

A Literature Review on Museum Merchandising and Branding based on Cultural Heritage Creative Design

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Abstract: The cultural and creative industries and the massive dissemination of information in the age of digital media provide new vehicles for the transmission and expression of cultural heritage and use the language of design to capture people's sensibilities, express cultural connotations, and bring the value of history to audiences through new media. Museums, as institutions of culture collection and dissemination, also want to increase their visibility by creating their brand. At the same time, as an important part of urban tourism, museum branding is also conducive to enhancing people's understanding and identification with local culture. For museums, the merchandising and branding of museum-based cultural heritage is an important part of museum marketing, in which museums' cultural heritage design products also tend to function as both consumer promotion and cultural expression. This paper is a literature review using methods that include analysis of literature database platforms and interdisciplinary research and discusses the impact of product design on the branding of museums' cultural heritage. Focusing on the relationship between museum branding and communication with audiences, as well as further study of dialectical thinking on the cultural dimensions of museum product expression, thus identifying key knowledge and research processes in this area.

Keywords: Museum Branding; Museums Merchandising; Cultural Heritage Creative Design.

1. Introduction

From an early age, Museums have been marketing and promoting the economic benefits of museums through the creation of museum shops and branding. In the UK, as well as in other countries, several policies have been implemented since the mid-1980s. Museums have been encouraged to develop management skills in marketing as well as income generation [1]. Meanwhile, in the mid-20th century, many museums had already started to reproduce and sell works, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the British Museum [2]. The development of museum merchandising in China started relatively late but has developed rapidly. Relevant policies were launched in 2006 to promote the development of cultural creativity in museums [3], and by 2017 the sales of cultural creative products of the Palace Museum reached RMB 1.5 billion with over 10,000 products [4], all reflect the huge commercial and brand value of museum products.

Meanwhile, the museum brand communicates its commercial value while conveying its cultural connotations to the audience, possessing a cultural education and entertainment function. The object of the edutainment experience, unlike the subject and any other form of consumption, in which the consumer expresses his personality and adds his response to the experience [5], and this is the information that the museum brand wants to transmit to the audience. Museum brands should focus on traditional culture and heritage, which, as Mats Urde et al. describe in their 2007 research, heritage can provide the foundation for positioning uniqueness that can generate competitive advantages, such as translating into higher prices and profit margins and retaining customers who have a meaningful attachment to heritage; At the same time, heritage can add to a brand's value proposition through depth, authenticity, and credibility; heritage can also help institutions to build a special relationship with a range of non-

customer stakeholders[6]. The heritage and culture that the museum brand has is therefore a valuable and meaningful part of itself.

As the identity symbol of a museum, the brand needs design to highlight its uniqueness, to make a deep impression, and to communicate its values and meaning to people. Design and craftsmanship are what create the champions of materiality and beauty in culture. They combine thought and production, ideas and products, and can achieve this relatively quickly [7], design creates more ways to play with and value for museum merchandise, and well-designed cultural heritage products which present communicable cultural content and make it recognizable and also represent the background from which it originates and may also have a playful dimension. At the same time, these products have additional functions, just as after being taken home, they may continue to narrate the experience of the visit and expand it [2]. It is evident that design is particularly important and an aspect to focus on for the shaping of museum-branded merchandise.

This paper undertakes a review of the key literature on museum branding and merchandising and considers the relevant research themes while focusing on the issues and solutions that museums need to solve and reflect upon. Although the main focus of this paper is on museum branding and case studies in China, it is believed that the data will have wider international application and value, and will further engage the attention and reflection of museums.

2. Research Methodology

This paper is based on a study of the literature related to museum branding, and is based on the selection and collation of literature through Scopus, CNKI, Google Scholar, and other database platforms, mainly on "museum cultural and creative products", "museum brand design", "museum merchandising" and "museum-digital communication" and to understand the relevant research background. An

interdisciplinary literature search was conducted, covering economics, marketing, sociology, muse-ology, communication, and design. Also, reviewing case studies of museums in different countries, the cross-cultural nature of the study was considered, with a comparative examination of literature from China and different countries, with the languages being mainly Chinese and English. A total of 133 literature items were selected for the study, including 31 papers in English and 109 papers in Chinese. The literature was compared and studied to be able to understand the direction of relevant research over the last decade or so.

3. Limitations

All data and references mentioned in this paper are based on specific database platforms, mainly on Scopus, CNKI, and Google Scholar, and all references not available or displayed online outside these database platforms are excluded. Also, due to translation issues and cultural differences in English and Chinese vocabulary, there is a chance that the search terms may cause some degree of bias in the results, but this has been avoided as much as possible. Finally, references were included only in English and Chinese, but not in other

languages. As the study focuses on museums and the phenomenon of cultural creativity in China, the results are relatively more in the Chinese language and the study is more oriented towards Chinese social and behavioral perceptions.

4. Data Analysis

4.1. Data Analysis of English Literature

For the study of the English literature database, two keywords were selected for the search, 'museum branding' and 'museum merchandising', to visualize as much as possible the context of the literature related to the study. The first was to review of the books studied, and the Google Books Ngram Viewer was used for the book analysis (Figure 1), where the keyword 'museum strategy' was also added to give a curve that shows the overall direction of the bibliographic research. The research on museum branding has tended to fluctuate, but is generally on the rise, especially in recent years due to globalization and the growth of tourism, with research and discussion increasing year on year. Discussion of the merchandising of museums has declined in recent years, but remains stable, with more space available compared to museum branding and strategy.

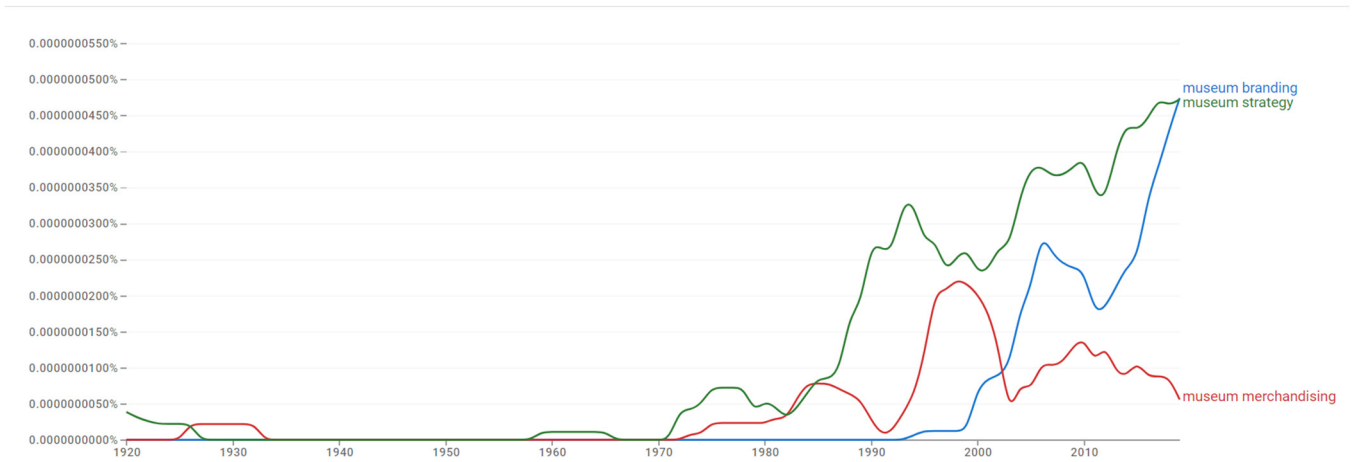


Figure 1. Bibliography Review on Google Books Ngram Viewer

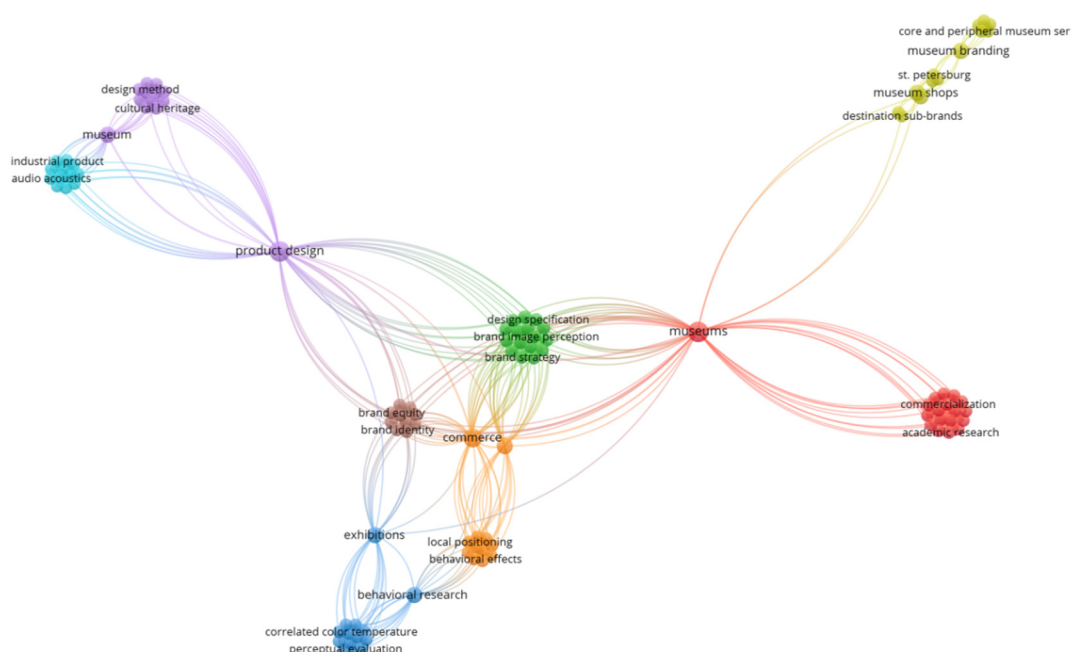


Figure 2. English literature keyword research in VOS viewer

Secondly, journals and papers were searched after analyzing the published books, mainly through the Scopus platform. 43 results were obtained by searching for the keywords in Scopus. In order to obtain literature and research more in line with the current situation, the year of the literature was set to the last ten years and 31 results were obtained. Subjects covered the disciplines of business, management, accounting, computer science, social sciences, engineering, arts and humanities, economics, econometrics and finance, mathematics, and materials science. Removing two unrelated papers left 29 papers, which were placed in VOS viewer and retrieved a total of 199 keywords, of which 109 were associated, showing that the keywords in this field of study were related to museums, behavioral research, exhibitions, marketing, business, and product design, with subcategories focusing on user behavioral habits, buying styles, human perception, museum shops, souvenirs, and brand marketing and management (see Figure 2).

4.2. Data Analysis of Chinese Literature

The search of Chinese literature databases was mainly conducted through the Chinese CNKI platform, mainly for

journals and theses, and due to language conventions and translation issues, the keywords "museum and cultural creation" were added to the research to achieve more accurate results. The search for museums and branding and design in CNKI brought up 109 results, with a limit of 102 results for the last ten years. The disciplines covered archives and museums, tourism, art, calligraphy, sculpture and photography, industrial general technology and equipment, journalism and media, cultural economy, business economics, culture, architecture, administration, education, natural sciences, computers, and other disciplines. Of these, 42 were theses and 56 were journals and conference. By removing 4 irrelevant papers, 98 papers were obtained, and a total of 312 relevant keywords were listed in VOS viewer(see Figure 3), which were related to museums, cultural and creative industries, brand image, art derivatives, cultural consumption, redesign, commercial operation, visual communication, new media, market, business and product design, among which the aspects that have received more attention in recent years are a cultural expression of museums' cultural and creative industries, market experience, digitalization, and interactions, etc.

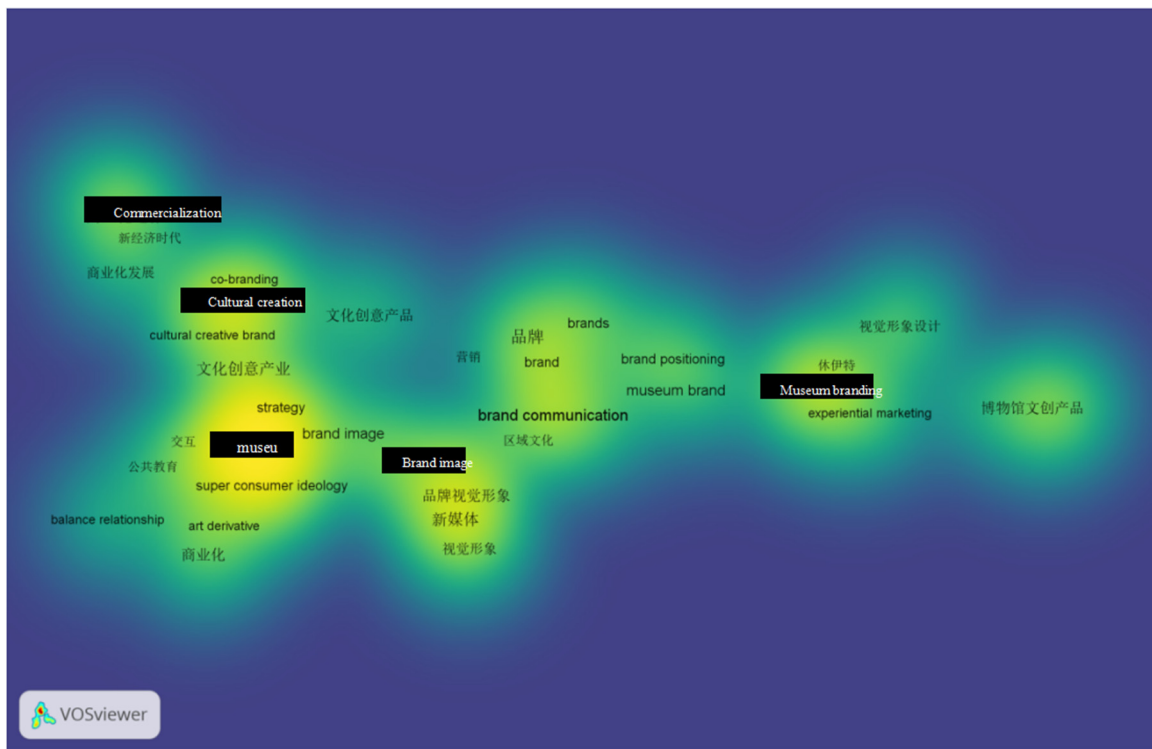


Figure 3. Chinese literature keyword research in VOS viewer

4.3. Results

This paper compares statistical results from a study of the literature on museum merchandising, branding, and communication, comparing the relevant literature over the last decade or so (Table 1). The literature covers both Chinese

and English, and for keyword searches, it can be concluded from the data results that research on the topic has been less researched in recent years in the English literature compared to the Chinese literature, while the areas of research are relatively intersecting, but the direction and focus of the research are different.

Table 1. Literature Search Comparison

	<i>Search results</i>	<i>Results for the last ten years</i>	<i>Unrelated literature</i>	<i>Final Literature Count</i>	<i>Related keyword quantity</i>
<i>English</i>	43	31	2	29	109
<i>Chinese</i>	109	102	4	98	312

In terms of research content, it is clear from the English

literature that for the Western context, the merchandising of

museums has developed earlier and is relatively well established, mostly focusing on the commercial operation of museums themselves, but also on the revenue generated by museum merchandising and retailing for museums. However not much research has been considered by scholars on museum shops and product design, and there is no systematic research analyzing consumer buying behavior towards brands of products derived from museum culture, as well as consumer loyalty to brands, user experience, user profiles, product design, motivations for buying museum memorabilia, and extending from the case of Chinese museums to Western Museum brands [8] different consumer purchasing habits, etc. Museum branding and museum shop revenues are in turn an important part of museum revenue and education [9] and are an important part that should not be overlooked. Also, due to the differences between the Chinese and Western social systems, Chinese consumers are very different from other consumers in terms of product aesthetics, purchasing styles, and access to information, which is also a research direction that needs to be considered. There has been relatively more research on museum cultural goods in Chinese literature. Due to the development of the travel industry in recent years and the new generation of young people's love for museums and history culture, museum cultural and creative products have become a very popular research direction, however, there has been relatively little research on branding. In particular, the development of digital media in recent years has provided new ideas for museum branding and design forms, so it is well worthwhile to research in-depth museum cultural and creative products and activities based on experience, focusing on the guidance of branding on consumer emotions, and the design of cultural and creative products with the participation of new media.

5. Discussion

5.1. Museums Cultural Heritage Merchandising

As a sub-category of cultural heritage goods, products and services with promotional and commercial purposes, with strategic lines, designed to add value to visiting exhibitions or museums, are defined as museum merchandise[2]. It can be both a commodity in itself and educational and carries the value of culture. In many cases, people buy it in museum gift shops, where it takes on the function of extending and enhancing the experience[7]. Some people buy museum cultural products as souvenirs, symbolic reminders described as metaphors for events, places, or experiences, full of meaning and consequences[10]. In China, on the other hand, products designed from the museum's cultural heritage can be regarded as cultural creation products for the museum. Museums need to sustain museum income through commercial activities and also to continue the experience of visiting through museum merchandise. From an experiential perspective, consumption is the experience that comes from the interaction between a subject, which is the consumer, and an object. It is only from the interaction of these two entities that an experience can be created. And the museum adds consumption to a more experiential and cultural value. The event of interaction between subject and object is added to a creative interpretation of cultural consumption. The consumerization of art and culture can be interpreted as a form of edutainment as individuals enjoy themselves and learn at the same time[5], however, these marketing research

questions do not exclude the value or even the possibility of a better understanding of how art and cultural displays can be enjoyed in museums [1]. but rather deepen this possibility. People are interested in merchandising products beyond the privilege of being just a commercial asset but as part of an overall experience[7]. It is therefore worth looking at how museums can be branded through marketing and how their cultural heritage can be better merchandised to capture audiences.

The design of museum cultural heritage is not only limited to tangible goods[11] but also digital products and experiences can be a very important aspect of it. Also, with the development of media and digital communication, the use of digital media to build the brand value of the museum itself is an important part of the museum's work. Museums are beginning to create new experiences for their audiences through different digital approaches, such as extending the museum experience beyond the museum through websites and social media or using cultural heritage exhibitions to communicate their complex values and promote lifelong learning for their visitors. [12] Digitization has enabled more ways of expressing the design of cultural heritage in museums and has created the conditions for the communication and marketing of museum products, bringing museum merchandising into the online space[13] and generating more financial income for museums. Thanks to information technology, the 'e-factor' or entertainment factor has become a driving force in the global economy [14] and a trend for major museums to make technological transformations, that is, to create unique brands and experiences.

5.2. Museum Branding

A museum brand is a name, symbol, design, terminology, or mark element unique to a museum that distinguishes its products and services from other competitors in the same field, either in a single or a combination of elements[15]. As Fiona McLean [16] writes, museums have recognized since the 1980s that the development of the museum experience does not necessarily compromise the integrity of the museum. Instead, museum products became part of the museum's brand strategy as symbols of the museum brand and part of the museum experience.

For the audience, they can go into the museum not only to see the exhibition but also to further experience the more diverse public services provided by the museum. The audience's experience can also consist of more aspects, and what they see, use or even experience can be included in the category of cultural creativity for branding and operation [17].

The study of museum branding can be informed not only by the culture of the museum but also by other branding studies, in which museums can draw inspiration from other cultural brands. Similarly, research into brand values will be applicable in a wide range of contexts and has its universals, so museum brands can also learn from them. At the same time, different brand categories are specific and require particular analysis and research for their brand type, which is the responsibility and concern of museum design and marketing departments. At the same time, brands provide funding and objects, and museums and heritage provide a rich source of inspiration. This collaboration is a permeation of skills and has blurred boundaries, with brands taking on the role of guardians of their heritage, while museums simultaneously hold their marketing and merchandising skills[11]. Awareness at the level of recall further influences choice by

affecting how brands are considered and selected [18]. The quality, design, and reputation of a product can greatly influence the perception of the brand in the public mind and therefore the choice of the audience, making the design of the product particularly important.

6. Conclusion

This paper provides an in-depth study of the literature on museum branding, merchandising, and cultural product design. Firstly, the background of the literature on branding and merchandising of museums was researched and searched, and a total of 133 papers were obtained for the study, in the languages of Chinese and English. The study shows that the merchandising and branding of museums are of great importance to museums and have gained increasing attention in recent years.

Secondly, through the comparison and analysis of Chinese and English literature, the areas that need to be focused on for future research in museum branding-related fields are identified. Due to the different social systems and cultures of China and other countries, the focus of this research is relatively different, but comprehensively, the direction of the research should focus on (1) the analysis of consumers' motivation and behavior towards the purchase of museum brand products. (2) The experience and emotion of audience participation in the purchase and activities of museum cultural and creative products. (3) Research on the new creativity and prospects brought by the use of new media in the design of cultural and creative products for museum brands. Finally, the paper discusses the views of different scholars on museum branding and museum merchandising, explores the views and perspectives of cultural merchandise design and branding in museums at different levels and various disciplines, and conducts further in-depth reflections and research as a theoretical basis for future research.

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