

CHINA'S LONGJI CULTURAL HERITAGE - RESEARCH ON THE MODERN INNOVATIVE DESIGN OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCTS

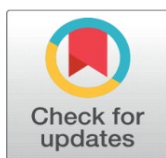
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ABSTRACT

This study is situated within the context of the declining prominence of China's traditional Longji (Dragon Ridge) architectural ornamentation, with the research objective of innovatively designing Longji-themed cultural and creative products in Jiangsu Province. By examining the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Longji architecture and conducting an in-depth investigation into the decorative characteristics of Longji structures in Jiangsu as well as public demand for related cultural products, this study proposes feasible solutions for the innovative design of Longji-inspired creative goods. Adopting a mixed-methods approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative research, the study employs literature review, field surveys, interviews, and questionnaires to analyze public perceptions of Longji architectural ornamentation in Jiangsu and assess the current state of Longji-themed cultural product design. Building upon these findings, the research innovatively develops contemporary Longji-inspired cultural products. Finally, through consumer experience evaluations and expert assessments in the field, the study validates the effectiveness of these designs in preserving Longji cultural heritage. The results indicated that the proposed innovative designs offer viable solutions and pathways for the transmission of Longji architectural decorative culture and the promotion of local economic development.

Keywords: Longji Culture, Cultural and Creative Products, Cultural Heritage



1. INTRODUCTION

Ancient Chinese architecture represents the crystallization of technology and art, bearing profound cultural heritage of Chinese civilization. Particularly, the dragon ridge ornamentation on building roofs has become an architectural treasure due to its distinctive forms and rich symbolic meanings, demonstrating not only the superb craftsmanship of artisans but also embodying auspicious and sacred cultural connotations. The stylistic evolution of dragon ridge

decorations carries distinct imprints of different historical periods, reflecting dynamic transformations in social structures, cultural values, and power relations throughout Chinese history.

Despite its historical significance, the Longji (Dragon Ridge), like many aspects of traditional Chinese craftsmanship, now faces the threat of gradual obscurity. Rapid modernization and urban development have dramatically transformed architectural landscapes, leading to a decline in the application of traditional decorative elements in contemporary structures. Furthermore, as [Wang \(2016\)](#) notes, the transmission of ancient architectural techniques is endangered, with fewer artisans trained in the specialized skills required to create and restore Longji ornamentation. The younger generation, increasingly drawn to technology-oriented professions, exhibits diminishing interest in pursuing traditional craftsmanship, resulting in critical gaps in the preservation and continuity of these intricate skills.

Consequently, this study focuses on the design and practical application of cultural and creative products featuring Longji (Dragon Ridge) ornamentation, aiming to provide enriched cultural experiences through innovative product development while proposing new approaches for preserving and transmitting China's Longji architectural heritage. The cultural value of Longji decoration manifests not only in creative product design but also in the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage. These distinctive Longji cultural elements serve as a bridge between history and modernity while functioning as a catalyst for regional economic development. Thus, precisely and effectively conveying Longji culture through well-designed creative products holds significant importance in strengthening cultural identity, enhancing consumer engagement, and facilitating the dynamic continuation of Longji architectural traditions.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To develop contemporary product designs incorporating dragon ridge motifs, integrating innovative technology to harmonize tradition with modern aesthetics.
- 2) To evaluate the effectiveness of the designed products based on cultural, economic, and creative criteria, ensuring their viability in modern markets while preserving cultural heritage. Research Objectives.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Before studying and designing Longji architectural cultural and creative products, the researchers collected and summarized relevant literature. The research status of integrating ancient architectural ridge decorations with modern digital technology to develop cultural and creative industries, promote economic development, and protect and inherit ancient buildings will be outlined, in order to provide a solid theoretical foundation and framework for the subsequent design of Longji architectural cultural and creative products.

1) The integration of ancient architectural ridge decoration and modern digital technology

This study examines the historical-cultural significance of Longji architecture while innovatively exploring its artistic value through an integrated approach combining intangible cultural heritage (ICH) preservation principles with contemporary design methodologies. According to [Gong et al. \(2023\)](#), cultural and creative design approaches can effectively reinterpret Longji decorative patterns for adaptation into modern cultural products, thereby ensuring their contemporary relevance while preserving their historical essence. For instance, employing image gene extraction methodology to transform three-dimensional ornamental sculptures from the Forbidden City's roof ridges into two-dimensional patterns, followed by graphic reconstruction and implementation as digital interactive art installations, presents a viable solution for both promoting and innovating traditional ridge ornamentation.

2) Current trends in the cultural and creative industries

The development and promotion of cultural and creative products has emerged as a prominent trend in disseminating traditional culture in contemporary society. According to [Wang \(2019\)](#) elucidates, the growing public demand for cultural commodities, technology-driven innovation of cultural products in the intelligent era, and the increasing sophistication of mass cultural consumption have collectively contributed to the escalating demand for creative cultural merchandise. However, current practices in integrating traditional culture with product design still exhibit several deficiencies, including inadequate market segmentation and weak regional cultural distinctiveness. Furthermore, many cultural products demonstrate insufficient aesthetic consciousness and a mismatch between practical functionality and artistic appeal, failing to satisfy consumer expectations. Consequently, Wang emphasizes that regional cultural specificity and emotional resonance constitute critical factors in contemporary cultural product design.

3) Integration of culture and economy

Exploring innovative cultural product designs inspired by ancient Chinese architecture not only serves to promote traditional culture but also presents significant potential for economic growth. According to Li (2020) highlights through the case study of museum cultural products, the current homogeneity in creative merchandise results in limited market competitiveness. By adopting cross-disciplinary strategic collaborations aligned with contemporary market trends, museums can enhance their product design frameworks, thereby achieving a mutually beneficial synergy between cultural preservation and economic development.

4) Protection and inheritance of ancient buildings

The conservation measures and methodologies employed for ancient architecture constitute one of the most crucial endeavors in cultural heritage preservation. According to Li (2023) elucidates, the quintessential elements of traditional residential architectural ornamentation culture predominantly encompass decorative patterns, carvings, and chromatic schemes. The proposed preservation framework advocates for the establishment of a multi-stakeholder collaborative conservation mechanism, the innovative refinement of heritage protection paradigms, and the development of specialized tourism initiatives as strategic interventions for safeguarding this cultural legacy.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a combination of theory and practice, and uses qualitative and quantitative analysis methods to collect data, aiming to provide guidance and reference for the innovative selection and design direction of Longji decorative patterns.

1) Data Collection

Collect relevant literature, search online through academic journals, conference papers, etc., and consult historical materials on architectural ridge decoration in the library. After obtaining information through multiple channels, screen, systematically organize, summarize and analyze. At the same time, conduct in-depth interviews with traditional craftsmen of architectural ridge decoration in Jiangsu Province, using a one-on-one approach, prepare relevant questions in advance, and obtain real and effective first-hand information through good communication. These interview results will provide credible data for the research, which will be mutually verified with the literature and together form the basic support for the research.

2) Participants

A questionnaire was designed that included personal information, demand for Longji cultural and creative product types, and current satisfaction with Longji cultural and creative product design. 355 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to citizens in Jiangsu Province, and 325 valid questionnaires were collected, with an efficiency of 91%. In addition, 30 questionnaires on current satisfaction with Longji cultural and creative product design were distributed to craftsmen and professionals in related industries, and 30 valid questionnaires were collected, with an efficiency of 100%, providing effective data support for subsequent statistics and analysis. The survey data was collected and preprocessed to determine the measurement indicators of consumer satisfaction and consumption intention with existing Longji cultural and creative products.

3) Research Instruments

The research instruments were systematically established, incorporating on-site photographic documentation and structured interviews of Longji architectural ornamentation to provide robust data support and methodological assurance. A scientifically designed questionnaire survey was implemented, with subsequent data analysis conducted using SPSS software to rigorously examine reliability (Cronbach's alpha ≥ 0.7) and validity (KMO measure ≥ 0.6), while employing descriptive statistics to quantify percentage distributions and analyze demographic characteristics of the sample population.

4) Research Analysis

Through in-depth interviews with industry artisans and professionals, this study systematically collected and synthesized existing information on Longji architectural cultural creative products. Employing a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, we quantitatively evaluated three critical dimensions: product functionality, design quality, and cultural transmission efficacy (as detailed in Table 1). Analytical results revealed significant homogeneity in current dragon-themed creative products, which predominantly manifest in two stereotypical forms: (1) traditional intimidating dragon

representations featuring intricate serpentine curves and ferocious visages that evoke awe, and (2) oversimplified cartoonish depictions that, while approachable, lack innovative design and substantive historical/cultural foundations. Based on the survey results, innovative design improvements were implemented to address the deficiencies in the product design dimensions, and experts were then engaged to assess their satisfaction with the redesigned product.

Table 1

| Table 1 Evaluation Indexes of Longji Element Cultural and Creative Product Design | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------|--|
| Design elements | Product practicality | Product Design | Cultural heritage of products |
| Evaluation indicators | Convenience | Appearance | Integration of inheritance and innovation |
| | Functional | Innovation | Feature |
| | Mass, volume | Technology | Promote |
| | Material, durability | Diversity | Connotation |
| | Easy to clean | Package | Combination of traditional and modern design |
| | Price | Color | Emotional resonance |

Source: Author

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

This chapter will elaborate on the main findings of the study, including the current status of architectural decoration in Longji, China, the views of relevant cultural researchers and designers on the innovative design of Longji cultural and creative products, the application of innovative design of Longji cultural and creative products in Jiangsu Province, and the sustainable development path of cultural and creative products.

5.1. THE CURRENT STATUS OF ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION IN LONGJI, CHINA

Traditional Longji architectural decoration is a treasure of Chinese culture. However, with the acceleration of modernization, self-built houses have been transformed into commercial housing with modern unified specifications. Traditional Longji architectural decoration has gradually withdrawn from the stage of history. As a result, the Longji architectural carving skills have gradually been lost. It needs to be continued through the protection of ancient buildings and living inheritance.

5.1.1. THE CULTURAL CONNOTATION OF THE DRAGON RIDGE PATTERN

The evolution of the dragon ridge pattern, from the initial simple chiwei carving, to the later exquisite longwen shape, and then to the return to the simple style today. This process shows the journey from the emergence of the dragon ridge to its peak, and then to the fading of its sacred halo. Such a transformation is not only a true portrayal of the transformation of the social system, but also shows the trend of people's aesthetic and cultural needs developing in a diversified direction.

5.1.2. PROBLEMS FACED BY LONGJI DECORATIVE BUILDINGS

At present, the inheritance of Longji architectural skills still mainly relies on the restoration of physical buildings. However, craftsmen who are proficient in core technology of this traditional carving skill are becoming increasingly scarce. On the one hand, the demand for such craftsmen and artists in modern society is decreasing. On the other hand, modern young people generally have received higher education. They think that manual carving and bricklaying are hard work, the learning cycle is long, and the economic returns are low. This makes Longji architectural skills face the risk of being lost.

5.1.3. CURRENT STATUS OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCTS IN LONGJI

The existing inheritance and protection of Longji's tangible cultural heritage is difficult to adapt to the needs of modern social and technological development. Therefore, it is necessary to explore ways of living inheritance to continue

China's Longji culture, such as the popular cultural and creative design products as a carrier of cultural communication. However, the existing Longji cultural and creative products on the market have high similarity in patterns, serious homogeneity, lack of recognition and cultural connotation, so the design of Longji elements needs to be improved to increase sales and wide dissemination.

5.2. OPINIONS OF RELEVANT CULTURAL RESEARCHERS AND DESIGNERS ON THE INNOVATIVE DESIGN OF LONGJI CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCTS

Cultural researchers and designers related to Longji have put forward their own views and suggestions on the innovative design of Longji cultural and creative products. They believe that it is necessary to choose diversified communication carriers, retain the core culture of Longji according to market demand, and combine modern innovative design techniques to enhance the value of Longji culture and the core competitiveness of design products.

5.2.1. LONGJI ELEMENT CULTURE INHERITANCE AND INNOVATION

Reasonable space planning through the layout of functional areas, ground signs, signs, lighting guidance, etc., Guide visitors to understand the history, inheritance and technical characteristics of needlework in an orderly manner, enhance the coherence and experience of the visit, and avoid crowding or emptiness to ensure comfortable viewing.

5.2.2. THE CHOICE OF CARRIERS FOR THE INHERITANCE OF LONGJI CULTURE

Designers believe that the use of cultural and creative product carriers, such as daily necessities, office supplies, digital technology, etc., can solve the problem of the single inheritance carrier and limited dissemination of Longji decoration skills. It can not only meet the daily practical needs of modern consumers, but also continue the Longji culture in a living form, achieving a win-win situation of cultural heritage and economic value.

5.2.3. MEET MARKET DEMANDS AND DIVERSIFIED SCENARIOS

Tailoring products to distinct consumer demographics - such as high-end collectors, youth-oriented trend followers, and tourists - requires a focus on portability, price accessibility, and emotional resonance. Examples include cultural and creative lifestyle products, collaborative fashion items, and regionally distinctive souvenirs. Leveraging e-commerce platforms and social media channels can amplify outreach and enhance market competitiveness.

5.3. INNOVATIVE DESIGN AND APPLICATION OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCTS IN LONGJI, JIANGSU PROVINCE

5.3.1. THE INNOVATIVE DESIGN OF LONGJI CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCTS

In order to solve the current market problems of homogeneity and single design of Longji cultural and creative products, researchers conducted extensive data collection, excavated and refined pattern elements with unique imprints of Longji's evolution history, retained the original main colors of Longji buildings, and re-matched the colors. In collaboration with Yancheng Feipu CNC Machine Tool Co., Ltd., they carried out a series of innovative designs for Longji in Jiangsu Province.

Figure 1

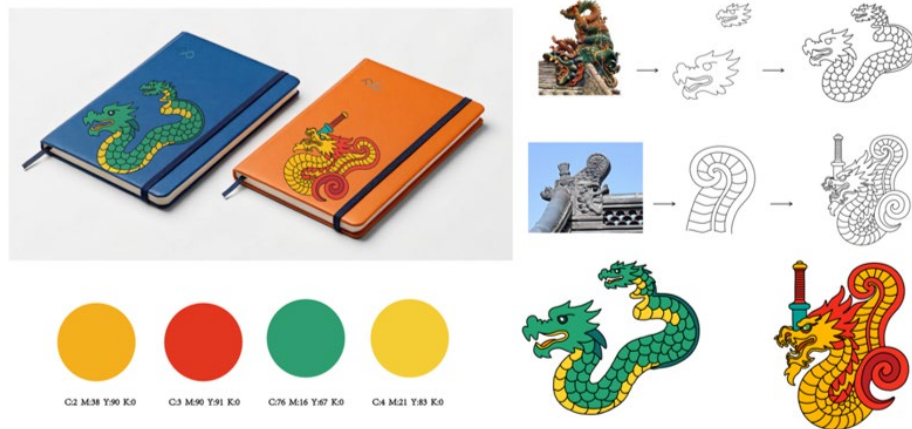


Figure 1 Innovative Design of Chiwen and Longwen Patterns

Source: Author

Figure 2

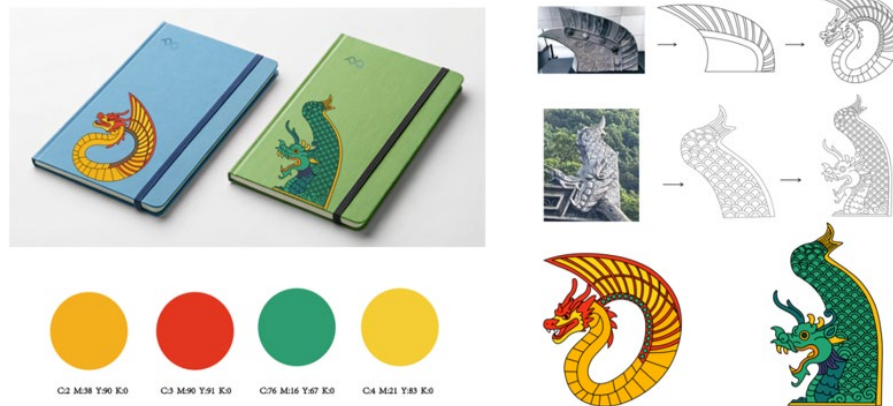


Figure 2 Innovative Design of Chiwei and Aoyu Patterns

Source: Author

Figure3



Figure 3 Innovative Design of Longji Interlocking Branch Patterns and Auspicious Cloud Patterns

Source: Author

Figure 4



Figure 4 Innovative Design of Longji Cultural and Creative Fan Effect Display Picture

Source: Author

Figure 5



Figure 5 Innovative Design of Longji Cultural and Creative Mobile Phone Case Effect Display Picture

Source: Author

Figure 6



Figure 6 Innovative Design of Longji Creative Bags Effect Display Picture

Source: Author

Figure 7



Figure 7 Innovative Design of Longji cultural and creative masks and scarves Effect Display Picture

Source: Author

Figure 8



Figure 8 Innovative Design of Longji Cultural and Creative Mouse Pad Effect Display Picture

Source: Author

5.3.2. EXPERT SATISFACTION EVALUATION OF INNOVATIVE LONGJI CULTURAL PRODUCT DESIGNS

Table 2 presents the evaluation criteria and results from five domain experts regarding the design outcomes. A five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) was employed to assess post-design satisfaction. The evaluation metrics encompassed product functionality, aesthetic design of patterns, color scheme integration, pricing strategy, and cultural transmission efficacy. Notably, the cultural transmission dimension received unanimous maximum satisfaction (mean = 5.0), while all other criteria achieved consistently high ratings (mean = 4.8), demonstrating expert consensus on the innovative incorporation of Longji motifs.

Table 2

| Table 2 Evaluation Criteria for Satisfaction with Innovative Longji Cultural Creative Product Designs | | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Evaluation Project | Expert 1 | Expert 2 | Expert 3 | Expert 4 | Expert 5 |
| Functionality | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 |

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Appearance pattern design | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Color matching of patterns | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Price | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Cultural Heritage | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |

Source: Author

5.4. LONGJI CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCT DESIGN HAS BEEN IMPROVED

The researchers have made modern and innovative designs for Longji cultural and creative products, improving them in many aspects, including design concepts, pattern creativity, color matching, cultural connotations, communication carriers, material selection, and product evaluation, aiming to enhance the cultural heritage of Longji architecture and the market competitiveness of cultural and creative products.

5.4.1. DESIGN CONCEPT

The evolution of dragon ridge ornamentation—from the initial simplicity of chiwei carvings, to the later exquisitely crafted longwen motifs, and finally to the current return to an unadorned style—reflects its trajectory from emergence to zenith, followed by the gradual shedding of its sacred aura. This transformation not only mirrors shifts in social structures but also demonstrates the diversification of public aesthetic preferences and cultural demands.

5.4.2. PATTERN CREATIVITY

The pattern selects four representative forms of Longji, Chiwei, Aoyu, Chiwen, and Longwen, extracts the typical characteristics of the four patterns, improves the Longji shape, and adds modern innovative design. The winding branch pattern and auspicious cloud pattern of Longji architecture are extracted, and the shape is improved and modern pattern splicing is carried out, so that the traditional Longji architectural pattern gets rid of the sense of obsolescence and is more in line with the relaxed and pleasant atmosphere of modern aesthetics.

5.4.3. COLOR MATCHING

The colors are mainly green and yellow, which are commonly used in Longji decoration, and Chinese red is added. The modern and beautiful colors collide with the retro colors, making the color matching simple and elegant. It can enhance the visual appeal and fashion sense of the product, while retaining the original colors to maintain the strong correlation with Longji culture.

5.4.4. MATERIAL SELECTION

The materials selected for relevant cultural and creative products should be environmentally friendly, skin-friendly, durable and low-cost, ensuring that they can be put into mass production, reduce prices and make consumers purchase without financial pressure.

5.4.5. PRODUCT REVIEWS

Through consumer surveys and market analysis, researchers evaluated the improved cultural and creative product designs to ensure that the designed products meet consumer expectations and market demands.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

6.1. THE MODERN LIVING HERITAGE OF CHINA'S LONGJI ARCHITECTURAL CULTURE

This study identifies key challenges facing China's Longji architectural heritage based on preliminary research, including the loss of traditional craftsmanship, replacement of vernacular housing by modern commercial developments, and inadequate preservation of ancient structures. Through contemporary living heritage approaches such as cultural

product development and digital preservation technologies, it enhances public understanding of traditional Longji architecture and strengthens cultural identity.

6.2. LONGJI CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PRODUCT INNOVATIVE DESIGN ACHIEVES WIN-WIN SITUATION FOR CULTURE AND BUSINESS

This study extracts characteristic Longji patterns for cultural product design, integrating modern aesthetics to transcend traditional stereotypes and create a retro-modern fusion style. Through pattern design, cultural resonance, and scenario-based applications, it cultivates target consumer engagement. Employing eco-friendly materials and functional designs that align with user needs, these lifestyle-oriented cultural products have gained broad acceptance. Future efforts will focus on market-driven strategy optimization to enhance competitiveness, developing products that synergize contemporary demands with Longji cultural elements, achieving sustainable cultural-commercial synergy.

6.3. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF LONGJI ARCHITECTURAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

Local governments should establish targeted policies and specialized regulations for Longji ancient architecture, clearly defining preservation measures. A dedicated Longji architectural fund should be created to support routine maintenance and restoration work. The fund should also provide financial assistance to inheritors of Longji architectural craftsmanship and support relevant research projects. These measures aim to incentivize broader societal participation in architectural conservation and cultural transmission, while simultaneously promoting the restoration of local heritage structures and regional economic development.

6.4. CONTRIBUTION TO ACADEMIC RESEARCH

This study contributes to the Longji architectural research by providing an extensive collection of Longji ornamental pattern typologies, while simultaneously broadening novel approaches and design practice cases for the preservation of tangible cultural heritage. These findings substantiate [Wang \(2016\)](#) proposition regarding the modernized transmission of traditional craftsmanship. The research outcomes are anticipated to enhance public accessibility to intuitive understanding of Longji architectural culture, elevate its cultural valuation, amplify its societal impact, and further stimulate interdisciplinary exploration and practical applications among researchers engaged in Longji architectural heritage conservation.

6.5. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The dissemination of Longji architectural culture through cultural and creative product design represents merely one modality of its dynamic preservation. Subsequent studies should employ periodic interviews and structured questionnaires to systematically investigate public preferences regarding cultural transmission formats and emerging demands. Concurrently, leveraging big data analytics to monitor keyword trends and discussion topics related to Longji architecture and traditional Chinese cultural propagation across social media platforms and e-commerce channels will enable researchers to identify market trajectories with temporal precision. Such multidimensional analysis will facilitate proactive adaptation to evolving cultural consumption patterns while optimizing heritage transmission strategies.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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