

INTEGRATION OF CHINESE YI TRADITIONAL CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY DESIGNS: A SCOPING REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Yi traditional culture is the source of inspiration for its contemporary designs. However, with rapid social developments and changes, the integration of Yi traditional cultural elements with contemporary designs has changed. There is a dilemma of how best to integrate Yi traditional cultural elements into the designs of various products. Therefore, this research reviews related articles published between 2010 and 2020 through an electronic database search. The purpose is to examine the relationship between the Yi traditional cultural elements and contemporary product designs, in order to determine the current integration of Yi traditional cultural elements in Chinese contemporary designs. This review hopes to identify knowledge gaps for future research. The review was screened by two independent authors for inclusions in the analysis, and used the Crowe Critical Appraisal Tool (CCAT) for quality assessment. Scoping Review Guidelines and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statements were used to report items. The research findings revealed that designers faced difficulties in integrating Yi cultural elements in contemporary designs.

Keywords: Chinese Yi, Contemporary Design, Integration, Traditional Cultural Elements, Scoping Review

INTRODUCTION

The Yi Ethnic group is an ancient ethnic group in China. The people of Yi ethnicity are mainly found in Southwestern China. Chinese Yi traditional culture has a long history, and its unique cultural, artistic and aesthetic values make it distinguished from all other Chinese ethnicities (Jigu, 2018). Integration of culture and design can help increase the added value of products and help arouse consumers' sense of identity (Wang et al., 2014). Numerous studies have shown that Yi traditional culture is regarded as the source of inspiration for contemporary designs (Li & Zhang, 2016; Ye, 2016). Many Yi traditional elements have been applied in China's contemporary designs in recent years (Xu, 2020; Zhu et al., 2017). However, Yi ethnic areas have undergone rapid developments in technology, changing modes of production, as well as changes in lifestyle and consumption. Major changes are said to have also taken place in the integration of Yi traditional cultural elements with contemporary designs, creating challenges in the process of inheritance and innovation (Zhou, 2003). Despite this, there is a lack of systematic review to present synthetic evidence. Gathering this evidence is important to enhance the integration of local traditional culture and contemporary product designs, beside sustain Yi traditional culture and create novel design products.

In this scoping review, articles related to Yi traditional culture that were published between 2010 and 2020 were reviewed. The purpose is to examine the relationship between the Yi traditional cultural elements and contemporary product designs, in order to determine the current integration of Yi traditional cultural elements in Chinese contemporary designs. This research will address the following objectives:

- 1) To study the integration of Yi traditional cultural elements in contemporary designs
- 2) To identify Yi traditional cultural factors in contemporary designs.

Concept Definition

The explanation of the relevant terms in this study are as follows:

Yi Traditional Cultural Elements

Yi Traditional cultural elements carry a variety of cultural information. These elements can be defined as components in any visual design to express the inherent value of the design or product. In addition to their functional use, they also represent the material needs and spiritual beliefs of the Yi people and culturally, they are sustainable medium. Yi traditional cultural elements reflect the commonalities in traditional culture of the Yi people. Moreover, Yi cultural elements have a high degree of visual recognition and can stimulate the perception and imagination of the target group. Yi traditional cultural elements make the process of cultural information transmission and communication easier and more orderly.

Contemporary Design

Chinese contemporary design always emphasizes the value of traditional culture in order to improve the recognition of design products, and has a distinct cultural identity (Yi, 2020). Although it has assimilated some Western experience in its origin and development, design activities still have their unique cultural attributes. Contemporary design in China has expanded rapidly since the 1990s. By the 21st century, a relatively complete structural system has been formed (Li, 2020). It is feared that that designs that are separated from local cultural factors will appear hollow and lack foundation (Sun & Fu, 2007). It should be noted that contemporary designs in this research also refers to contemporary product designs, and they are interchangeable concepts.

METHODS

Scoping Review

This study adopted a scoping review design. The scoping review is an increasingly popular form of knowledge synthesis. It aims to map the key concepts, types of evidence and research gaps related to a specific field by systematically searching, selecting and synthesizing existing knowledge (Colquhoun et al., 2014). The results of the scoping review inform practices, programs and policies, along with providing directions for future research priorities (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Arksey and O'Malley proposed a five-stage scoping review framework to provide methodological steps. Levac, et al., (2010) added a stage to enhance this framework. Therefore, there are six stages in the framework adopted for conducting a scoping study: identifying research questions, searching for existing relevant studies, research selection, data mapping, collating, reporting results, and consultation. The new stage (consultation) is

optional, to consult with stakeholders to validate or inform research findings (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). As there was no stakeholder in this study, stages 1 to 5 were adopted as the framework to guide the study.

Research Questions

Through a scoping review, this article answers the following research questions:

- (i) What is the current situation of Yi traditional cultural elements integrated in contemporary designs?
- (ii) What are the Yi traditional cultural factors in contemporary designs?

Search Strategy

This research used English electronic databases such as Scopus, JSTOR and UPM Library, and Chinese electronic database CNKI for searching articles. The PICO format (Population, Intervention/Exposure, Comparison, Outcome) is often used to achieve a clear review process (Prasad, 2013). This research refers to the PICO format for searching. The flexibility of this format is that it allows the authors to extract the items that are appropriate for their own research. Since no comparisons was made in this review, the 'C' of PICO was dropped, and the PIO concept was used. Table 1 provides the appropriate PIO criteria and search terms for this study with reference to the PICO concept.

In addition, citation tracking was performed on the "cited by" option in Google Scholar to identify more relevant studies (Wright et al., 2014). The related articles published before 2010 were few and sporadic. However, there was an increase in articles published after 2010. Therefore, the researchers thought it would be appropriate to include academic articles published between 2010 and 2020 in the analysis.

Population	"Yi traditional culture," "Yi traditional cultural elements."
Intervention	"Contemporary design," "Contemporary product design," "Creative design."
Outcome	"Integration," "Application": "Status quo" "Knowledge gaps"

Study Selection

In the article screening process, duplicate articles were excluded and this was followed by a second screening process which was performed according to the title and abstract. Then, articles were filtered according to the full text. The selection process was completed independently by two reviewers. The data were extracted by the first reviewer and cross-checked by the second reviewer, and differences were resolved through discussions until a consensus was reached.

Data Extraction Analysis

The extracted data included: author and year of publication, research objective, Yi traditional culture elements, proposed elements, contemporary product design categories, integration status. The relevant data were summarized and the numerical analysis of the extent and nature of this research was presented using tables and graphs. The thematic analysis as

shown in Table 3.

Quality Assessment

The Crowe Critical Appraisal Tool (CCAT) Form (Crowe et al., 2012) was used to assess the quality of the included studies (Table 2). This research follows the format and user guide of version 1.4 (Crowe, 2013), which provides 22 items in 8 categories. These items are based on the nominal scale: present, absent, or not applicable, and each category is scored. The highest score is 5 points, the lowest score is 0 point, and the total score is 40 points.

Each article was scored by two independent authors using the same quality rating scale, and disagreements were resolved through discussions. Finally, each category score, total score, and total percentage for each article was written on the CCAT form to the nearest total percentage.

Author	Preliminaries	Introduction	Design	Sampling	Data collection	Ethical matters	Results	Discussion	Total score	Corresponding Total %
Zhang (2014)	4	4	3	3	3	2	4	4	27	68%
Zhang (2015)	5	5	3	5	4	3	4	4	33	83%
Zhu et al., (2017)	5	5	4	3	3	1	4	3	28	70%
Qin (2017)	4	4	3	3	4	1	3	4	26	65%
Zeng and Zhang (2018)	4	4	4	3	4	1	3	3	26	65%
Zhao and Gao (2018)	5	4	4	4	4	2	3	4	30	75%
Tang and Hu (2018)	4	5	4	4	4	2	4	4	31	78%
Wang and Wang (2019)	4	4	4	4	3	3	4	4	30	75%
Xu (2020)	4	3	4	4	4	2	4	4	29	73%
Jia (2020)	4	5	4	4	4	2	4	4	31	78%

RESULTS

Using the inclusion criteria, the author searched the database and found 213 possible articles, which were published between 2010 and 2020. The search results were exported to the reference management program Mendeley for one-step analysis, thereby identifying and eliminating irrelevant articles. In the final analysis, 10 articles were included in the review (see Table 3).

Figure 1 presents the screening process. As the first step of the screening process, there were 213 possible records in the database, out of which 19 articles were excluded due to duplications. The theories and conclusions contained in the titles and abstracts (Wright et al., 2014) of 194 articles were analyzed and 117 titles and 48 abstracts that were not suitable for this study were excluded. Twenty-nine articles were evaluated for full text, out of which 19 were excluded. These 19 articles did not pay attention to the traditional cultural elements and contemporary designs of the Yi people, and they were not published in peer-reviewed journals (Davis et al., 2014). The remaining 10 articles passed the quality assessment (see Table 2), with

a score of $\geq 65\%$. A score ≥ 60 is considered acceptable as high-quality research (Jones et al., 2008). The nature of these studies will be explained in more detail later in this section.

Table 3
THE INTEGRATION OF YI TRADITIONAL CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

Author (year)	Study purpose	Yi Traditional Culture Element	Contemporary Design	Integration Status	Summary of the Proposed Element
Zhang (2014)	To extract the main design elements of Yi costume patterns.	Sheep pattern, Tiger pattern, Torch pattern, Azalea pattern	Graphic design	Many traditional patterns with profound meanings have disappeared or are greatly reduced in Yi Clothing	
Zhang (2015)	To Promote the sustainable development of chemical lacquer ware production mainly for gifts and tourist souvenirs; to protect traditional lacquer ware craftsmanship.	Colors, Patterns/ Motifs, Types and shapes of artifacts, Raw materials, Skills and techniques	Gift and souvenir design	1. The colors and patterns on lacquerware have greater influence on product production than the shape and type of lacquerware; 2. The main raw material of lacquerware—Lacquer, has changed from natural lacquer to chemical lacquer. 3. The use of the product is transformed from practical consumption to symbolic consumption, that is, the transformation from “using” to “seeing”.	Forms/ Shapes Uses Function Local materials Craft skills Motif/Pattern
Zhu et al. (2017)	To design tourist souvenirs with characteristics of Yi culture.	Cultural elements in Yi costumes, Embroidery, Lacquerware and musical instruments	Tourism souvenir design	At present, most of the Yi tourist souvenir designs have the following three problems: 1. Lack of accurate market positioning. 2. Lack of Yi cultural characteristics. 3. Lack of innovation, imitation plagiarism is widespread.	Color Symbol
Qin (2017)	To establish a cross-boundary thinking mode to promote the design development based on Yi culture.	Totem patterns, Traditional colors, Ancient mythology	Contemporary design: cultural product design, interior design	1. Design products based on Yi culture are of low use value, but the price is very high. 2. Product design lacks	

				creativity and design sense, and does not have the characteristics of modern products. 3. There are certain differences in the aesthetics of products, and the degree of acceptance by the public is also low.
Zeng & Zhang (2018)	Explore the methods to reasonably integrate the Yi cultural elements into contemporary design.	Motifs and colors in cultural artifacts	Contemporary design	There are few innovative designs based on Yi culture. Most products lack innovation and seek short-term market benefits through imitation and plagiarism. The Yi elements are not integrated with contemporary design.
Zhao and Gao (2018)	Innovate the Yi patterns and apply them to the advertising and graphic design	Artifact pattern: flame pattern, sun pattern Clothing pattern: star pattern, claw pattern Yi cultural colours: blue, white, black, yellow, red	Advertising and Graphic Design	The application and innovation of the Yi patterns do not conform to the user's aesthetics of the times, nor do they maintain the original characteristics of the patterns.
Tang and Hu (2018)	To explore the innovative application method of fire grass cloth in modern fashion.	The fabric and production method of fire grass cloth, the forms of fire grass clothing	Modern fashion design	1. The sharp decrease in the number of fire grass leaves has brought a severe challenge to the development of the traditional handicraft fabric for fire grass cloth. 2. The innovative design of fire grass cloth has a great space for reinvention.
Wang and Wang (2019)	To understand the characteristics of the Yi traditional visual symbols and apply them	Symbols on sacrificial equipment, Totem symbols,	Native product brand design	The designer does not have a deep understanding of Yi culture. The redesign of the pattern only satisfies the

	in design.	Spiritual and cultural symbols		visual effect, and has not yet established a connection in the extension of the semantics.
Xu (2020)	To find out the Yi traditional culture in the modern furniture design feasible path.	Natural patterns, Animal patterns, Production tool Pattern, Lacquer process key colors	Modern furniture design	Traditional Yi furniture can no longer meet the daily needs of the Yi people. The new modern furniture does not meet the inherent requirements of the Yi people for traditional culture.
Jia (2020)	To protect the Yi silver ornament culture and promote the creative industry development of Yi culture.	The craftsmanship and forms of Yi silver ornaments	Cultural and creative product design	At present, there are still many shortcomings in the innovation and development of cultural creative products: 1. The sameness and lack of creativity; 2. One-sided emphasis on culture; 3. Lack of practicality.

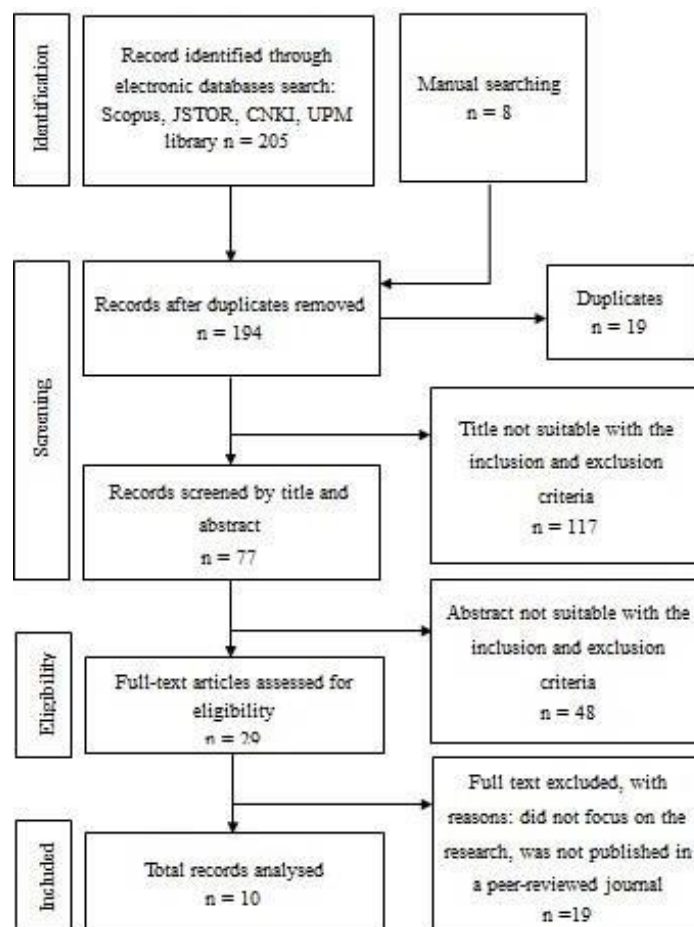


FIGURE 1
PRISMA FLOW DIAGRAM FOR SCREENING PROCESS
(MOHER ET AL., 2009)

The Relationship between the Yi Traditional Cultural Elements and Contemporary Product Designs

The 10 articles that passed the quality assessment mainly focused on the relationship between Yi traditional culture and contemporary designs. The overall purpose of these studies was to improve the Yi contemporary product designs and to enhance the sustainability of Yi traditional culture, especially Yi craft culture (Jia, 2020; Wang & Wang, 2019; Zhang, 2015). The designers (Luo, 2014; Zhang, 2014) extracted Yi traditional cultural elements from various craft objects and applied them to contemporary designs.

As shown in Table 3, a total of 32 Yi traditional cultural elements were mentioned in these studies, which had been integrated into contemporary product designs (Jia, 2020; Qin, 2017; Tang & Hu, 2018; Wang, 2019; Xu, 2020; Zeng & Zhang, 2018; Zhang, 2015; Zhang, 2014; Zhao & Gao, 2018; Zhu et al., 2017). They can be categorized into 8 items such as, forms and shapes, uses, functions, local materials, skills and techniques, motifs and patterns, as well as colors and symbols. These were applied to different design fields such as furniture, fashion, tourist souvenir, native product brand, cultural and creative designs.

The Integration Status of Yi Traditional Cultural Elements in Contemporary Designs

The research on the application of Yi traditional elements in contemporary designs has attracted much attention in the past decade. However, the findings from these research show designers have encountered difficulties in creating new and popular Yi cultural products. The main manifestations are: (i) The impact of modern industry (Chen, 2014), leading to the disappearance of many traditional elements that have profound meaning (Zhang, 2014). (ii) Yi cultural design products have few uses and functions, but they are very expensive (Qin, 2017).

(iii) Yi traditional aesthetics can no longer satisfy contemporary aesthetics. (iv) Most Yi cultural product designs lack innovation and seek short-term market benefits through imitation or plagiarism (Zeng & Zhang, 2018). (v) Designers lack understanding of the Yi culture, so the semantic extension of designs has not been connected with the culture (Wang & Wang, 2019). (vi) The reduction of local materials limits the space for innovative designs (Tang & Hu, 2018). This also exposes the problems existing in the integration of Yi traditional cultural elements in contemporary designs. First, the design products lack of Yi cultural characteristics and innovation. Second, the designers lack understanding in craft attributes due to lack of Yi cultural references. Third, there is a lack of methods to integrate Yi craft culture into product designs.

DISCUSSION

This scoping review determined relevant items such as research purpose, Yi traditional cultural elements, contemporary designs and integration status. Although this study did not perform a critical evaluation of the articles included in the review, the selected articles demonstrated a positive side to the relationship between the Yi traditional culture and contemporary designs. The sources of elements that are integrated into the contemporary designs cover various types of Yi traditional craft culture. They are considered as the sources of inspiration for product designs that are important in the early stages of design.

However, there is still a lack of procedures on how to integrate Yi traditional cultural elements into various product designs. For example, among the proposed elements, colors and patterns are the easiest to extract, so they are most frequently used in contemporary designs. However, these two elements mainly affect the aesthetics of the product designs, and consumers may refuse to buy the products because of their lack of functionality. This reveals that most product designs only pay attention to surface level cultural elements (Zhang, 2015), while ignoring other equally important elements. Fang (2020) explains that in the process of integrating local craft culture into designs, practicality and aesthetics are both important. In addition, the research findings infer that the Yi cultural product designs do not meet the aesthetics and needs of consumers. Cultural inheritance and design innovation have become an inevitable requirement for product survival and development in the context of consumer culture (Li, 2014). But there is no complete framework to connect design and culture, yet (Zhu, 2018).

CONCLUSION

This study examined the integration of Yi traditional cultural elements in contemporary designs through a scoping review. It answers the question of the integrated status of Yi traditional cultural elements in contemporary designs. From the review, the findings demonstrate that the integration process of Yi traditional cultural elements and contemporary designs face many problems. This review provides synthetic evidence for this fact. The research also identifies Yi traditional cultural elements in contemporary designs. Yi traditional cultural elements often considered in contemporary product designs are forms and shapes, uses, functions, local materials, craft skills, motifs and patterns, colors and symbols. These elements influence the beauty, use, security, identity and other aspects of the designed products.

Future research should focus on the most important Yi traditional cultural elements that affect the product designs, determine their cultural attributes and design characteristics to find a suitable design framework. In this way, cultural elements in design can adapt to the current social background, resulting in the better use of culture itself as innovative resources and creating, sustainability of culture and related designs.

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