

Research on the Market Adaptability of Rongchang Summer Cloth Product Innovation Under the Intervention of Modern Design Language

Pei Xi¹

¹ Modern International Art and Design Academy, Chongqing Technology and Business University, China

Correspondence: Pei Xi, Modern International Art and Design Academy, Chongqing Technology and Business University, China.

doi:10.63593/AS.2709-9830.2025.10.002

Abstract

This paper takes Rongchang Summer Cloth as the research object, focusing on the market adaptability of its product innovation under the intervention of modern design language. Based on cultural consumption theory and design value theory, it constructs an analytical framework of “design innovation–market segmentation–value adaptation”. Through case analysis and theoretical deduction, it proposes four core market segments for Rongchang Summer Cloth: cultural elites and collectors, new middle-class and lifestyle consumers, designers and creative classes, and Generation Z and national trend enthusiasts. On this basis, it elaborates on five core design innovation methods–symbol translation, material reengineering, structural innovation, functional crossover, and narrative empowerment–and their dynamic adaptation paths with each market segment in terms of value demands, functional needs, and price perception. It proposes that market adaptation is a precise value co-creation behavior, whose essence lies in transforming the cultural and aesthetic value created by design innovation into a value that can be perceived, recognized, and paid for by specific target consumers through appropriate channels and narratives. This paper aims to provide theoretical support and practical references for the coordinated development of cultural inheritance and commercial value of Rongchang Summer Cloth in the context of cultural confidence and consumption upgrade.

Keywords: Rongchang Summer Cloth, product innovation, market adaptability, modern design language, intangible cultural heritage revitalization

1. Introduction

The intervention of modern design language has injected unprecedented vitality into the innovative design of Rongchang Summer Cloth. Designers have transformed Rongchang Summer Cloth from a traditional craft facing a crisis of inheritance into a contemporary cultural carrier that can be presented on fashion weeks and art exhibitions through methods such as symbol translation, material reengineering, and deconstruction innovation. However, while we are adept at discussing the methodology of design innovation, we are often negligent in examining the effective connection between its innovation outcomes and the diversified market demands. If the value created by design innovation cannot be verified and realized in the market, its revitalization path will be difficult to sustain, and it may eventually lead to the intangible cultural heritage falling back into the inheritance predicament due to a lack of economic vitality. Therefore, this paper aims to shift the research perspective from focusing on the supply side of design innovation to exploring its adaptability to market demand. The core research question of this paper is how the innovation outcomes of Rongchang Summer Cloth under the intervention of modern design language can be effectively matched with different market segments, and what the internal adaptation logic and realization mechanism are. This is of crucial theoretical value and practical

significance for promoting the sustainable development of Rongchang Summer Cloth.

2. Construction of Design and Market Adaptation Model

This paper constructs a design-market adaptation analysis model by integrating the theoretical perspectives of marketing, cultural sociology, and design. Based on this theoretical foundation, the author draws on cultural capital theory to view design innovation as a process of cultural capital reproduction, and uses value co-creation theory to explain the interaction between designers and consumers.

In this paper, the intervention of modern design language specifically refers to the creative transformation of Rongchang Summer Cloth through five methods: symbol translation, material reengineering, structural innovation, functional crossover, and narrative empowerment. Market adaptability is a multi-dimensional concept that measures the degree of match between the innovation product and the demands, preferences, and willingness to pay of target consumers in terms of value proposition, functional utility, and price positioning. Symbol translation is not merely the simple extraction of traditional patterns but the contemporary expression of cultural genes through design language. Its essence is to measure the degree of synergy between the innovation product and the target consumers in terms of value recognition, functional satisfaction, and price acceptance. Starting from the cross-analysis of three key variables—consumption motivation, value pursuit, and price sensitivity, the potential market for Rongchang Summer Cloth is divided into four typical types: the cultural elite market, whose core demand lies in the cultural authenticity, rarity, and art investment value of the product, and which pays more attention to the authenticity of the product's lineage and cultural origin; the new middle-class consumer market, who pursue the aesthetic style, ecological ethics, and improvement of life quality carried by the product, and who pay more attention to the concern and practice of sustainable lifestyles; the creative class market, which shows the characteristics of productive consumption, regards innovative products as sources of inspiration and creative materials, and values their uniqueness and experimental nature; and the national trend enthusiasts market, whose consumption behavior is deeply driven by social interaction, prefers products with high appearance levels, strong cultural symbols, and interesting features, and has significant characteristics of symbolic consumption and group identity. The core analytical tool of this article is the design-market fit matrix, which cross-relates five design innovation methods involving modern design language with the four segmented markets, and focuses on explaining how design innovation can achieve creative value transformation through specific cultural translation paths to meet the core demands of different target markets.

3. Market Segmentation Map and Value Demand Analysis of Rongchang Summer Cloth

Based on the perspective of the aforementioned theoretical framework, the consumption market of Rongchang Summer Cloth presents a clear value stratification and a diverse coexistence trend. The cultural elite market follows a unique value logic. This group regards summer cloth products as aesthetic objects for inheriting cultural memory, and their consumption behavior is essentially the accumulation and display of cultural capital. For instance, the artwork "Twelve Screens of Summer Cloth Landscape" was sold at an astonishing price at Sotheby's, fully demonstrating the scarcity value of handcrafted originality. The circulation channels of such works are significantly closed, often completed through targeted transfers among private art advisors and important collectors, forming an elite cultural circle based on trust and professional authentication. The new middle-class consumer market shows distinct modern characteristics and is the main force of industrialization and the main service target of brands. This group regards summer cloth products as media for personalized life aesthetics. For example, brands like Yiqutang and Sulu have deeply cultivated this market, selling through designer brand stores, high-end online platforms, and cultural tourism complexes, and constructing a complete brand narrative, enabling consumers to simultaneously recognize and practice the cultural imagination of an elegant life during the purchasing process. The creative class market exhibits unique productive consumption traits. This group regards summer cloth as a creative medium with cultural depth, and their demands focus on the material's malleability and cultural symbolic value. For instance, architect Zhang Lei innovatively applied a specially treated waterproof summer cloth composite material to interior partitions in his "Fusion House" project, preserving the natural texture of the material while endowing it with modern functions. This cross-border material experiment not only expands the application boundaries of summer cloth but also essentially realizes the dialogue between traditional craftsmanship and contemporary design. The transaction mode in this market usually adopts customized services, completed through direct cooperation between design institutions and material laboratories. The national trend enthusiasts market is the center of traffic and topics, and this group's market shows distinct postmodern symbolic consumption characteristics, deeply integrating the demands of digital social interaction and identity recognition. The product forms in this market are lightweight and symbolic, such as summer cloth elements in cultural and creative peripheral products, IP collaboration products, and trendy accessories, and their sales heavily rely on social media e-commerce, trendy collection stores, and pop-up events, emphasizing immediate sharing and group identity. These four consumer groups do not exist in isolation but form a dynamic value ecosystem. This complex interaction relationship not only reveals

the multiple aspects of traditional culture in contemporary society but also provides new thinking dimensions for the diversified paths of intangible cultural heritage revitalization.

4. Dynamic Adaptation Paths of Design Innovation Methods to Segmented Markets

Based on the systematic analysis of the design-market fit matrix, the five core design innovation methods of modern design language and their adaptation paths to different markets present clear differentiated characteristics, reflecting the unique value cognition models and consumption logics of each market group.

At the level of symbol translation, although both the cultural elite market and the national trend enthusiasts market show high adaptability, their strategies are completely different. For the cultural elite market, translation should follow the principle of subtractive aesthetics. For example, designer Ma Ke's "Useless" series of works deconstructs and abstracts the warp and weft of summer cloth into a space installation full of Zen, which not only retains the essential characteristics of the material but also triggers philosophical speculation about the relationship between tradition and modernity through a minimalist form; while for national trend enthusiasts, translation can be bold and direct, pasting and re-creating local cultural symbols with anime and trendy elements to meet their needs for identity marking and social sharing.

The two most experimental design methods, material reengineering and structural innovation, present distinct market segmentation in their value realization paths. In the cultural elite market, the value of these innovative approaches lies in creating museum-level art treasures. For instance, Cai Fan's "Light of Summer Cloth" lamps, whose value lies in the unrepeatable light and shadow art brought about by material experiments, perfectly align with collectors' pursuit of rarity; while the parametrically designed summer cloth structures provide architects and product designers with new creative media. For the new middle class market, the application of these two methods needs to be downgraded, that is, to transform their cutting-edge achievements into design details that enhance the quality of daily necessities, such as applying the crease texture used in artworks to a pillow or lampshade, showcasing extraordinary taste in the details.

Functional crossover is an effective strategy to break down the barriers between the new middle class and national trend enthusiast markets. For the new middle class, the value of a summer cloth Bluetooth speaker lies in its embodiment of an elegant lifestyle, and the crossover needs to be precise and elegant; for national trend enthusiasts, a summer cloth phone case or keyboard cap becomes a high-quality social currency due to its novelty and fun, with the crossover focusing on creating topicality and spreadability.

Narrative empowerment is a universal value amplifier for all markets, and its narrative strategies must be precisely designed based on the audience's knowledge structure and acceptance habits. For the cultural elite group, a grand narrative about authenticity and inheritance needs to be constructed; for the new middle class, warm stories about quality life and sustainable choices should be told; for the designer group, clear and professional material technology manuals should be provided; for national trend enthusiasts, stories must be transformed into lightweight, visual, and easily shareable short videos or interactive experiences.

This differentiated adaptation path reveals a deep-seated rule: the effective connection between design innovation and the market is essentially a process of cultural decoding and re-encoding. Designers need to accurately grasp the cultural codes of different groups and transform the value of traditional craftsmanship into forms recognizable and identifiable by specific markets through appropriate design languages. This process not only tests the professional ability of designers but also requires a profound understanding of the complex cultural landscape of contemporary society. It is worth noting that these adaptation boundaries are not absolute, and innovative design practices often open up new market possibilities by breaking the established cognitive framework.

5. Challenges and Forward-Looking Strategies in Market Adaptation

In the process of practicing market adaptation, the primary challenge stems from the eternal tension between authenticity and commercialization. When summer cloth products are simplified and mass-produced to adapt to the mass market, the cultural codes they carry face the risk of being deconstructed. The balance between design innovation and market demand constitutes another predicament. Designers' pioneering explorations are often based on cultural criticism and aesthetic subversion, which naturally creates a gap with the acceptance of the mass market. In the face of these deconstructive predicaments, this article proposes three strategies. Implement the product matrix strategy, that is, the same brand should build a complete product line from the master collection series to the youth trend series for different market segments, achieving a high-low value combination and maximizing market coverage. Upgrade the value communication strategy, fully leveraging digital technologies such as AR and VR to make the digital stories of every piece of fabric and every certificate tangible and perceptible, and through immersive experiences, enable consumers to intuitively understand the value of handcraft, thereby resolving their price concerns. Promote the community co-creation strategy, especially targeting the designer and domestic trend enthusiast market, by organizing workshops, launching crowdfunding,

and conducting joint design projects, transforming consumers from passive purchasers into active participants and co-creators, thereby building deep user stickiness and brand loyalty. The implementation of these strategies must be based on a profound understanding of the essence of traditional culture. The ultimate goal of market adaptation is not to have tradition blindly cater to modernity, but to find creative connection points between traditional culture and contemporary life. In this process, maintaining reverence for cultural authenticity and the courage to innovate are equally important. Any extreme in a single dimension may lead to the alienation of cultural commercialization.

6. Conclusion

Under the intervention of modern design language, the market adaptability between the product innovation of Rongchang Summer Cloth and the diversified market demands is not merely a simple commercial accommodation, but a precise strategic value co-creation based on profound market insight. Each of the five design innovation methods has its own capability boundaries and targeted market domains. The key to successful commercialization lies in making clear choices about the target market and selecting the most suitable design value transmission path accordingly. For cultural elites, design is a profound interpretation of culture and an ultimate expression of art; for the new middle class, design is the shaping of life aesthetics and the resonance of values; for the creative class, design is an open tool and the grammar of innovation; for Generation Z, design is a social touchpoint and a symbol of group identity. In the future, the sustainable development of Rongchang Summer Cloth and the advancement of the entire intangible cultural heritage revitalization cause urgently require establishing a more creative, insightful, and sustainable dynamic balance mechanism among cultural essence, design thinking, and market needs. The theoretical framework and strategic suggestions proposed in this article are an exploratory attempt towards this goal, aiming to provide a referenceable thinking direction for the successful transformation of intangible cultural heritage from precious cultural assets into vibrant contemporary assets.

References

- Bourdieu, P., (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Harvard University Press.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L., (2016). *Marketing Management*. 15th ed. Pearson.
- Li Yanzu, (2008). The Wisdom of Design. *Art and Design*, (4).
- Li Yuliang, (2016). Research on Design Innovation Strategies of Rongchang Summer Cloth Cultural and Creative Products. *Packaging Engineering*, 37(16).
- Wang Zhan, Duan Hui, (2020). Research on Design Strategies of Intangible Cultural Heritage Products from the Perspective of Cultural Consumption. *Packaging Engineering*, 41(10).
- Zhang Guoyun, (2015). Research on the Cultural Space of Handmade Summer Cloth Weaving Tools in Rongchang and Its Design Ethical Value. *Decoration*, (3).

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).