The Cultural Innovative Product Design Based on the Regional Culture

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ABSTRACT

The expression of the cultural characteristics is an important means to improve the added value of the products. And the cultural innovative product design based on the regional culture is the effective way for developing the innovative industry of the regional culture and enhancing the design level of the innovative products. From the analysis of the hierarch and connotation of the product system design this article studied the method how to incorporate the regional cultural features into the product system design and put forward the two methods of longitudinal and transverse design and verified the methods by the specific example of the product design.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the cultural innovative industries in global scope has become a pillar of economic development in many counties. The Cultural innovative industry in China started relatively late but its development is fast and the attention is attached to it from the government, enterprises and academy. The report of the 18th Representative Commission of the Chinese Communist Party clearly puts forward “to carry out the strategy of innovation-driven development”, advocates a plot with a global perspective to promote innovation, emphasizes the important position of the cultural innovative industry in the national economy and points out that “the design is also the first product”. This shows that the innovative product design has risen to the position from enterprise behavior to the national economic and social development strategy. With this background the innovative products (especially the products embodying the characteristics of the regional culture) seems more important. The innovative products design with the evident national and regional cultural features have become the common focus of the designers and theoretical researchers.

THE DESIGN OF THE REGIONAL CULTURE AND THE INNOVATIVE CULTURAL PRODUCTS

Dirk Hoff thinks that design is “skin of the culture” because culturally the design is a kind of external form that may be looked, listened and with skin mixture. Culture is a kind of soil pregnant with excellent design and the product always presents before the
people in a certain cultural face. And it plays the role of spreading the features of the local culture. This is the right property of the culture. The elegance of the IKEA products roots to the profound traditional handcraft industry in Scandinavia area and also to the study of the modern design; the finesse of the SONY product design comes from the thinking of the country’s resources and has the greatest esteem for the oriental philosophy of “being small, smart and empty”. All these excellent designs are all derived from the deep understanding of the regional culture. Thus, in the daily product design, the local cultural breath can be protruded. On the contrary, if we design the products based on the view-point of the technology without thinking of the cultural features of the products it is very easy for us to stuck in the simple formation and even to fall down in the Mired of imitation and plagiarism.

Kroeber thinks that culture is a set of behaviors, and the relevant behavioral pattern. This pattern is popular in a particular period of time in a group [2]. Exactly, culture refers to a country or a nation’s history, geography, local conditions and customs, traditions, way of life, literature and art, behavior standards, way of thinking, value, etc. While the so-called “regional culture” refers to the behavior and thought patterns for the specific people in a certain scope of space. The difference of the behavior patterns and thinking modes in different area has led to the difference of the regional culture. The regional culture and culture in concept, therefore, are not much different. The regional culture pays much attention to the research of the cultural origin of the specific people, function, behavior, beliefs, habits, social organizations in a certain space range and find out the local color by using of the above researches[3]. Because of this, when people research the relationship between culture and the design of innovative products they would take the regional culture as a gripper and the specific culture in a certain area or a certain nationality and as the starting point to study its application in the design of the innovative products. The strong invasion of the western culture in the globalization becomes more clear, and in the design of urban planning, architectural landscape, innovative products and other area of design, the phenomenon of identical forms and stereotyped design appeared more and more severe. At present, people have realized the importance of the innovative design based on the regional culture. And in urban planning,[4] architectural design[5], landscape sketch design [6] and so on, the people have carried out the outstanding and fruitful design practice. In the field of the innovative design, the existing research results are more focused on the tourist souvenirs [7-9], and the product packaging graphic design [10]. Due to the direct link with the regional culture, the tourist product design has become the first hot spot. It plays particular emphasis on the principle to design the tourist souvenirs based on the regional culture, the developing mode and the design practice, etc. At the same time, the product packaging, logo design, and graphic design work are all the hot spot to research. The regional culture often explicit for modeling symbols with specific regional characteristics including architecture, clothing, embroidery, printing and dyeing, ceramics and other material and cultural symbols. The extracted symbols of body block, such as patterns, lines, colors are very suitable for application in graphic design and gain the recognition from the consumers.

However, the design of the innovative products is far more than the category of the tourist souvenirs and the packaging design. The development of the cultural innovative industry in the successful area has proved this. The design of the theme park, “China dinosaur” broken through the limitation of resources by innovative design. The enlarging effect of the dinosaur further prolongs the industry chain and develops the
cartoon derivative products and other more than one thousand kinds of other toys. Thus, an industry chain integrating the theme parks, leisure, tourism, cartoon network etc. into one has been gradually formed and it has become a developing model of the cultural innovative industry in Jiangsu province. From the above, we can see that the design of the innovative products based on the regional culture is not limited to a particular model or one kind of product development and it should expand the influence of the characteristic culture by the design of the derivative products and thus the innovative and cultural industry with a brand effect would be formed. The key point shows in two aspects: the features of the characteristics and systematic. The emphasis of the regional cultural characteristics is to shape the distinctive brand image and the emphasis of the systematic is in order to expand the ranges of the products and to strengthen the service image of a brand. And the innovative product design based on the regional culture is just proposed for the realization of this goal.

THE DESIGN METHOD OF THE INNOVATIVE CULTURAL PRODUCTS BASED ON THE REGIONAL CUTURE

As one of the important method of modern product design, product design is the necessary result of the research and development of the systematic theory, information science and the design research. It raises the design concept from the physical level to the one of a complex system. The product design is considered as a process system and it belongs to a larger system [11]. At the same time the idea of the systematic theory is applied into the product design. From the perspective of human-machine-environment system, considering the relationship with the social production, life style and manufacturing technology, aesthetic fashion and the production-use-abandoning of the products we begin the design.[12].

On the one hand, not only the product design is regarded as an engineering system but also the product itself is a system. This is embodied on three levels: (1) The product itself is system made of different parts for realizing a certain function; (2) The relationship between the products and the product and the people also constitutes system. The study of the man-machine system in industrial design is just the right case for this; (3) The relationship between the whole life cycle of the production-use-scrap-recycling of the product and environment can always be understood as a system. On the other hand, people may lay emphasis on the different levels of the corresponding products and the methods of the product design (table 1 ). (1) In order to improve the interchangeability and versatility of the spare parts the methods of standardization and modular designs are often adopted. (2) Considering the relationship between the products and the users the emotional and interesting designs are often adopted. In order to protrude the common features of the product family and to make the same brand products with unified identification features the methods of series designs are adopted. This is the essential method for product design. (3) In order to make our products reduce their damage to the environment as much as possible the methods of ecological and green designs are often used. We should think of using the green materials and the reuse of it after their scrapping.
TABLE I. THE LEVELS OF THE PRODUCT SYSTEM AND THE CORRESPONDING DESIGN METHODS.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The levels of the product system</th>
<th>The methods of Product design</th>
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<tr>
<td>Products themselves</td>
<td>Standardization, modularization, universal design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product- product /product-man</td>
<td>Serialization/product family design, humanized and emotional design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product-environment</td>
<td>Green design of product\ ecological design</td>
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1. The essence of the product innovative based on the regional culture is to develop the new products with the features of the rich regional culture. At the same time the ranges of the products may be prolonged and a certain brand effect may be formed. Thus, the products become a kind of business card that spreads the regional culture. For this purpose the key performance shows in two aspects: First, the innovative products should properly express the characteristics of the regional culture and get rid of the stereotyped face of the products; On the other hand, much attention should be paid to the design and development of the cultural derivative to expand the influential of the regional culture. Corresponding to this, in the practice of the product design. First, we should seize the characteristic symbols with the regional culture from the various cultural modeling symbols we should extract the most representative ones and apply them to the design and development of the new products; second, we should develop the diversity of the cultural derivative products. The most appropriate method is to design the products in serration and to form the cultural characteristics of the product family.

Figure 1. The Product Design Method Based on Regional Culture.

The product design method based on the regional culture is shown in fig. 1. First, we extract the typical cultural symbols with characteristics from some kind of the regional culture. The symbol may be classic architectural form, the decoration of a nationality handcraft product or a religious art. And then we begin to design the innovative products in the transverse and longitudinal ways. (1) The train of thought for the transverse product design is to extract the single modeling symbol to carry out the different type of the innovative product design. These products have the common cultural features and modeling semantics, and form a series of products. (2) The train of
thought for the longitudinal products is to extract multiple modeling symbols with the same topic. And from this we start to design the innovative family products with the same category. These products have the same cultural appeal and form the cultural brand effect with the distinct regional characteristics.

DESIGN CASE

The stone carving in Dazu, Chongqing is well-known through the country. The main content of the stone carving is the Buddhist culture and has the characteristics of secularization, adaptation and popularization at the same time. It has both the aesthetic consciousness of our nation and the local features of the Bashu culture. It is a masterpiece of the fuse of the Buddhist culture and the traditional culture in China. “Double Bridge” State-level Economic and Technology Development Zone in Dazu, Chongqing has a long history for producing the hardware products and has a certain competitive power in our country. It is known as the “hometown of the hardware products”. The Science and Technology Commission in Dazu area conducts the “Dazu Cup” industrial design contest once a year. The aim of the contest intends to combine the local Buddhist stone carving culture with hardware industry to develop the products with the market prospect.

According to the design method shown in fig.1, to conduct the innovative design of the hardware products based on the Dazu local culture, first we should extract the cultural symbols with the most distinctive local culture and then carry out the design in transverse and longitudinal ways. The most distinctive local cultural symbol is the Buddhist cultural stone carving of the Treasure Top-Mountain. Among them, the most typical one is the 8-meter high stone carving: the “Six Cycle” stone carving. It embodies figuratively the core teaching of Karma in Buddhist culture. The connotation of semantics reflected in product design can be very intuitively corresponding to different status of the same product when used. The products families located in different levels may mean the moral life (time). According to the thinking of the longitudinal design shown in fig.1 and the cultural connotation of the stone carving for the “six metempsychosis” and with the reference to the feature of the six equal division and its visual characteristics as shown in fig.2. We respectively designed the lamps and lanterns desk calendar and spoons. Among them, because the design of the lamp and the lanterns has the structure of the “six metempsychoses” of the stone carving and the modeling feature. When the lamp is turned on the six fan pages of the lamp will rotate 360 degrees around the intermediate shaft. This means the moral life. The design of the desk calendar based on the characteristics of the stone carving structure shows the Gregorian and Lunar calendar through the transformation of the different levels and the correspondent relationship. The design of the spoon is divided into six series of products with six different styles. According to the people’s pursuit of the happy life, we make some difference of the grain decoration on the handles. This accords with the artistic characteristics of the Dazu grottoes Buddhist culture in which the Buddhist culture is combined with the secular life culture.
Dazu grottoes take the Buddhist culture as the theme and the modeling includes many Buddhist stories and the carving persons. Among them there are a lot of typical figures in various postures. If we take these distinctive figures’ postures as the prototype and through the extraction, abstraction, simplification and application we may create a product family that embodies the Buddhist culture vividly. According to the thinking for the longitudinal design as shown in fig.1, we select 3 typical postures of the Buddhist figures’ modeling in Dazu grottoes to extract the characteristic modeling curve. After a further abstraction and simplification (the design process is shown in fig. 3) and finally we apply these modeling features into the innovative design of the office stationery product family. The new products contain compasses tape divider and paper knife. They are made to have the modeling language of the same material, color and surface treatment. They have the same cultural theme and conform to the requirements to develop the traditional hardware manufacturing in Dazu county. It’s just the right case to combine the traditional local culture with the modern design and manufacturing.
CONCLUSION

The innovative product design based on the regional culture is a practical method to improve the added value of the products as well as an effective way to spreads the excellent regional culture. By analyzing the relationship between the regional culture and the innovative product design we find that product design is the important method to realize the combination of the innovative design with the regional culture. By analyzing the idea and methods of the product design we put forward the two ways based on the regional culture and through the specific design example, the two ways have been verified. We hope what we have done will offer a beneficial reference for enhancing the design level of the innovative cultural products in our country. And also we hope that we will do more and better for the cause of inheriting and developing the traditional regional culture for our motherland.

REFERENCES