

Study on Value Construction and Design Innovation of Xiqin Embroidery Cultural and Creative Based on Cultural Identity

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to explore the construction logic and design innovation path of Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products in the dimensions of cultural value, homogeneous design form and weak market competitiveness in current Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative development.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The research adopts literature research, field investigation and design practice methods. By systematically sorting out the cultural connotation and artistic characteristics of Xiqin Embroidery, a four-dimensional value system is constructed, and three design innovation paths are proposed. Three physical design cases are developed to verify the feasibility of the paths.

Findings – The construction of the four-dimensional value system and the implementation of the three design paths can effectively enrich the cultural connotation of Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products and enhance the public's sense of identity and emotional belonging to Qin culture.

Research Implications – The research results provide theoretical and practical references for the design innovation and industrialization development of Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products, and also offer a referable paradigm for the living inheritance of other regional intangible cultural heritage cultural and creative products.

Keywords: Cultural Identity; Xiqin Embroidery; Cultural and Creative Products; Value Construction; Design Innovation; Intangible Cultural Heritage

JEL Classifications: Z11, Z10

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I. Introduction

Cultural identity is the source of Chinese national cohesion and the deepest level of identity, which governs and inspires the thoughts and actions of all ethnic groups. Under the background of creative transformation and innovative development of excellent traditional Chinese culture, intangible cultural heritage, as an important carrier of national culture, has become an important way to enhance cultural confidence and construct cultural identity. Xiqin Embroidery, mainly spread in Baoji and surrounding areas of Shaanxi Province, is a typical representative of Qin culture and was included in the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage representative project list in 2008. Rooted in the fertile soil of Zhou and Qin civilizations, it has formed a unique artistic style of bold and unrestrained, bright colors and auspicious meanings after more than 3,000 years of evolution, carrying the wisdom crystallization and spiritual pursuit of the working people in Guanzhong area.

In recent years, with the deepening of intangible cultural heritage protection, certain achievements have been made in the inheritance and development of Xiqin Embroidery. However, there are still many problems in the development of cultural and creative products: first, the excavation of cultural connotation is shallow, most products only stay in the simple replication of patterns and fail to deeply explain the historical culture and spiritual value behind them; second, the design form is homogeneous, the product category is single, and there is a lack of innovative consciousness and modern aesthetic expression; third, the industrialization degree is low, the brand awareness is weak, and the market competitiveness is insufficient. These problems make it difficult for Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products to establish emotional connection with contemporary consumers and effectively play their functions of cultural communication and identity construction.

From the perspective of cultural identity, this study systematically sorts out the cultural connotation and artistic characteristics of Xiqin Embroidery, constructs a four-dimensional value system for its cultural and creative products, and proposes targeted design innovation paths, supplemented by three practical design cases to verify the feasibility of the scheme. The purpose is to transform the cultural genes of Xiqin Embroidery into cultural and creative products that meet modern lifestyle and aesthetic needs through scientific design methods, so that intangible cultural heritage can enter public life and enhance the public's regional cultural identity and national pride imperceptibly.

II. Concept and Value of Cultural Identity

1. Concept of Cultural Identity

Cultural Identity is a complex and multi-dimensional concept covering emotion, cognition and behavior, involving the relationship between individual and society, history and reality. It refers to “the basis on which people use common cultural symbols, follow consistent thinking and habits, adhere to common cultural values and pursue unified cultural ideals as the basis for identification”(Liang Zhao-Zhen, 2023). From an ethnological

perspective, cultural identity is the process in which ethnic members recognize, acknowledge and agree with their own national culture, thereby generating a sense of belonging and further obtaining cultural consciousness

In a broad sense, cultural identity is an individual's sense of identity and consciousness towards the cultural group to which he belongs, and it is a dynamic internalization process from cognition to emotion and then to behavior. Individuals construct their own cognition, concepts and emotions in the social and cultural environment, and integrate the internalized ideas with daily production and life through the recognition, acceptance and practice of culture, forming a benign relationship of mutual promotion between individuals and culture. For intangible cultural heritage cultural and creative products, cultural identity is the core driving force for consumers to accept and love products, and also an important foundation for the living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage culture.

2 .Value Orientation of Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is the result of the joint action of individual cognition, emotion, intention and behavior, and its value is mainly reflected in the following three aspects:

First, promote cultural inheritance and innovation. Cultural identity is an emotional bond that can strengthen individuals' cognition and respect for local culture and stimulate the consciousness and responsibility of cultural inheritance. When individuals identify with a certain culture, they will take the initiative to understand, learn and spread the culture, and innovate on the basis of inheritance, endowing traditional culture with new forms and vitality.

Second, enhance individual cultural identity. Under the background of globalization, cultural identity can help individuals clarify their own cultural identity and social positioning and form stable self-cognition. By contacting and using cultural and creative products with local cultural characteristics, individuals can obtain a sense of cultural belonging, resist the impact of foreign culture and enhance cultural confidence.

Third, improve social cohesion. Cultural identity can cohesion group consensus, enhance national centripetal force and reduce cultural estrangement and value differences. Common cultural memories and value pursuits can closely connect different individuals and provide strong spiritual support for social stability and development.

It can be seen that cultural identity, as a research perspective, can construct a clear logical framework for intangible cultural heritage cultural and creative design, make the design more targeted and value-oriented, and finally achieve the goal of “carrying culture with objects and educating people with culture”(Wang Yuan,2021).

III. Value Construction of Xiqin Embroidery Cultural and Creative Products

As a bridge connecting tradition and modernity, intangible cultural heritage and the public, Xiqin

Embroidery cultural and creative products have multi-dimensional and multi-level values. Based on cultural identity theory and combined with the cultural connotation and artistic characteristics of Xiqin Embroidery, this study constructs its value system from four dimensions: cultural value, aesthetic value, educational value and entertainment value.

1. Cultural Value: Contemporary Inheritance of Historical Context

Cultural value is the core value of Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products, playing the role of a bridge connecting history and contemporary times, tradition and modernity (As shown in Fig.1) . Xiqin Embroidery originated from sacrificial costumes and court decorations in the Shang and Zhou dynasties, developed in the Qin and Han dynasties, flourished in the Tang and Song dynasties, and matured in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Its development process is closely linked with the evolution of Qin culture. It is not only a folk craft, but also a “living fossil” of the history and culture of Guanzhong area, carrying rich historical information and cultural memories(Liu zong-ming and WengHai-Feng,2025).



Fig1. Xiqin Embroidery

The cultural value of Xiqin Embroidery is mainly reflected in three aspects: first, the inheritance of historical context. Through the innovative application of traditional patterns, colors and needlework, the 3,000-year history of Qin culture is integrated into modern products, allowing consumers to feel the weight of history in the process of use; second, the spread of cultural symbols. Patterns such as tigers, peonies, cloud patterns and meander patterns in Xiqin Embroidery all have specific cultural meanings. For example, tigers symbolize exorcising evil and suppressing evil, peonies symbolize wealth and auspiciousness, and pomegranates symbolize many children and many blessings. These cultural symbols are widely spread through cultural and creative products; third, the continuation of cultural spirit. The spiritual qualities of the people in Guanzhong area, such as bold and simple, hardworking and brave, optimistic and upward, embodied in Xiqin Embroidery, can be passed on to contemporary consumers through products, realizing the intergenerational inheritance of

cultural spirit(Yang Fei -Yu,2024).

2. Aesthetic Value: Modern Expression of Regional Art

Aesthetic value refers to the basic aesthetic attribute that things can satisfy people's needs. "The generation of aesthetic value is conditioned on the shaping of external things on the one hand, and on the shaping of human senses and psychology on the other hand. Only in the correspondence and isomorphism of the two can people perceive the beauty of things"(Xu Heng-Chun, 2006). Xiqin Embroidery has unique regional aesthetic characteristics. Its bold and unrestrained shapes, bright and strong colors and rich and varied needlework form an artistic style completely different from that of Jiangnan embroidery.

The aesthetic value of Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products is reflected in three levels: vision, touch and overall artistic conception. At the visual level, through the abstract simplification of traditional patterns and the modern reconstruction of colors, a visual effect with both traditional charm and modern sense is created to meet the aesthetic needs of contemporary consumers; at the tactile level, through the technological transformation of traditional needlework, such as transforming seed stitch into three-dimensional printing and gold-wrapping embroidery into bronzing technology, the texture of embroidery is retained, bringing rich tactile experience to consumers; at the overall artistic conception level, Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products create a strong Qin style and charm through the organic combination of shape, color and technology, allowing consumers to feel the unique charm of Qin culture in the aesthetic experience(Qian Hai-Qing,2020).

3. Educational Value: Concrete Communication of Cultural Knowledge

Xiqin Embroidery contains rich historical and cultural knowledge and traditional craft skills, and has high cultural and educational functions. Different from the abstractness of book knowledge, cultural and creative products present cultural content in a concrete and visual way, allowing the public to learn cultural knowledge and improve cultural literacy imperceptibly in the process of use and appreciation.

For teenagers, the educational value of Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products is particularly prominent. Teenagers are in a critical period of value formation(Dong Wen-qian and Ge Lou,2025). By contacting Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products with novel designs and strong interest, their curiosity and desire to explore traditional culture can be stimulated. For example, stationery and toys with Xiqin Embroidery patterns can allow teenagers to understand the historical origin, pattern meaning and production technology of Xiqin Embroidery in daily study and play; while embroidery DIY material packages can allow teenagers to experience embroidery technology in person and cultivate their hands-on ability and innovative thinking. For adult consumers, Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products can enrich their cultural life, improve their aesthetic taste and enhance their cognition and identity with traditional culture.

4. Entertainment Value: Diversified Satisfaction of Emotional Experience

Entertainment value not only refers to the way of obtaining value in the process of leisure and relaxation, but also reflects its positive significance of stimulating creativity and imagination(Zhang Jia-Min,2026). In the fast-paced modern life, consumers pay more and more attention to the emotional experience and interactivity of products. The entertainment value of Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products is realized through the interesting, interactive and participatory design.

At the visual level, through cartoon and cute design techniques, traditional Xiqin Embroidery patterns are transformed into lovely IP images, such as “Qin Xiaohu” and “Qin Mudan”, bringing consumers a relaxed and pleasant visual experience; at the interactive level, develop spliceable and combinable embroidery decorative paintings, educational toys with embroidery elements and other products, allowing consumers to have fun in hands-on operation; at the experience level, through carrying out embroidery experience courses, intangible cultural heritage inheritor meetings and other activities, allowing consumers to participate in the creation process of Xiqin Embroidery in person and obtain a sense of achievement and satisfaction from creation. This multi-dimensional entertainment experience can shorten the distance between consumers and Xiqin Embroidery culture and deepen their cognition and identity with the culture in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere(Wang Xin-xin,2024).

IV. Design Innovation Paths and Practical Cases of Xiqin Embroidery Cultural and Creative Products

Based on the above four-dimensional value system and combined with the cultural connotation and artistic characteristics of Xiqin Embroidery, this study proposes three design innovation paths of Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products from the aspects of symbolic image design, branded series design and experiential interactive design, and implements three physical designs: Qin Xiaohu Portable Bookmark, Qin Style Pattern Silk Scarf and Intangible Cultural Heritage DIY Embroidery Material Package (Fig.2, Fig.3, Fig4). The design is generated based on LoRA model training, and the same applies hereinafter (Shi Wen-qi,2025).

1. Symbolic Image Design: Extraction and Translation of Cultural Genes

Symbols are visual and cultural carriers that carry meanings and can refer to and convey cultural connotations. “Cultural identity is premised on the identification of cultural symbols and based on the identification of cultural identity, and its core is the cultural subject's choice and recognition of cultural values”. The core of Xiqin Embroidery symbolic image design is to extract representative cultural genes and transform them into visual symbols that meet modern aesthetic needs through scientific translation methods.

First, construct a Xiqin Embroidery cultural symbol library. Through field investigation and literature

research, systematically sort out the patterns, colors and needlework of Xiqin Embroidery, and screen out symbolic elements with regional identification and cultural representation. Pattern symbols mainly include auspicious animals (tiger, lion, kylin), flowers (peony, lotus, pomegranate), geometry (cloud pattern, meander pattern, water pattern); color symbols mainly include traditional five colors such as cinnabar red, bright yellow, navy blue, grass green and ink black; needlework symbols mainly include seed stitch, gold-wrapping embroidery, appliqué embroidery, plain stitch, etc. Second, translate and reconstruct the extracted symbols. Adopt the methods of abstract simplification, deconstruction and recombination and semantic translation to retain the core cultural connotation of the symbols while removing cumbersome details to adapt to the needs of modern design. Finally, apply the translated symbols to product design. Select appropriate symbolic elements and application methods according to the function and positioning of different products(Shi Wen-Qi,2023)

Case 1: Qin Xiaohu Metal Bookmark (Fig.2) Based on the classic town house tiger pattern of Xiqin Embroidery for symbol extraction, the prototype is taken from the tiger head shape of the old embroidery piece in Longxian County, Baoji. The iconic features of big round eyes, wide mouth and short forehead lines are retained, redundant hair details are eliminated, and flat abstract reconstruction is carried out to shape the "Qin Xiaohu" IP image. The main body adopts brass etching process, and the local edge is embossed with concave and convex to imitate the texture of gold-wrapping embroidery. The color matching uses Xiqin cinnabar red paint to embellish the eyes. The product is oriented to student groups, realizes daily touch through stationery carriers, completes the cognitive accumulation of Xiqin auspicious animal culture in use, and implements cultural and educational value.



Fig 2. Qin Xiaohu Metal Bookmark Rendering

Note: The design retains the core characteristics of Xiqin Embroidery tiger pattern and adopts modern metal craft. Source: Author's design.

2. Branded Series Design: Systematic Transmission of Cultural Value

Branding is an important means to improve the market competitiveness and cultural influence of cultural and creative products. The branded series design of Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products aims to systematically transmit the cultural value of Xiqin Embroidery and enhance consumers' brand identity and loyalty by creating a unified brand image and product matrix. Establish the main brand line of "Qin Style Elegance · Craftsmanship Inheritance", divide into three product series: Auspicious Animals, Blooming Flowers and Craftsmanship, and unify the color system and visual specifications(Chen Si-xing,2025).

Case 2: Qin Style Peony Cloud Pattern Silk Scarf (Fig.3) Belonging to the "Blooming Flowers and Prosperity" series, select Xiqin Embroidery peony and rolling cloud patterns as the core visual elements, break up the original full-spread traditional composition, split the flower units for dislocation recombination, improve the original high-saturation color matching, reduce the purity of red and green, and adapt to modern dressing aesthetics. The fabric is made of 16 momme mulberry silk, the edge is digitally printed to simulate the outline of appliqué embroidery, and the local precision machine embroidery reproduces the particle texture of seed stitch. The product is oriented to urban youth and cultural tourists, and can be used as a scarf, hair band and decorative accessory. It unifies the brand visual language, forms brand recognition through serialized products, and constructs emotional identity from the level of wearing aesthetics.



Fig 3. Qin Style Peony Cloud Pattern Silk Scarf Rendering

Note: The design combines digital printing and machine embroidery to restore the texture of Xiqin Embroidery. Source: Author's design.

3. Experiential Interactive Design: Deep Construction of Cultural Identity

Experiential interactive design is a design method that focuses on audience participation and interactive experience. It constructs a multi-sensory and immersive interactive relationship between people, objects and space, allowing people to change from passive viewing to active perception, thereby forming profound cultural memory and emotional identity. Implement the design from three layers: physical DIY, offline experience and digital interaction(Wang Juan.2026).

Case 3:Mini Xiqin Embroidery DIY Experience Material Package (Fig. 4). Classified into the "Craftsmanship Embroidery Art" experience product line, it contains cut linen base, color-divided embroidery threads, simple embroidery hoop and needlework instructions. The patterns select two classic simplified patterns: Qin Xiaohu and Small Pomegranate, and the supporting tutorials mark two core needlework of Xiqin: plain stitch and seed stitch. The size is controlled at 10cm×10cm, and the finished product can be made into a refrigerator magnet or key pendant. The product focuses on hands-on participation attributes and is suitable for primary and secondary school club activities and intangible cultural heritage research classes. The process of users embroidering by themselves realizes the transformation from passive viewing to active practice, and completes the three-layer cultural identity closed loop of cognition-emotion-behavior.



Fig 4. DIY Embroidery Material Package Rendering

Note: The design simplifies the embroidery process and is suitable for beginners to experience.

Source: Author's design.

V. Conclusion and Prospect

From the perspective of cultural identity, this study deeply excavates the cultural connotation and artistic characteristics of Xiqin Embroidery, constructs a four-dimensional value system of culture, aesthetics, education and entertainment for Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products, and proposes three design innovation paths: symbolic image design, branded series design and experiential interactive design. The practicability of the design paths is verified through three practical cultural and creative cases. The research shows that Xiqin Embroidery, as an important carrier of Qin culture, contains rich cultural and artistic values. Through scientific and systematic design innovation, it can be transformed into cultural and creative products that meet modern lifestyle and aesthetic needs. These products can not only meet consumers' material and spiritual needs, but also enhance the public's regional cultural identity and national pride imperceptibly, and promote the living inheritance of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

Although certain achievements have been made in this study, there are still some deficiencies: first, there is a lack of large-scale empirical research on the market demand and consumer preference of Xiqin Embroidery cultural and creative products; second, the research on the digital transformation and innovative application of Xiqin Embroidery needlework technology is not deep enough; third, the industrialization transformation path of design results needs to be further explored.

Future research can be carried out from the following aspects: first, carry out extensive market research, subdivide the needs of different circles such as teenagers, cultural tourism consumption and household products, and optimize the product design direction; second, combine new technologies such as 3D printing and intelligent digital weaving to expand the cross-border application of embroidery elements in daily use and clothing cultural and creative products; third, build a collaborative research and development platform of "local intangible cultural heritage workshop+university design + local cultural and creative enterprises" to accelerate the landing and mass production of design results.

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