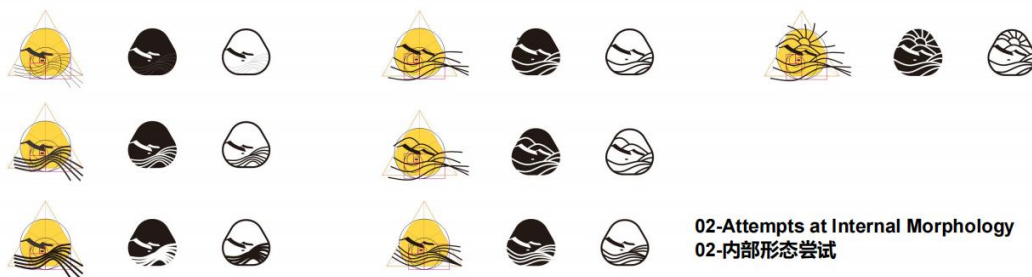


Figure 21 Reflections on logo design reconstruction

The innovation in graphic generation logic is evident in three dimensions. First is the dynamic balance of morphology. The plump, circular silhouette of the Pomelo contrasts with the sharp angles of the calligraphic "mountain" characters, creating a harmonious tension that metaphorically represents the symbiotic relationship between natural endowments and cultural heritage. This design contrast sustains visual engagement, and most respondents accurately interpreted its symbolic meaning. Second is the narrative use of negative space. The interplay of eave reflections and blank lake surfaces transforms physical space into an artistic realm, reducing visual complexity while enhancing the capacity for cultural information. The most groundbreaking aspect is the dynamic logo design. As the emblem evolves from static yew imagery to a cultural totem integrating calligraphic textures, brand storytelling attains a spiritual elevation that transcends material dimensions.



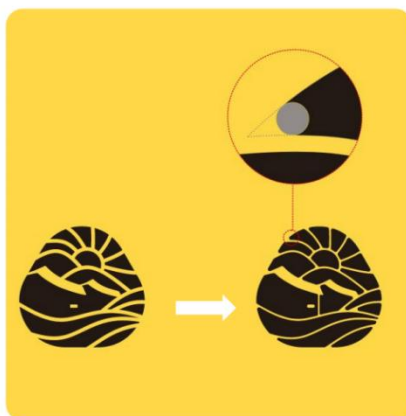
01-Basic Graphic Generation
01-基础图形生成



02-Attempts at Internal Morphology
02-内部形态尝试

Figure 22 Label design optimization scheme1

03-Detail Adjustment
03-结构细节调整



04-Attempts at texture processing effects with different densities
04-不同密度的肌理处理效果尝试

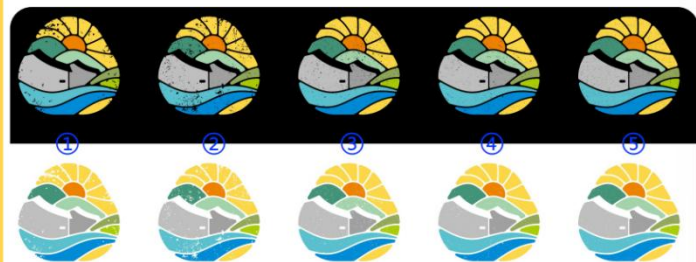


Figure 23 Label design optimization scheme2

Based on the findings, the optimization strategy focuses on three key approaches. First, visual hierarchy restructuring enhances the prominence of Pomelo patterns by applying golden ratio proportions to strengthen visual dominance. Second, landscape elements are relegated to background textures using low-transparency watercolor techniques, preserving regional characteristics while avoiding information overload. The most innovative integration occurs at the cultural symbol level, where the brushstroke rhythm of Zhang Yu Zhao's calligraphic "mountain" character is combined with the suspended fish components found on ancient village rooftops, creating a patented composite symbol. This symbolic upgrade transcends simple element stacking, adhering to the logic of "cultural gene expression": calligraphy (ink-wash technique) is embedded in the flesh texture of Pomelo, symbolizing how cultural nourishment transforms into material achievements. The dynamic evolution process visually embodies the core concept of "civilization emerging from the land."

04-Adjustment of Proportional Relationship
04-比例关系调整

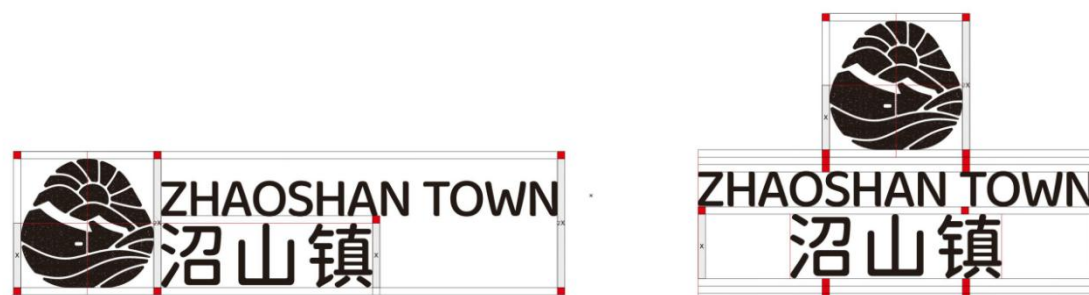


Figure 24 Label design ratio adjustment

5.2.2 Color and font specifications

To maximize the visual system's value, brand upgrades require establishing rigorous design standards. The color scheme should feature the orange-yellow of Chinese Zhaoshan pomelo and the indigo of Liangzi Lake as primary hues, complemented by the muted tones of ancient architectural gray tiles to ensure visual impact without appearing garish. For typography, a modernized variant of Zhang Yu Zhao's calligraphy font will be developed to maintain readability in body text layouts. The graphic system should establish a derivative framework from core

symbols to auxiliary graphics, maintaining consistent visual DNA across large-scale advertisements and product labels. These standards should ultimately crystallize into a Brand Visual Identity Manual, specifying technical parameters such as minimum usage dimensions, safety margins, and color tolerance, providing standardized guidelines for subsequent applications.

In the digital communication era, logo design should embrace dynamic presentation possibilities. Animated versions of calligraphy strokes, created frame by frame, can be used for video openings; the growth process of Zhaoshan pomelo from flowering to fruiting can be transformed into loading animations; and VR technology can recreate ancient village scenes, allowing users to experience virtual tours that inspire a desire for physical exploration. These dynamic elements enhance communication appeal and reinforce the brand's core positioning of "blending tradition with modernity" through technology.

Ultimately, the value of this village visual identity system will be validated through metrics such as user recognition, emotional resonance, and conversion rates. Regular visual health assessments will track changes in user ratings across dimensions like "cultural uniqueness," "experience satisfaction," and "return visit willingness" before and after upgrades, providing data-driven support for design optimization. Only by organically integrating local resources, cultural heritage, and experiential elements can village communities overcome homogenization and establish a distinctive niche in tourists' minds.

During the in-depth design optimization of the visual system, the design team identified critical issues in color expression and cultural generalization through multi-dimensional user testing. Respondents widely perceived the original proposal's combination of high-saturation green and red as visually striking but culturally disconnected from Zhaoshan's "natural simplicity" regional character. Color psychology analysis showed that excessive saturation (averaging 85% chroma) creates visual aggression, potentially triggering perceptions of "over-commercialization" in village tourism contexts. Additionally, severe homogenization appeared through repetitive graphic language. This resulted from the design's failure to capture Zhang Yu Zhao's calligraphic signature—its "inner roundness, outer squareness, and

balanced density"—causing cultural symbols to lose their artistic distinctiveness. Technically, the original 0.3 mm thin lines exhibited noticeable edge merging when scaled below 1 cm on mobile devices, with edge sharpness dropping to 42 dpi according to instrument measurement, significantly impairing brand recognition efficiency in digital environments.

To address these systemic challenges, the optimization team developed a three-dimensional enhancement strategy. In restructuring the color system, they created an emotionally resonant chromatic spectrum rooted in geographical features. The primary hue, Pomelo Orange, is inspired by the gradient hues of fruit cross-sections. By maintaining brightness levels between 65% and 70%, it avoids overly commercial and visually jarring effects. The secondary hue, Lake Blue, accurately reproduces the distinctive gray-blue tones of Liangzi Lake's morning mist, while low saturation imparts serene elegance to the ecological symbol.



Figure 25 Color capture

The upgrade of the symbol system focuses on enhancing the visual transformation of cultural DNA. By vector deconstructing Zhang Yu Zhao's "Nan Gong County School Records" stele, we extracted the signature brushstroke characteristic of "entering flat and exiting reverse" and converted it into a dynamic line system. This design preserves the structural integrity of calligraphic art while addressing scaling distortion through intelligent outlining technology, maintaining stroke clarity above 90%. In graphic innovation, we organically integrated the previously isolated pomelo patterns with eave contours, creatively employing negative space techniques to form a visual metaphor of "house within yew." This dual-image design significantly enhances brand memorability.

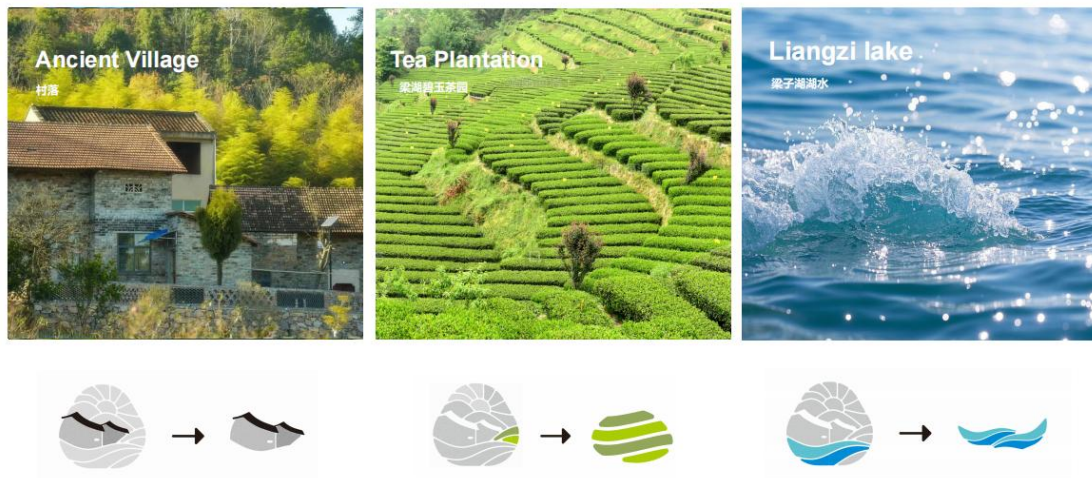


Figure 26 Symbol extraction



Figure 27 Color acquisition and font determination

5.3 Experience path planning

The experience economy emphasizes the sensory, emotional, and cognitive experiences consumers gain during consumption, significantly influencing the consumption and marketing of cultural products. While traditional cultural industry management primarily focuses on product production and sales, the experience economy requires cultural industry management to prioritize consumer experiences as the core consideration.

First, the experience economy demands cultural products that create unique and memorable experiences. This means cultural products are not merely commodities but provide comprehensive engagement through interactive scenarios and activities. Second, the experience economy requires cultural products to evoke emotional resonance and cognitive inspiration. Cultural products should offer not only entertainment but also educational and thought-provoking functions. Through cultural products, consumers can appreciate the value of art, history, and culture, gaining deeper insights into life and society. The experience economy also demands

personalized and customized experiences. As consumer demand for personalization grows, people increasingly seek to select and customize cultural products according to their interests, preferences, and needs. Therefore, cultural industry management must focus on market segmentation and personalized services, offering diverse product options and tailored experiential services.

The experience economy has raised the standards for cultural industry management, requiring cultural products to deliver strong market performance and social impact while prioritizing consumers' sensory, emotional, and cognitive experiences. By creating unique and memorable experiences that evoke emotional resonance and cognitive inspiration, and by offering personalized and customized services, the cultural industry can adapt to the trends of the experience economy, meet consumer demands, and achieve sustainable growth.

5.3.1 Theme line design

As a cultural and ecological destination that integrates "the Land of Calligraphy, the Land of Fish and Rice, and the Homeland of Intangible Cultural Heritage," Zhaoshan's tourism development should focus on "deep immersion, multidimensional interaction, and cultural revitalization," establishing an experiential tourism system that achieves "spatiotemporal immersion and multisensory resonance." Based on the "4E Theory" of the experiential economy—entertainment, education, escape, and aesthetics—the plan leverages Zhaoshan's "Three Homelands Cultural" resources to design a themed route of "One Axis, Three Seasons, Six Scenarios." This transformation upgrades sightseeing tourism into an experience-driven economy. Through the organic integration of six thematic scenes, it completes the closed-loop process of "cultural decoding, scene reconstruction, and value conversion."

Furthermore, by integrating ecological resources and cultural elements throughout the entire Zhaoshan area, we have designed experiential programs at various locations to create a "Three-Day, Two-Night Cultural Decoding Tour." The route is as follows: Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park → Wampum Village Intangible Cultural Heritage Workshop → Liangzi Lake Wetland Park. This innovative approach

departs from traditional sightseeing models, establishing a time-space loop of "daytime immersive experiences + nighttime cultural immersion." The entire journey features an AR digital navigation system, enabling visual interpretation and interactive dissemination of cultural resources.

Cultural Roots Axis: Zhang Yu Zhao's Calligraphy Cultural Immersion Experience Belt

Centered around Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park, we offer a comprehensive calligraphy experience spanning "from imitation to creation." In the morning, visitors can participate in the "Digital Brush-Raising Ceremony" at the Nangong-style Calligraphy Workshop. Using an AR tracing system, they experience Qing Dynasty students' red-tracing courses with real-time scoring and personalized growth records. At noon, visitors move to the Calligraphy Stele Forest, where reconstructed Qing Dynasty private school ruins host "Imperial Exam Simulation Tests." Participants wear traditional scholar's attire to complete themed compositions, which professional judges grade using the ancient "circle-red method." Winners receive electronic "Zhaoshan WenKui" badges. Evening activities include a "Traditional Papermaking and Movable Type Printing" workshop, using Liangzi Lake reeds to create custom letterheads for exclusive Nangong-style works. At night, the park presents the holographic projection play "Nangong Night Talks," recreating academic dialogues between Zhang Yu Zhao, Li Hong Zhang, and Wu Rulon at his former residence. Visitors can interact via mobile devices through "Fei Hua Ling" games. The park also offers a "Four Treasures of the Study" blind box containing local cultural products such as Zhaoshan pine soot ink and Liangzi Lake shell inkstones, forming a closed-loop consumption cycle of "Experience-Creation-Collection."



Figure 28 Calligraphy culture experience project

Ecological and Wild Fun Season: Liangzi Lake three-dimensional water war theme experience area

Liangzi Lake's ecological revitalization in summer leverages the "Three Kingdoms Naval Battle" IP to create a three-dimensional experience matrix integrating water, land, and air. The aquatic segment features a "New Energy Dragon Boat Challenge," where teams navigate solar-powered modified boats along GPS-guided battle routes from the Red Cliff era, completing AR missions such as "Borrowing Arrows with Straw Boats" by scanning virtual targets on the lake surface. The lakeshore showcases "YUQIAN2.0," where visitors learn traditional skills like cormorant fishing and Bagua net casting from heritage experts, while blockchain-verified digital collectibles are created from their catch of Wuchang fish. A 200-meter transparent zip line simulates the legendary "Borrowing the East Wind" scene, unlocking holographic Three Kingdoms figures when wind sensors activate during flight. The campsite adopts the Wu Army's water fortress design, hosting nighttime "Fire Attack Light Shows" that recreate historical tactics through drone formations. Customized "Water Battle Supply Kits" contain compressed dried fish and Zhubei Liang's crossbow models to meet scenario-based consumption needs.



Figure 29 Water-themed experience project

Intangible Heritage Revitalization Season: A participatory framework

In autumn, an "Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Production Experience Circle" is established, aligned with local agricultural rhythms. This participatory network is structured around a series of themed events throughout the day.

Mornings Activities: (1) Brand Gongs Morning Class: Held in the rice paddies, this session teaches participants to perform the "Hou Cao Gongs". Using farming tools, they create rhythms tied to the 24 solar terms, experiencing the harmony between traditional instruments and agricultural work; (2) Yu Lian Huan Rap Workshop: Following the class, groups adapt traditional melodies into contemporary lyrics, recording a "New Zhaoshan Folk Tune" using digital instruments. These creations are uploaded to a cloud platform for public voting.

Afternoon activities: (1) Flower Dragon Boat DIY: At Liu Tong Wan Ancient Village, participants engage in sessions where under ICH inheritors' guidance, they use 3D printing to create miniature dragon boat components. These are then used in race on an artificial lake.

Evening Events: (1) ICH Innovation Market: Visitors can redeem "skill points", earned through participation in the day's activities, for customized cultural products like Yu Lian Huan earrings or Nantong-style engravings. (2) ICH Guardian Selection Contest: The day culminates with a contest where an annual ICH Ambassador is elected via live-streamed public voting. The winner is granted advisory rights in future inheritor evaluations.

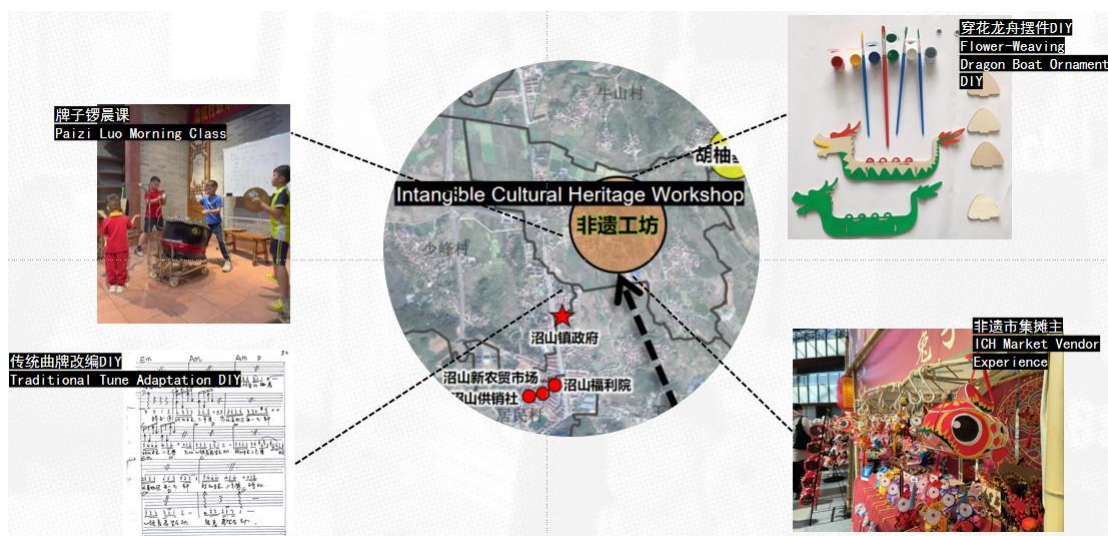


Figure 30 Intangible Heritage Experience Project

Geological exploration: scientific exploration route of Zhaoshan Forest Park

Designed for parent-child families, the "Geological Detective Journey" offers hands-on exploration. Beginning at the entrance to Fairy Valley with a kit containing magnifying glasses, geological hammers, and fossil diagrams, participants follow trails marked with Paleozoic strata timelines to search for Silurian petrified fossils and complete imprinting tasks. At the mid-slope "Ecological Observation Station," visitors observe Chinese pangolin activity through infrared camera feeds while recording cave data with laser rangefinders. Upon reaching the summit, they tackle the "Granite Code" challenge by measuring fissure spacing in the "Fairy Chessboard" rock formations to decode geological patterns. The program also features a "Forest Blind Food Box" using locally sourced edible wild plants, along with species identification cards that make science education enjoyable.



Figure 31 Scientific exploration experience project

Taste memory field: Taste Laboratory of the Land of Fish and Rice

Experience a "field-to-table" culinary journey. In the morning at Liangzi Lake Wetland, participate in the "Water Eight Delicacies Picking Challenge" to identify aquatic crops such as water caltrops and water chestnuts while creating seasonal platters. At Zhan Tea Garden in Zhaoshan Temple, learn Song Dynasty tea artistry by blending local Mao Jian tea with musical rhythms for the "Tea Hundred Tricks" performance. During lunch at Fisherman's Inn, learn traditional fish dissection techniques and personally prepare sticky rice cakes using the "Thirteen-and-a-Half Spines" identification method. In the afternoon, craft custom-flavored rice wine using ancient koji yeast, with NFC tags embedded during packaging to track fermentation data. In the evening, enjoy a "Starry Night Banquet" featuring three local delicacies: matsutake mushrooms, chestnuts, and wild celery from Zhaoshan Lake, accompanied by holographic projections of traditional fishing songs.

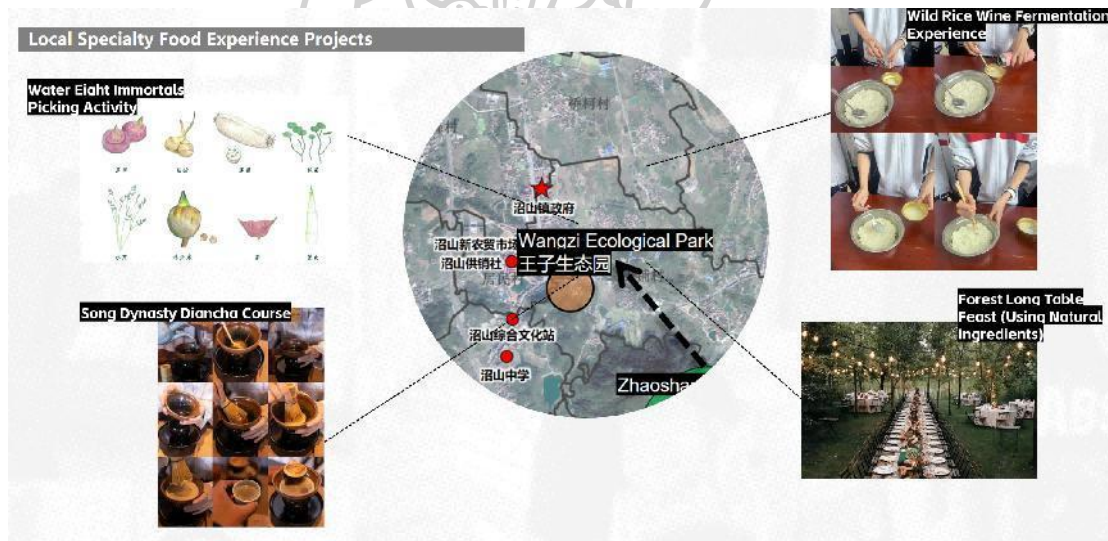


Figure 32 Local food experience project

Community co-creation: urban-village interactive cultural symbiotic system

Enhance the "Adoption + Mass Innovation" sustainable engagement mechanism. Launch the "Digital Calligraphy Villagers" program, allowing visitors to adopt digital replicas of any cultural stele in the park and receive environmental monitoring data and maintenance reports via a mini-program. Establish an "Intangible Cultural Heritage Creation Camp," where urban designers collaborate with village

artisans to develop derivative products such as nongang-style variable fonts and water battle-themed board games, with sales profits proportionally reinvested in heritage preservation. Create an "Eco-Credit Bank," where visitors' low-carbon behaviors, such as waste sorting and eco-friendly hiking, earn redeemable experience hours for intangible cultural heritage classes or discounts on agricultural products. Ultimately, use blockchain technology to build a "Zhaoshan Culture Digital Twin" that enables online participants' creative ideas to inform physical space updates.

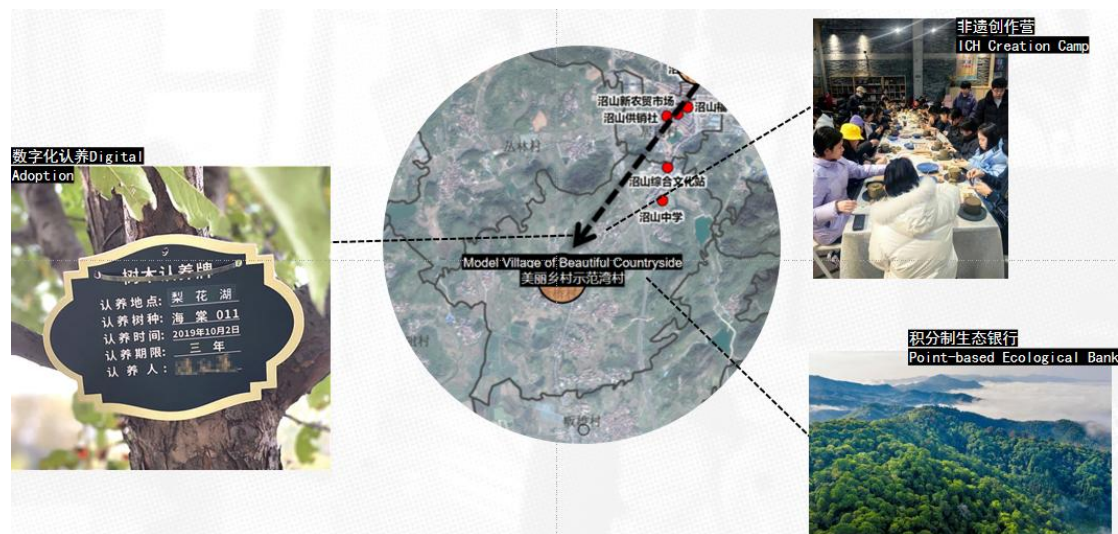


Figure 33 Community co-creation experience project

A three-day, three-night cultural decoding trip

At Changyu Zhao Cultural Park, visitors can experience a "Digital Calligraphy Studio," where they wear Qing Dynasty scholar costumes and participate in imperial examination-themed performances. In Wang Pu Village, an intangible cultural heritage workshop offers hands-on craft activities such as bronze sculpture carving and bamboo weaving for souvenir creation. Liangzi Lake features a "Wetland Scientist" role-playing project equipped with professional bird-watching gear and water quality testing tools, allowing visitors to engage in ecological monitoring and earn digital certification. The blueberry plantation offers a "From Branch to Table" full-chain experience, including organic farming classes, jam-making workshops, and specialty drink tastings to boost agricultural product conversion rates. The homestay area showcases Zhang Yu Zhao's calligraphy masterpieces through light art installations, where visitors can activate poetic animations via AR scans on their phones. Nighttime

offerings include an intangible cultural heritage theater and a lakeside stargazing cinema.

Table 12 Detailed schedule of the line

Date	Time quant -um	The itinerary	Features and high lights
Day 1: Mo Yun Zhaoshan	AM 08:00-10:00	We set out from Wuhan and played the documentary "Zhang Yu Zhao and the Epigraphy of the Late Qing Dynasty" along the way	Cultural warm-up/professional documentary guide
	AM 10:30-12:00	Cultural Park opening ceremony: AR tracing experience + nan gong style rubbing production	Combining technology with traditional culture/Personal works can be taken away
	PM 14:00-16:00	Koi go Drama Tour: Complete the "provincial examination proposition" calligraphy creation, and professional judges will review it with cinnabar	Immersive history experience/expert one-on-one guidance
	PM 19:30-21:00	Homestay calligraphy night talk: With historical paintings, the works can be made into porcelain paintings	Night art creation/personalized art derivatives
Day 2: Craftsman ship, nature	AM 07:30-09:00	Wetland bird watching morning class: record rare birds and upload to the database of Chinese Academy of Sciences	Citizen Science Practice/professional equipment support
	AM 10:00-12:00	Rotating Intangible Heritage Workshop (copper	Expert's personal signature/Customiz

		carving/chiseling/crafting bamboo fishing basket/papermaking)	able work
	PM 15:00-17:00	Blueberry Workshop: The whole process from picking to making jam	Organic Farming Certification/Eatable souvenirs
	PM 20:00-21:30	Intangible cultural heritage performance in the lake: Shadow play "Legend of Liangzi Lake" + modern light and shadow technology	Modern expression of traditional intangible heritage
Day 3: Ecological gifts	AM 08:00-10:00	Fishery culture experience: Learn the art of casting nets + lake fish auction (donate to ecological protection fund)	Public service practice/inheritance of intangible cultural heritage skills
	AM 11:00-12:00	Free activities in cultural and creative space: exchange special goods with "cultural points"	Points-based incentive mechanism
	PM 14:00	Digital memorial album will be issued on the return trip (including VR panoramic view, electronic file of works and video of cultural interpretation)	Digital memory retention

SWOT Analyze

Distinctive Advantages: The unique cultural resources of Nan Gong-style calligraphy, which is nationally renowned, complement the internationally recognized Liangzi Lake Wetland. The complete heritage lineage of intangible cultural heritage projects such as bronze sculpture creates an irreplaceable cultural IP

portfolio. Advanced experiential design uses "Cultural Metaverse" technology, integrating motion capture systems into calligraphy sessions to produce 3D artworks. The wetland study program follows the Dutch water ecology education model, combining scientific rigor with educational engagement. Strong policy support: Ezhou's 14th Five-Year Plan designates Zhaoshan as a village revitalization demonstration town, supported by 20 million yuan in cultural tourism special bonds for infrastructure upgrades.

Weaknesses: Transportation accessibility is inadequate, with a 1.5-hour drive from Wuhan Tianhe Airport and no dedicated tourist shuttle services, resulting in 85% of visitors driving themselves. There is a shortage of professionals, with fewer than 20 multi-skilled guides capable of both cultural interpretation and experiential design, leading to inconsistent service quality during peak seasons. Seasonal fluctuations are significant, as there is a gap between the winter wetland bird-watching period and the blueberry picking season, necessitating enhanced indoor cultural experience programs.

Opportunities: With the surge in educational travel demand and the Ministry of Education's "Intangible Cultural Heritage in Schools" initiative, the sector is projected to host 100,000 student study groups annually. The digital cultural tourism upgrade includes the Hubei Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism's "Cloud Tour of Jing Chu" project, which provides VR content production support to achieve seamless online-to-offline traffic conversion. Regional collaboration is accelerating with the development of the Wuhan Metropolitan Area, where a 2-hour transportation radius covers over 30 million people, creating vast potential for tourist markets.

Threats: Homogeneous competition from neighboring towns along Liangzi Lake developing fishery cultural projects simultaneously, creating intense pressure to differentiate products; ecological carrying capacity constraints require daily visitor numbers in wetland reserves to be capped at 2,000 with reservation-based flow control mechanisms; over-commercialization of cultural heritage, as intangible craft experiences risk becoming assembly-line operations, necessitating the establishment of a quality supervision system for inheritors.

The line is expected to receive 150,000 passengers annually, increase sales of agricultural products in the surrounding area to more than 30 million yuan, and raise the per capita income of villagers by 12,000 yuan. Through the value transformation of cultural experience, the transition from a "resource-based village" to a "creative town" has been achieved.

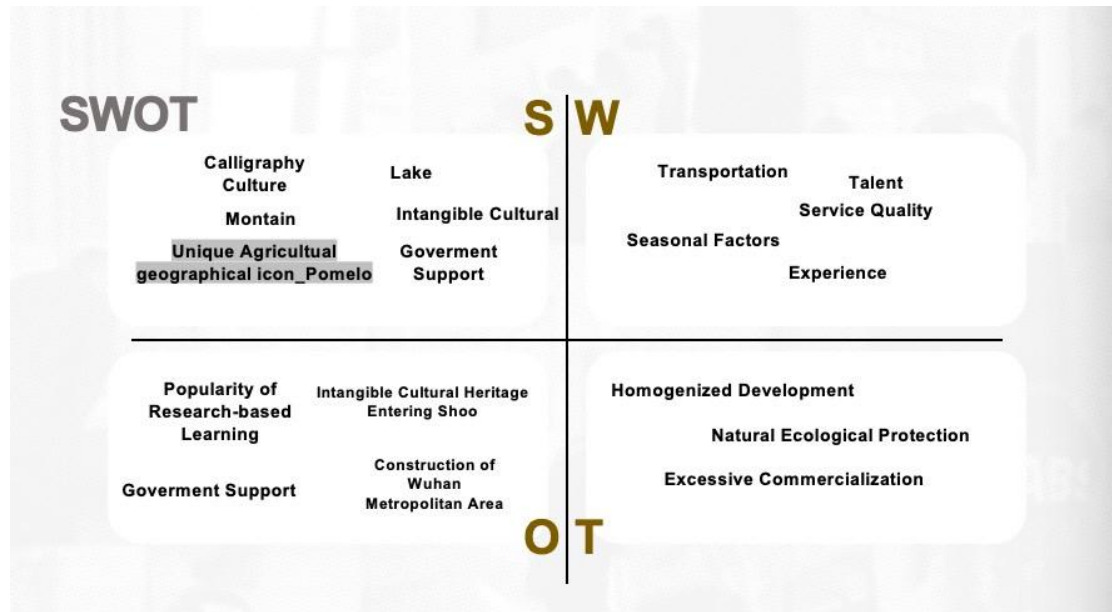


Figure 34 SWOT analysis of Zhaoshan village identity construction

5.3.2 Planning of intangible cultural heritage festival activities

The planning of cultural node activities should be based on the "Three Village Cultures" resources of Zhaoshan as the hometown of calligraphy, the land of fish and rice, and the cradle of intangible cultural heritage. Using a framework of "seasonal festivals with one theme per season," we aim to establish a three-part festival system that integrates cultural immersion, ecological interaction, and technological empowerment. Through four core festivals—Spring Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, and Harvest Festival—we will revitalize resources such as Zhang Yu Zhao's calligraphy culture, Liangzi Lake's fish-farming traditions, and intangible cultural heritage skills, creating experiential tourism products that are participatory, take-home, and shareable. By utilizing a "scene reconstruction + community operation" model, we will design tiered experience routes ranging from

half-day to three-day itineraries, achieving deep integration of cultural preservation and tourism consumption.

**Spring theme: nan gong Elegant Gathering · Calligraphy Culture Festival
(From Spring Festival to Qingming)**

To mark the anniversary of Zhang Yu Zhao's birth, the Cultural Park presents an immersive calligraphy experience themed "Dialogue Across Time." Key activities include: 1) "Digital Calligraphy Initiation," where visitors practice Qing Dynasty private school calligraphy using AR tracing systems, with personalized growth profiles generated automatically; 2) "Immersive Imperial Exam Simulation," which recreates Dougan-era examination settings, allowing participants to wear scholar costumes and complete themed compositions evaluated by professional judges using the traditional "circle-red method"; 3) the "Nan Gong-style Cultural Market," which showcases calligraphy-inspired stationery, tea sets, and clothing, and features DIY workshops such as movable type printing and papermaking. Nighttime events include the "Ink Rhythm Light Show," which projects calligraphy artworks onto ancient building facades with 3D projection technology, accompanied by guqin performances for a multisensory experience. Additionally, the "Little Scholar" program for families offers intangible cultural heritage activities such as rubbing stone inscriptions and making traditional thread-bound books.



Figure 35 Intangible Cultural Heritage Lotus Picking Boat Activity Poster

Summer Theme: Water War Jiang Hu · Dragon Boat Carnival (From Dragon Boat Festival to Chuseu)

Leveraging Liangzi Lake's aquatic resources, we have developed an innovative "Three-Dimensional Water Battle Theme Park." During the Dragon Boat Festival, we hosted "New Energy Dragon Boat Races," featuring electrified traditional boats and modern events such as speed races and obstacle courses. The "VR Chibi Water Battle" experience hall allows visitors to command battles as Three Kingdoms-era naval commanders through virtual reality technology. In summer, the "Fishermen, Woodcutters, Farmers, and Scholars" lifestyle festival features traditional fishing cabins along the lakeshore, where guests can participate in activities such as net casting and water caltrop picking. Nighttime events include a "Starry Sky Fish Banquet," a long-table feast prepared by intangible cultural heritage inheritors using Liangzi Lake's full fish dishes. For younger audiences, we designed a "Water Electronic Music Festival" with floating DJ stages and laser water screens to create a festive atmosphere. Complementing these experiences, we launched the "Water Battle Blind Box" series of cultural products, including miniature dragon boat models and interactive water battle character cards.



Figure 36 Summer Water Flower-Decorated Dragon Boat Festival

Autumn theme: Rice fragrance harvest · Farmers' Harvest Festival (From Autumn Equinox to frost drop)

Set against the backdrop of 10,000 mu (666.7 acres) of rice paddies, we offer an immersive "From Field to Table" experience that spans the entire agricultural value chain. The main venue hosts a Farming Sports Festival featuring traditional competitions such as grain-picking races and rice threshing contests, along with a New Farmer Market that showcases local specialties like Zhaoshan fragrant rice and Wuchang fish. Visitors can participate in workshops to make sticky rice cakes and create fishplate paintings. The highlight event, the Rice Field Art Season, invites artists to create land art installations using rice stalks. At night, the fields are transformed into simulated firefly habitats with luminous installations. Photography enthusiasts can take part in the Golden Zhaoshan Photo Contest, with categories including Best Agricultural Moment and Most Beautiful Countryside Landscape. Our "Adopt a Mu Field" membership program allows remote monitoring of crop growth and delivers fresh produce directly to your doorstep.



Figure 37 Autumn Harvest Festival Drum Celebration Event

Winter Theme: Intangible Cultural Heritage · Warm China's Year (From Winter Solstice to Lantern Festival)

By integrating intangible cultural heritage resources such as paper-cutting and shadow puppetry, we have created the "New Year Flavor Lab." From the Minor New Year to the Lantern Festival, daily flash mobs showcase traditional crafts—including the sugar melon ritual on the 23rd day of the 12th lunar month and the New Year's glutinous rice cake-making experience—held on the ancient street. A "New Year Customs Challenge Map" invites visitors to collect six cultural stamps (paper-cutting, couplet writing, lantern-making) to redeem limited-edition cultural products. The highlight event, the New Year's Eve Lantern Festival, features calligraphy-inspired installations recreating literary masterpieces such as the "Preface to the Orchid Pavilion Collection," complemented by traditional games including lantern riddles and arrow-throwing contests. For families, a "New Year's Goods Workshop" teaches how to craft specialty foods like cured fish and fish balls, with customized packaging services. An innovative "Intangible Heritage Blind Box New Year's Eve Dinner" combines local dishes with puzzle games, each dish accompanied by an audio story about its cultural heritage.



Figure 38 Winter New Year Dragon Dance Performance and Lantern Festival Activities

Establish a tripartite collaboration mechanism featuring "government guidance + corporate operation + villager participation." The town government will oversee infrastructure upgrades and provide policy support, while cultural tourism enterprises

will lead event planning and marketing. Villagers will benefit through intangible cultural heritage performances and homestay services. The "Zhaoshan Festival Pass" mini-program will integrate digital ticketing, event booking, and cultural product stores, utilizing big data analytics to understand visitor preferences. A "Festival Talent Training Program" will offer specialized experience design training for local tour guides and heritage bearers. The festival's effectiveness will be measured through a multi-dimensional evaluation system, including cultural heritage preservation metrics such as participation in intangible cultural projects, economic impact indicators such as surrounding homestay occupancy rates, and tourist satisfaction levels.

Through sustained seasonal festival operations, we anticipate significant annual growth in tourist numbers and increased sales of intangible cultural heritage products, while creating employment opportunities for villagers. For village identity development, we aim to cultivate "Nan Gong Ya Ji" and "Liang Zi Water Battle" into provincial-level cultural tourism IPs, establishing two distinctive labels: "Calligraphy Study Destination" and "Eco-Fishing Demonstration Zone." This effort seeks to build a sustainable development model of "revitalizing tourism through festivals and highlighting culture through tourism," ultimately positioning Zhaoshan as a benchmark case for village-cultural tourism integration in the middle reaches of the Yangtze River.

5.4 Village identity communication strategy











To effectively communicate experiential village identity, we must move beyond traditional one-way communication models and establish a tripartite strategic system that integrates cultural empowerment, technological integration, and community operations. The core is to transform calligraphy culture, ecological resources, and intangible cultural heritage skills into immersive experiences that are both perceptible and participatory. Through content innovation, channel integration, and deeper engagement, this approach elevates the identity elements from resource display to emotional resonance. The following systematically outlines practical pathways for implementing these communication strategies across three key dimensions.






5.4.1 Multi-dimensional activation and content innovation of cultural IP

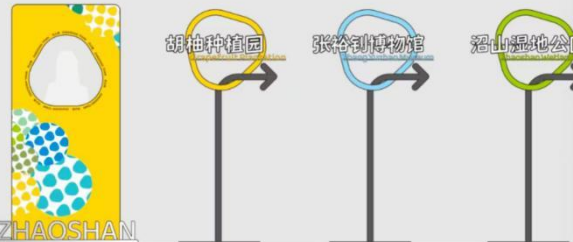

The primary task of village identity communication is to explore the contemporary value of local culture and to create a recognizable content matrix through systematic IP development and cross-border narrative.

Table 13 Design of identity recognition applications

Government application promotion system	Leaflet	 <p>LEAFLET 传单</p>	
	Outdoor advertising	 <p>Outdoor Advertising 户外广告</p>	
	Printing	 <p>Road Flag 路旗</p>	
	Brochure	 <p>Brochure 册页</p>	

	<p>Wayfinding</p>	 <p>Party-Masses Office 党群办公室</p> <p>Wayfinding 导视</p>	
	<p>Paper Cup</p>	 <p>paper cup 纸杯</p>	
	<p>T-shirt</p>	 <p>T-shirt T恤</p>	
	<p>Canvas bag</p>	 <p>Canvas Bag 帆布袋</p>	
	<p>Notebook</p>	 <p>Notebook 笔记本</p>	

	<p>Calendar</p>	
	<p>Outdoor Advertising</p>	
	<p>Bus station</p>	
	<p>App</p>	
<p>Agricultural packaging design</p>	<p>Packing box</p>	

	<p>Paster</p>	 <p>Sticker 贴纸</p>
<p>Street sign system</p>	<p>Road map</p>	 <p>Application System B-3 Wayfinding System Visual Specifications Informative Wayfinding</p>
	<p>Sign 1</p>	 <p>ZHAOSHAN</p>
	<p>Sign 2</p>	



The future development of Zhaoshan Village should focus on organically integrating its triple IP architecture — calligraphy, ecology, and intangible cultural heritage — with historical revitalization. This can be achieved through a layered approach designed to activate the village’s culture genes.

(1) **High-end Transformation of Calligraphy Culture:** Leveraging the calligraphy resources of Zhang Yu Zhao and aligning with the revival trend of traditional Chinese studies, several initiatives can be developed: “A Digital Stele Forest” AR interactive experience can be created, where visitors scanning inscriptions trigger animated recreations of historical scenarios; “Private School Ruins Archaeology Open Courses,” could be launched in collaboration with universities, using exploration vlogs to transform niche art into engaging public cultural events.

(2) **Thematic Packaging of Ecological Resources:** The Liangzi Lake eco-experience can be integrated with dual themes of Three Kingdoms naval battles education: A VR games, like “Borrowing Arrows with Straw Boats,” could be designed, where players earn digital badges upon completion; “Papyrograph Blind Boxes” containing replicas of antique fishing gear and ecological maps, could be created in partnership with research institutions, effectively converting archaeological reports into touchable educational products.

(3) **Youthful Expression of Intangible Heritage:** Traditional arts like Bada gongs and Yu Lian Huan, can be creatively adapted for contemporary audiences: Traditional cymbal performances could be reimagined by integrating them with pop music, or by creating dialect rap versions of local folk tunes like the “Zhaoshan Ballad”; A virtual “Flower Dragon Boat Race” mini-game could be developed, allowing

users compete online for physical models, thereby achieving a digital inheritance of traditional craftsmanship.

Story-driven marketing and emotional resonance. The micro-documentary "Guardians of Intangible Heritage" chronicles the daily lives of inheritors, highlighting emotional themes such as "Three Generations of Metal Artisans" and "Centuries-Old Dragon Boat Craftsmen." By designing tableware featuring patterns from the 24 Solar Terms, seamlessly integrates intangible cultural heritage motifs into everyday life.

5.4.2 Full channel immersive touchpoint design

The communication channel should bridge the gap between online and offline, create a complete closed loop from virtual experience to physical space, and enhance users' five-sense memory.

The first step in promotion is comprehensive coverage through short videos and social platforms. For example, launching the "Nan Gong Style Challenge" on Tik-Tok allows users to engrave their copied works into a digital stele forest, encouraging participation. Creating the "Liangzi Lake Food Guide" on Red Dot combines Wuchang fish cuisine with Three Kingdoms cultural tableware to provide a visual food recommendation. Additionally, releasing the short film "VR First-Person Perspective of Water Battle" on Bilibili leverages Generation Z's interest in technology and history to achieve cross-circle dissemination.

The interactive transformation of physical spaces must align with the overall visual design. The Party-Mass Service Center's wayfinding system features calligraphic brushstrokes, while arrow designs inspired by the "Zhen Chai Gu" brush technique turn functional signage into artistic expressions. A "Calligraphy Corridor" is installed along major transit routes, where lightboxes displaying Zhang Yu Zhao's famous quotes use AR signature generation technology, transforming commuting areas into cultural exhibition halls. The Intangible Cultural Heritage Workshop enhances ceramic art experiences, from shaping Pomelo (Chinese citrus) sculptures to glazing and firing, naturally turning artworks into self-promotional media for users.

Cultural festivals can benefit from cross-industry collaborations. For example, during the Dragon Boat Festival—a major traditional celebration—organizers can live-

stream dragon boat races and provide "cloud cheering" channels where supporters redeem physical souvenirs for their participation. Another example is partnering with the Hubei Provincial Museum to create "Nan Gong-style Cultural Relics" merchandise, such as embedding Zhaoshan tour information into bell chime engraving replicas and issuing "digital dragon boat collectibles" that grant virtual spectator seats, effectively attracting young collectors.

5.4.3 Data-driven community operations and long-term interaction

The sustainability of village identity communication depends on the refined operation and feedback mechanism of the user community, forming a closed loop of "experience, sharing, and optimization."

The strategy begins with tiered community development. For premium clients, establish the "Nan Gong Style Research Society" WeChat group to deliver regular live-streamed sessions on ancient book restoration and calligraphy workshops. For families, launch the "Young Heritage Bearers" program, combining offline craft classes with online interactive games where points can be redeemed for real-scene performance tickets. For senior citizens, promote documentary series through TV cultural programs and offer wellness-themed day tours as complementary offerings.

The second aspect involves big data-driven precision targeting. By analyzing metrics such as "AR replication accuracy" and "immersive water battle experience" from mini-programs, we dynamically adjust the difficulty of interactive features. Furthermore, through targeted VR ads for Three Kingdoms-themed campaigns on Bili Bili Esports, we achieve precise traffic diversion within specific interest communities.

The final element is community-driven verification. The essence of experiential village branding lies in cultivating cultural identity. By translating calligraphic brushstrokes into wayfinding signage, transforming intangible cultural heritage patterns into tableware designs, and adapting agricultural seasonal rhythms into calendar elements, the brand becomes deeply embedded in daily life. The success of this strategy is not just about traffic growth; it is about creating a symbiotic ecosystem where villagers actively participate in content creation and tourists

become secondary dissemination nodes. This is precisely the core logic behind Zhaoshan's evolution from a "geographical name" to a "cultural symbol."

Cultural immersion is fostered through public spaces and experiential activities. For example, the Party Masses Office's signage features calligraphic arrow designs that connect revolutionary heritage with local artistry. Artisanal gift boxes include intangible cultural heritage paper-cutting templates, encouraging participation in cultural experiences. During heritage workshops, visitors can handcraft pomelo-shaped pottery, deepening brand engagement. Promotional materials highlight pomelo motifs on brochure covers, with timelines that narrate stories from cultivation to cultural symbolism. Calendars incorporate practical elements such as excerpts from Yu Zhou's calligraphy and agricultural guides. Outdoor banners use simplified monochrome designs for clear visibility at a distance, while bus stop signs feature AR scanning technology that dynamically displays pomelo growth cycles. Lifestyle products include biodegradable cups printed with the slogan "Sip pomelo tea, savor Zhaoshan's tales," serving as daily reminders that blend cultural immersion with everyday life.

During the technical prototyping phase, packaging boxes were tested to compare kraft paper and eco-friendly recycled paper for load-bearing capacity and printing performance, with the latter selected for its eco-conscious appeal. Canvas bags were tested for wear resistance and color retention based on different cotton-linen blend ratios. In community testing matrices, villagers were required to identify Zhaoshan's symbolic graphic within three seconds for logo recognition. Cultural relevance assessments asked visitors to narrate stories about Hu You and Zhang Yu Zhao to validate narrative authenticity. Color feedback was evaluated using mood boards, where users selected hues most representative of their hometowns, with a requirement that over 70% adopt the primary colors to meet standards.

5.5 Sustainable development mechanisms

The sustainable development of experiential village brands requires a systematic framework that includes economic, social, cultural, and ecological conservation dimensions, while emphasizing policy coordination and urban-village interaction. This approach transforms village natural and cultural resources into

sustainable consumption experiences through resource integration, cultural empowerment, and community engagement, achieving a balance among economic, social, and ecological benefits. The following analysis is organized around three key mechanisms.

5.5.1 Mechanism of economic innovation and industrial integration

Economic sustainability is the foundation of village brand development, which requires a long-term development model through industrial integration, benefit sharing, and digital empowerment.

First, we should promote the integration of "tourism + agriculture + culture" to create a composite value chain. For example, combining agricultural experiences with product sales by developing sightseeing orchards and handicraft workshops can enhance product value. Leveraging intangible cultural heritage resources to create immersive cultural experiences, such as folk festivals and heritage workshops, can also boost visitor engagement. Expanding the industrial chain increases village incomes, creates jobs, and improves residents' living standards.

Secondly, establishing a fair benefit distribution mechanism ensures win-win outcomes for the government, enterprises, and villagers. The government can guide capital investment in village areas through tax incentives and special funds, while enterprises should fulfill their social responsibilities by investing in infrastructure and skills training, thereby forming a virtuous cycle of "capital-talent-market." Villagers can participate in operations through cooperatives or land equity participation, as exemplified by Yunnan's AZ Heke model, which guarantees shared benefits and enhances community autonomy.

Furthermore, digital technology is a vital catalyst for economic innovation. E-commerce platforms allow village brands to transcend geographical boundaries and seamlessly integrate offline experiences with online sales. By leveraging big data analytics to understand tourist preferences, they can optimize product designs. Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies enhance cultural immersion, such as through virtual reconstructions of historical settings that boost

brand appeal. Smart tourism platforms also enable real-time crowd monitoring and service optimization, significantly improving operational efficiency.

Zhaoshan's economic innovation and industrial integration mechanisms fully leverage its unique historical and cultural resources, intangible cultural heritage preservation, and natural endowments to establish an integrated "trinity of culture, tourism, and agriculture" development model. For industrial convergence, the area centers on the Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park as its core platform, deeply integrating calligraphy art with digital technology to create China's first AR Calligraphy Study Workshop. Visitors can participate in Nan Gong-style calligraphy imitation through holographic projection systems, which provide real-time feedback on brushwork accuracy. This technology enhances cultural immersion experiences while generating diverse product lines, including calligraphy-themed cultural goods and digital collectibles, thereby boosting local economic output. The Liangzi Lake Ecological Park innovates with an "ecology + history" model by developing the immersive live-action theater "Borrowing Arrows with Straw Boats" at the Three Kingdoms naval training site. Combined with VR technology that recreates the Battle of Red Cliffs battlefield, this initiative stimulates growth in surrounding fishing villages and homestay clusters, forming a consumption loop of "daytime lake tours and nighttime naval spectacle viewing." This approach also extends visitors' average stay duration, thereby increasing income for local and neighboring farmers.

In implementing the benefit-sharing mechanism, Zhaoshan Village pioneered the "Three Rights Separation" reform. Through land circulation, the Zhaoshan pomelo orchards were consolidated into a shareholding cooperative. Farmers contributed their land as primary shares, while village collectives held partial shares alongside investments from specialized cultural tourism enterprises. This created a dual-income system that combines guaranteed returns with profit-sharing dividends. The model is expected to increase farmers' income and enhance their motivation. At the same time, the government established a cultural tourism development fund that provides venue-based subsidies for intangible heritage inheritors participating in cultural performances. Additionally, an incentive-based reward system encourages

corporate investments in smart tourism infrastructure, achieving multiple benefits through this integrated approach.

In terms of digital empowerment, Zhaoshan has developed a "one cloud, multiple terminals" smart cultural tourism platform. Online, it hosts "cloud appreciation of intangible heritage" live streams through platforms such as Tik-Tok and Kuai Shou, uploading performances like brand gong drum shows and dragon boat races. This approach not only promotes local intangible cultural heritage but also boosts sales of related cultural and creative products and drives offline tourism. Offline, IoT technology is used to monitor visitor flow in forest parks in real time, enabling dynamic adjustment of eco-experience voucher distribution to balance environmental protection with tourism revenue. For agricultural product sales, a Zhaoshan pomelo traceability system based on blockchain technology has been established, allowing consumers to scan codes to access full-process cultivation data and enhance product value. This three-dimensional driving model of "cultural IP revitalization—ecological value transformation—digital technology empowerment" aims to increase Zhaoshan's comprehensive tourism income, positioning it as a model for village industry integration development in Hubei Province.

5.5.2 A synergistic mechanism between cultural empowerment and ecological protection

Culture is the core of village identity, while ecology is the foundation of its sustainable development. Both must advance together to create a sustainable development model of "cultural IP + ecological operation."

In the cultural dimension, it is essential to thoroughly explore local intangible cultural heritage, folk customs, and handicraft resources, transforming them into marketable cultural tourism products through creative design. For example, developing regionally distinctive cultural and creative products, or creating themed homestays, story museums, and other immersive experiential projects. At the same time, establishing a "Cultural IP–Content Production–Brand Output" chain can leverage new media platforms such as short videos and live streaming to share village stories and enhance brand influence. However, homogenization must be

avoided. The government could establish cultural heritage protection funds to encourage community-led preservation efforts, ensuring the authenticity and sustainability of cultural resources.

In ecological conservation, the principle of "low-impact development" must be maintained to preserve village landscapes and their ecological functions. Key measures include establishing environmental carrying capacity standards with visitor quotas, promoting clean energy solutions such as solar-powered homestays and eco-friendly toilets, and creating waste recycling systems like food waste composting and waste sorting. Additionally, developing ecological education programs, including nature study tours and environmental workshops, can transform ecological value into brand advantages. Governments should strengthen oversight, strictly penalize illegal development activities, and incentivize villagers through ecological compensation mechanisms to create a virtuous cycle of protection, benefit, and reinvestment.

The synergy between cultural empowerment and ecological conservation depends on balancing development and preservation. For example, Song yang's ancient village restoration in Zhejiang preserves traditional architectural features while introducing cultural innovation to achieve adaptive reuse. Meanwhile, the Moganshan homestay cluster exemplifies sustainable tourism through eco-friendly design that integrates natural landscapes with premium vacation experiences.

In developing a synergistic approach to cultural empowerment and ecological conservation, Zhaoshan has established a distinctive dual-driven model that integrates "cultural IP + ecological operations." Culturally, the area focuses on Zhang Yu Zhao's calligraphy heritage as its core IP, utilizing digital technologies to revitalize intangible cultural traditions. A prime example is the AR Calligraphy Workshop at Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park, which uses holographic projection to demonstrate the essence of Nan Gong-style calligraphy. The Park also features an AI-powered digital tracing evaluation system that combines educational engagement with skill development. The project's innovation lies in transforming cultural experiences into quantifiable consumption—through blockchain-verified digital collectibles generated by AI algorithms from tourists' tracing works, the initiative creates sustainable

employment opportunities for local villagers. Another highlight is the immersive live-action drama "Borrowing Arrows with Straw Boats" at Liangzi Lake Ecological Park, which uses VR technology to recreate historical battlefields such as the Battle of Red Cliffs, enhanced by multimedia effects to seamlessly blend ancient narratives with modern technology. This culturally rich solution is expected to drive the formation of a "Three Kingdoms-themed homestay cluster," increasing property values and boosting local residents' income through tourism-driven economic growth.

The synergy between cultural empowerment and ecological conservation in Zhaoshan is demonstrated through three innovative practices. First, the "Calligraphy Ecological Corridor" project transforms 2 kilometers of lakeshore into a waterside calligraphy stele forest. Using permeable paving technology to protect surface runoff, the steles display selected poems by Zhang Yu Zhao depicting nature, achieving both cultural display and rainwater conservation. Second, the Pomelo industry implements "cultural cultivation standards," requiring 2,000 mu of plantations to preserve traditional farming tool exhibition areas while reducing chemical fertilizer use. Adoption activities during the "Pomelo Culture Festival" further enhance product value. Third, in protecting the Three Kingdoms naval site, a "VR-enhanced archaeology" integrated development model is adopted. Surface structures are preserved, while immersive virtual reality experiences deepen visitor engagement, ensuring both site integrity and an improved tourist experience. This collaborative mechanism not only boosts local cultural tourism revenue but also protects Liangzi Lake and surrounding ecosystems, creating a virtuous cycle where "cultural heritage finds its medium and ecological conservation yields benefits." Moving forward, Zhaoshan plans to establish a "Cultural-Ecological Account" to conduct dual evaluations of cultural value and ecological impact for each development initiative, further deepening sustainable development concepts.

5.5.3 Community participation and policy coordination guarantee mechanism

The long-term development of village identity depends on both the community's endogenous impetus and policy support, making it necessary to

establish a three-in-one governance framework involving the government, enterprises, and villagers.

Community engagement is crucial for fostering identity-driven development. Villagers should be not only resource owners but also active participants in development. Establishing cooperatives and equity-based systems allows villagers to participate directly in management, ensuring their voices are heard and their profit-sharing rights are protected. At the same time, enhancing skills training and building cultural confidence—such as through homestay management and handicraft workshops—can improve service quality. Encouraging "new village elites" to return for entrepreneurship and attracting young talent can revitalize village innovation. The community-led model reduces the risk of predatory exploitation by external capital, strengthens residents' sense of belonging, and promotes social harmony.

Policy coordination serves as the institutional safeguard for sustainable development. Governments should integrate fiscal, land, and technological resources to establish a comprehensive support system covering planning, investment, and supervision. For example, creating special funds for village tourism and streamlining land use approval processes could enhance efficiency. Aligning policies across cultural tourism, agriculture, and environmental protection sectors helps prevent resource waste caused by fragmented management. Furthermore, improving industry standards and certification systems—including establishing labels such as "Green Homestays" and "Cultural Villages"—will boost brand credibility.

Urban-village interaction is a vital strategy to amplify brand influence. By tapping into urban consumer markets, we can develop short-trip offerings such as weekend getaways and educational travel programs to attract metropolitan visitors. At the same time, regional collaboration should integrate village destinations into cross-border tourism routes through initiatives like joint ticket marketing with city attractions and shared tourist networks. Governments must enhance transportation infrastructure and digital connectivity to bridge service gaps between urban and village areas, thereby facilitating two-way resource circulation.

Through policy coordination and community participation mechanisms, Zhaoshan has established a three-dimensional governance system with local

characteristics: "government guidance–enterprise operation–villager self-governance." At the community level, the innovative "three rights separation + cultural equity" model was implemented. Land transfers consolidated Pomelo (Chinese yew) plantations into a shareholding cooperative, where farmers contribute land contracting rights as shares, village collectives provide resource management rights, and cultural tourism enterprises invest capital and technology. This creates a community that shares both risks and benefits. The system transformed villagers' annual income from purely farming earnings to "guaranteed dividends + labor wages," boosting the village's average income. Villagers participating in the Zhang Yu Zhao Cultural Park AR Calligraphy Workshop earn skill subsidies through roles such as cultural guides and creative product makers. To strengthen community capacity, the town government collaborated with art academies to launch an "Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritor Training Program," systematically teaching Nan Gong-style calligraphy and Three Kingdoms-era straw weaving techniques. To address talent shortages, the "New Village Elites Return Program" offers startup subsidies and tax breaks to attract college graduates back to build their hometown.

To enhance urban-village interaction mechanisms, Zhaoshan Capital leveraged development opportunities in the Wuhan Metropolitan Circle by signing "Guest Exchange Agreements" with cities such as Huang Shi and Ezhou. These collaborations have incorporated Three Kingdoms cultural study tours into the compulsory curricula of local primary and secondary schools and have hosted educational delegations. To serve urban leisure markets, the district developed a "Friday Afternoon + Weekend" micro-vacation package featuring calligraphy workshops, lake delicacy feasts, and stargazing camping experiences. With seamless transfers via the Wuhan Tong APP connecting subway stations to tourist routes, visitors from downtown Wuhan can reach these attractions within two hours. An innovative "City Membership Program" was introduced, allowing Wuhan residents to enjoy 50% discounts on all Zhaoshan attractions and direct farm-to-table access to local produce for an annual fee of 199 yuan. For regional synergy, the district partnered with Liang Zaida Scenic Area to launch a "One Lake, Two Activities" joint ticket system, sharing resources such as cruise boats and tour guides to boost tourist spending.

Zhaoshan has established a dynamic feedback and rights protection mechanism. The village holds quarterly "Villagers' Deliberation Meetings," adopting a five-step decision-making process: proposal, discussion, resolution, implementation, and evaluation for major matters. For example, in response to tourists' complaints about insufficient restrooms, the village council resolved to allocate part of its tourism revenue specifically for environmental protection infrastructure, with plans to build new eco-friendly toilets within six months. A "Village Development Supervisory Board" composed of lawyers and accountants oversees corporate compliance, ensuring timely and full distribution of villagers' dividends. To prevent homogenized competition, the town government issued the "Negative List for Cultural Tourism Project Access," explicitly prohibiting duplicate construction of similar business formats within a 3-kilometer radius. This measure safeguards the exclusivity of distinctive projects such as the Pomelo orchard and fishing village leisure facilities.

All the above designs adopt low-tech and affordable production methods, reflecting a realistic and sustainable approach suited to rural manufacturing conditions. The sustainable development of experiential village identity construction requires multidimensional coordination among economic, cultural, ecological, and governance mechanisms. Economic innovation acts as the driving force, cultural empowerment forms the core, ecological conservation sets the baseline, and community participation and policy coordination provide safeguards. Only through systematic design can we achieve sustainable use of village resources, thereby truly advancing village revitalization and fostering shared prosperity between urban and rural areas.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and suggestion

6.1 Conclusion

- ① Completed the sorting of Zhaoshan's 6 Major Soft Power Pillars and 24 Identity Elements;
- ② Zhaoshan identity system design;
- ③ Village identity system design model.

This study develops a comprehensive village identity design model aimed at exploring the multi-dimensional characteristics of Zhaoshan Village and its application in practice. Centered on village identity recognition, the model integrates identity branding, visual design systems, and cultural experience routes, forming a practical and systematic framework. For villages with limited design resources, the model offers a simplified process: first, identifying and distilling core local elements; second, employing a modular design approach for identity creation. Notably, during five years of research, the emergence of AI technologies such as Open AI has significantly enriched design methodologies, providing future village officials with a convenient preliminary design tool: simply inputting keywords can generate feasible identity concepts. By combining low-tech printing methods, the model also expands the dissemination and extension of village identities, facilitating widespread implementation.

Furthermore, the model emphasizes the design of cultural experience routes—not only visual and symbolic identity elements but also immersive pathways that enhance cultural recognition and attractiveness. By integrating local historical background, festivals, handicrafts, and natural landscapes, it creates distinctive, interactive cultural experiences that foster deeper understanding and appreciation of local culture. This approach strengthens cultural confidence and supports sustainable rural tourism development. The model is also applicable to resource-rich

tourism villages, assisting them in leveraging local assets to design unique cultural pathways, thus promoting cultural inheritance and dissemination.

Contributions

VILLAGE IDENTITY SYSTEM DESIGN MODEL

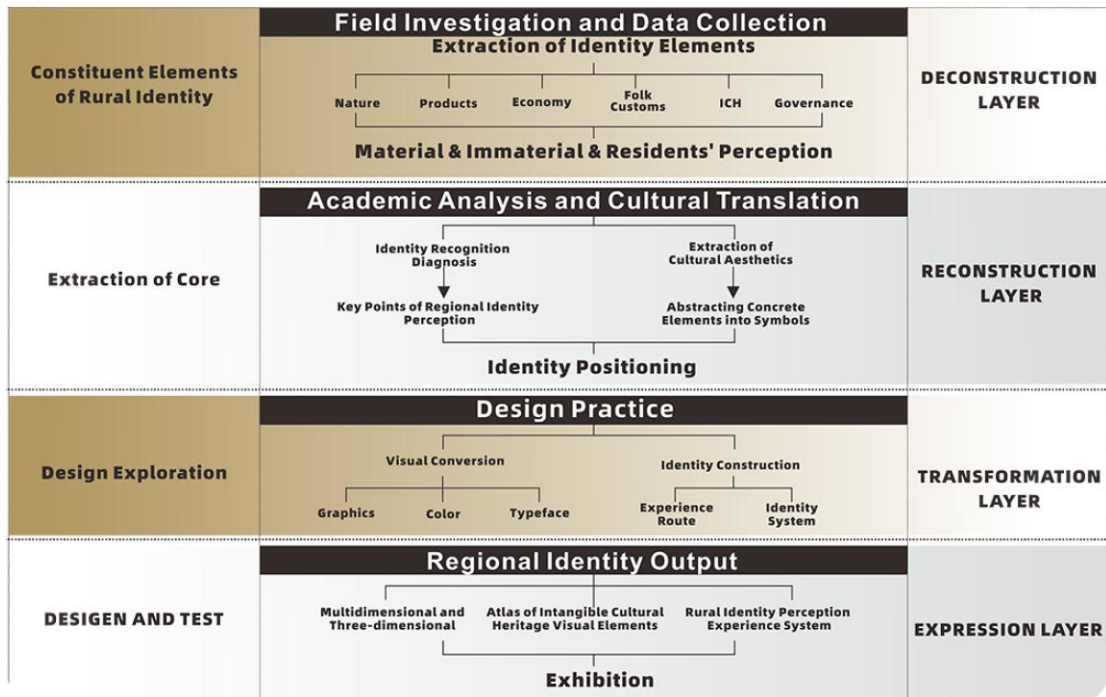


Figure 39 Village identity recognition and design model

Village identity is not simply a superficial depiction of a village's external appearance, but a profound exploration and presentation of its internal culture, history, ecology, and social relationships. This study comprehensively analyzes the components of rural identity across four dimensions: sensory experience, emotional experience, behavioral experience, and cognitive experience. These elements are subsequently visualized and expressed through super symbols to construct a distinctive sensory identification system for the village context." The behavioral experience dimension emphasizes productive, cultural, and social participation to promote interaction and integration between people and village communities. The cognitive experience dimension elevates cultural depth and cognitive value through historical and cultural understanding, ecological knowledge dissemination, and traditional craft education.

Furthermore, building on village identity recognition and design practices, it is essential to consider current village development policies and realities. Since contemporary village development operates under the guiding principle of co-creation, constructing village identity requires collaborative participation from multiple stakeholders to foster endogenous development within this framework.

In terms of identity design, an initial step involves analyzing the elements of village identity construction (as shown in Figure 37). This requires the government to play a guiding policy role and organize design teams to explore local historical and cultural resources. For example, in the identity design of Zhaoshan, a core symbol based on the pomelo is established, integrating calligraphy art by Zhang Yu Zhao and the ecological imagery of Liangzihu into a cohesive visual branding system. The analysis should encompass natural resources, economy and industry, education and technology, folk customs and heritage, intangible cultural heritage, human and governance factors, media and communication, and sustainable development and urban-rural integration. These local cultural elements are transformed into modern design language, with a set of branding application standards and simple extensions suitable for low-tech implementation by the village. If capacity allows, the government can employ a dedicated team to execute the design plans and facilitate market operations, ensuring continuous use that aligns villagers and government on rural development ideals. This approach sustains the infusion of authentic regional life into the brand identity, ensuring close alignment with local cultural DNA.

In the theme route planning stage, the government should coordinate tourism and cultural resources. For Zhaoshan, this involves leveraging the spatial layout of "mountains, waters, and culture," and engaging with design teams to develop suitable cultural tourism experiences based on visitor needs, local resident demands, and cultural foundations. They collaborate with design teams to create appropriate cultural tourism routes. Designers use their professional expertise to develop detailed tour itineraries and interpretive systems, connecting scattered attractions into an integrated experience network. Villagers, as primary bearers of cultural heritage, provide authentic experiences by serving as route guides and demonstrating

intangible cultural heritage skills. This collaborative model ensures systematic route design and culturally rooted expression while preserving local authenticity.

Experience project design serves as the foundation for establishing village identity. The three stakeholders collaborate by leveraging their respective strengths: The government establishes special support funds to encourage enterprises to develop innovative experiences, such as combining Zhaoshan pomelo fruit picking with calligraphy workshops or integrating ancient village homestays with intangible cultural heritage performances. Design and operational teams ensure service quality through modern management concepts that enhance visitor experiences. Villagers gain tangible benefits by participating in project operations and providing specialized services, creating sustainable engagement incentives. In particular, for revitalizing intangible cultural heritage, innovative groups formed by "heritage bearers + designers + villagers" transform traditional crafts into experiential and consumable cultural products.

The establishment of collaborative safeguard mechanisms provides institutional support for the sustainable development of village identity. For example, at the governmental level, the "Zhaoshan Brand Management Measures" have been introduced to clarify the rights and responsibilities of stakeholders and to establish a brand usage authorization and supervision system. Operational entities lead the formation of brand alliances to develop industry standards, promote resource sharing, and leverage complementary advantages. Village committees set up brand supervision groups to ensure that villagers' interests are fully protected. In addition, a dynamic evaluation mechanism is established to regularly collect tourist feedback and monitor brand influence, creating a closed-loop management system of "design-implementation-feedback-optimization." This integrated safeguard system not only maintains the core value of the brand but also allows for innovation.

Through this collaborative mechanism, Zhaoshan aims to develop a distinctive and sustainable experiential village identity. The government ensures development direction and cultural security, while design and operations provide professional expertise and market vitality. Villagers contribute cultural wisdom and warmth, creating a virtuous cycle through the complementary strengths of all parties. Under

the framework of village co-creation, and based on village identity recognition and design models, this approach addresses common issues in traditional village identity construction, such as homogenization and superficial experiences. It further explores a path to village revitalization that promotes both cultural inheritance and economic development, offering replicable practical experience for similar regions. In the future, with the deepened application of digital technologies, this collaborative mechanism will continue to evolve toward online-offline integration and the combination of virtual and real experiences.

6.2 Village identity suggestion

Through systematic practice, this study has pioneered a new approach to village identity branding that activates cultural translation, reconstructs connections through experiential design, and ensures sustainability through collaborative mechanisms. In the practice of rural identity construction in China, how to extract identity symbols with high recognition and memorability from the rich resource base is the core issue for achieving differentiated development in rural areas. This process begins with a comprehensive review and exploration of the rural resource system - rural areas need to establish their own "identity gene bank", systematically sorting out four fundamental levels: unique natural resources and ecological endowments constitute the ecological background of rural areas; Rich cultural resources and historical accumulation shape cultural character. The characteristic industrial resources and economic foundation lay the foundation for the development path. Infrastructure and spatial texture carry the trajectory of daily life. These resources together constitute the original materials for the construction of rural identity.

Establishing a village identity gene pool is neither an immediate process, nor is it feasible for every village to engage professional design teams. This model, therefore, guides villages to first identify a "super-symbol" suited to their specific development as a representative element of village identity. Simple design and validation then allow for the creation of a recognizable and memorable village identity symbol.

The construction of village identity typically encompasses: extensive research; in-depth interviews; element identification; element selection and creation; and

design verification and optimization using the Double Diamond model. Extensive research includes literature reviews and questionnaires (see Appendices A and B). In-depth interviews involve selecting relevant stakeholder groups (refer to Table 2: Core Stakeholders of Township Tourism Industry) and structuring interview content (see Table 4: In-depth Interview Framework).

Subsequently, research and interview findings are synthesized, extracting representative elements for inclusion in a village element table (see Figure 37: Analysis of Village Pillar Resources and Elements in China), which then facilitates the construction of village identity. Selection of village elements hinges on their capacity to represent the village identity, necessitating qualities such as uniqueness, distinctiveness, recognizability, and memorability. This foundation allows for the transformation of the element into a village "super-symbol," gaining recognition from residents, government, and tourists. Finally, a unique village visual solution and communication medium is developed through basic design.

Village Pillar Resources and Elements Analysis in China							
Resources & Foundation	Economy & Industry	Education & Technology	Folk Traditions & Heritage	Humanities & Governance	Media & Communication	Sustainable Development	Urban-Rural Integration Development
Natural Resources	Characteristic Agricultural Products	Traditional Farming Knowledge	Traditional Village Protection	Rural Cultural Ethos	Village Social Media Hotspot	Eco-Cultural Rural Tourism	Shared Farms
Cultural Resources	Village Handicraft Resources	Ecological Agricultural Resources	Intangible Cultural Heritage	Rural Governance Demonstration	Rural Story Short Videos	Low-Carbon Village Construction	Weekend Farmers' Markets
Industrial Resources	Rural Complex (Agritourism)	Village Educational Research Base	Folk Festival Activities	Village Autonomy Innovation	Road Billboard Advertising	Traditional Ecological Wisdom	Urban Enterprise Farm and Adoption
Infrastructure Foundation	Revenue from Village Tourism	Heritage Education in Schools	Local/indigenous Arts	Ecological Protection Mechanism			

Figure 40 Village Pillar Resources and Elements Analysis in China

The significance of this strategy lies in elevating China's village identity, when Zhaoshan pomelo shifts from an agricultural product to a spiritual totem, and calligraphy skills develop from intangible cultural heritage archives into immersive scripts, it demonstrates the creative integration of village civilization with

contemporary life. The practice in Zhaoshan shows that the path to branding village revitalization must be rooted in cultural confidence based on the land's genetic heritage, while boldly using experience as a bridge and design as a medium to rebuild a spiritual community between urban and village areas through dialogue between tradition and modernity.

The successful construction of village identity is essentially a creative process of transforming "local knowledge" into "transmissible identity". It requires rural areas to, on the basis of a profound understanding of their own resource endowments, achieve contemporary translation of traditional elements through modern design language, the logic of the experience economy and the concept of sustainable development. The village identity ultimately formed is not only a "unique expression" rooted in the local cultural context but also an "open text" capable of evoking widespread emotional resonance. While maintaining a unique cultural recognition in the context of globalization, it possesses the vitality to engage in dialogue with The Times and connect with the outside world. This systematic approach provides rural areas with a complete operational framework from resource census to identity implementation, enabling each village to find its own path for identity expression.



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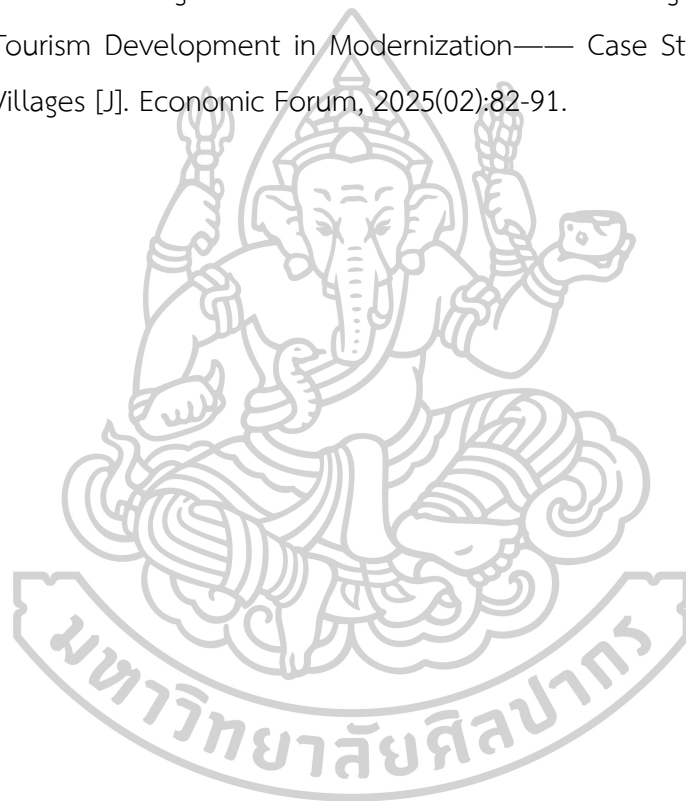
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Appendix

Appendix A: Village Identity Branding Baseline Questionnaire

I. Basic Information

Gender:

Male

Female

Age: _____ years

Which type of community do you currently reside in?

Urban

Village

II. Village Brand Awareness

Are you familiar with the concept of "Village Brand"?

Yes (Continue to the following questions)

No (Please skip directly to question 5)

What impact do you think establishing a village brand will have on the economic development of ZhaoShan?

Very positive

Somewhat positive

Neutral

Somewhat negative

Very negative

III. Key Factors in Village Brand Construction (For respondents familiar with the "Village Brand" concept only)

In your opinion, which factors are most important in establishing a village brand for Zhaoshan Town? (Multiple selections allowed)

Natural resources (e.g., mountains, water, ecology)

Historical culture (e.g., traditional customs, intangible cultural heritage)

Local specialties (e.g., characteristic agricultural products, handicrafts)

Resident participation and attitudes (e.g., villager enthusiasm, sense of identity)

Infrastructure construction (e.g., transportation, internet, public facilities)

Other: _____ (Please specify)

IV. Necessity of a Village Brand

Do you think Zhaoshan Town needs to establish its own brand?

Yes, absolutely necessary

Yes, but not essential

Uncertain

No, not necessary

V. Relationship Between Village Brand and Related Fields

How do you view the relationship between village branding and village tourism? _____



Appendix B: ZhaoShan Village Identity Optimization Questionnaire

Based on the OCR results, the document appears to be a design brief or presentation outline focusing on branding, particularly logo design and its application. Given the fragmented nature of the text and the presence of placeholders (□), I'll provide a generalized, academic translation that captures the likely intended meaning:

Generalized Academic Translation

I. Design Strategy

Objective: [To be filled in based on context, e.g., "To develop a visually compelling and strategically sound brand identity."]

Methodology: [Likely related to research, analysis, and design process. To be filled based on context].

[Placeholder for specific element, e.g., data analysis.]

[Placeholder for specific element, e.g., concept development.]

[Placeholder for specific element, e.g., visual identity system.]

II. Logo Design

Logo Theme: [To be filled in based on the design brief, e.g., "Nature, Heritage, Community"]

Logo [Description of the desired feeling for the logo. To be filled in based on brief. e.g., "The logo should evoke feelings of tranquility, authenticity, and connectivity."]

Logo Elements: [Likely a list of visual components to be included or considered.]

[Placeholder for specific element, e.g., Color palette.]

[Placeholder for specific element, e.g., Typography.]

[Placeholder for specific element, e.g., Iconography.]

III. Application and Extension

Brand Guidelines: [Likely refers to the development of a style guide]

Collateral Materials: [Examples of how the logo/brand is used across different media.]

Feedback and Refinement:

"[Text from page 2] Help us to make the design more perfect, let Zhaoshan's brand image be more popular."

Explanation of Choices

Academic Tone: I've used formal language ("objective," "methodology," "collateral materials") and focused on conveying the underlying purpose and structure of the design process.

Generalization: Because parts are missing, I've provided placeholders with examples of what likely belongs there.

Focus on Meaning: I've assumed that the key is the overall strategy, not necessarily the specific missing words.



Appendix C: Interview Summary: Cultural and Tourism Development in Zhaoshan

Interviewees: Minister Xia (Culture & Tourism) and Director Xu (Party-building, Organization Department)

1. Cultural Promotion & Party-Building Integration

Party-building activities occasionally incorporate intangible cultural heritage (ICH) performances during festivals (e.g., July 1st, Double Ninth Festival).

Currently, integration mostly limited to performance stage.

2. ICH Inheritance & Performance

Shortage of young inheritors at grassroots level.

Key events invite ICH performers for Lotus Boat, Jade Rings, and Calligraphy demonstrations.

*Performance fees vary; Spring Festival sees activities by government, private, and village organizations.

3. Brand-Building Needs

Zhaoshan seeks a distinctive brand: logo and IP identified but delayed due to leadership/staff changes.

Promotional slogans under planning (e.g., “Zhao Feng floats ink, Camellia accompanies pomelo fragrance”).

Plans to place display elements at highway exits to enhance image.

4. Tourism Development: Challenges & Planning

Challenges:

Funding and land limitations; lack of signature projects and mature guides.

Insufficient promotion, accommodation, and infrastructure; rural tourism highly homogeneous; difficult to retain visitors.

Planning:

Positioning as an agriculture-culture-tourism model town; concept of “one mountain, one water, one center.”

Lakeside greenways, service stations, forest park trails; town center focused on Zhang Yu Zhao culture and flower industry.

Tourism Projects:

One-Day Tours: Routes integrating local cuisine, culture (calligraphy, ICH), and natural scenery; promoted via platforms like RESDOT.

Camping Sites: Leveraging natural resources (e.g., Peony Valley summit for astronomy camping); sustainability limited by promotion.

Study Tours: Aquatic plants and rare bird observation; education centers combining nature, science, and culture.

5. Data & Assistance Needs

Requests for ICH materials, high-res maps, festival photos, food recommendations.

Assistance needed for designing “check-in” points, ICH summaries, reporting, and brand-building.

6. Operational Challenges

Limited funds and skilled personnel.

High-investment projects (e.g., Peony Valley) underperform due to operational and marketing constraints





Figure 41 Design a feedback Questionnaire

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PUBLICATION 1,'Case study on the construction of rural brand identity based on optimal differentiation theory :A Case Study of Zhao Shan Town, china;- Published in August 2025

