



Gugang Xi “Zhuang March 3rd”: The Expression of Zhuang Culture in Visual Design

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Abstract

Background and Aims: In 2014, "Zhuang March 3rd" was listed in the national intangible cultural heritage. Governments at all levels in Guangxi began to build the national cultural brand of "Zhuang March 3rd". The brand value of "Zhuang March 3rd" has attracted more and more attention from the world. How to explore the artistic techniques and design practices of the "Zhuang March 3rd" ethnic characteristics in graphic design? This paper aims to create a creative handicraft tourist souvenir design from the traditional festivals of the "Zhuang March 3rd"

Methodology: Combination of qualitative and quantitative research in the visual form of static structure semiotic analysis, field research, and interviews. Combing through the changing process of the visual form of the "March 3rd" festival, on the cultural dimension, historical dimension, natural dimension, and social dimension of the Guangxi Zhuang nationality.

Results: Analyze and study the patterns and color design of Zhuang brocade in Zhuang culture, and further investigate the design of creative handicrafts and tourist souvenirs. Through field investigation, selection of design techniques, selection of pattern elements, and selection of tourist handicrafts, four types of handicraft products of Silk scarves and pillows, and keychains, postcards (Zhuang ethnic pattern keychain, postcard). The final finished style, with rich colors, is suitable for the tourism market.

Conclusion: "Zhuang March 3rd" is integrated into the intangible cultural heritage tourism industry to create tourism souvenirs, release research results to the Guangxi government, improve the local tourism economy, enhance the market position of ethnic minority tourism commemorative products, and change their singularity. Expand the scope of tourism projects, combine the rational development of intangible cultural heritage tourism, and promote the widespread dissemination of the "Zhuang March 3rd" festival celebration.

Keywords: Zhuang March 3rd; Zhuang Culture; Visual Design; Creation of Souvenirs; Tourism Economy

Introduction

As the Zhuang ethnic group, with the largest population of China's minority nationalities, has a long history of development and inherited a profound culture, the "Zhuang March 3rd"





festival carries the unique style of Zhuang's customs, music, clothing, and art. The traditional festival is a valuable display of ethnic culture and integration in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. In the tide of globalization, how to maintain the continuity of tradition and balance the development of modern society has become a hot topic. As a necessary and important means of expression of cultural life and an important carrier of culture, modern visual communication language is a particularly popular research topic (Su & Yang, 2024). In view of the modern visual communication practice, this research will take the Zhuang ethnic group's traditional festival—"Zhuang March 3rd" as the research object, and integrate the symbolic elements, pattern types and color characteristics of traditional Zhuang culture to create artistic works of modern design, explore the artistic expression means of the festival design suitable for graphic design in modern expression context, and continue the culture on modern carrier.

On this basis, this study starts from the background of cultural creativity and extends the modern design application to create creative handicrafts and tourist souvenirs for the "Zhuang March 3rd" festival to explore the modern design application in depth and promote the development of local tourism in Guangxi Province. The cultural symbol is an indispensable carrier for cultural creativity and can be transformed into a creative product through modern commercial design to further drive the development of the regional economy. Therefore, graphic design practice in the modern context is more likely to focus on how to design and create through modern commercial design to improve the visibility of Zhuang cultural tourism (Su & Yang, 2024; Xue, Seviset & Piromgarn, 2024).

By summarizing the design effect and operation effect of the modern visual communication design practice, this research is an attempt to apply visual design to the theory of traditional festivals. Based on design practice, this study expands the application to explore cultural and creative graphic design and the creative experience it brings. On this basis, this study can be more closely linked with modern design, and continue the traditional culture in the modern market, analyze the artistic expression and graphic design, the influence of traditional culture on the design, and the market prospects of design. Finally, the study attempts to popularize the intangible cultural heritage of traditional festivals with the power of graphic design and lead to more in-depth intercultural communication with the world.

Objective

To create handicraft tourist souvenir designs from the traditional festivals of the "Zhuang March 3rd"





Literature Review

1. Literature on the “March 3rd” Festival of the Zhuang Ethnic Group

The Zhuang ethnic group is the most populous minority nationality in China, primarily distributed across the Lingnan region—from Lianshan Zhuang and Yao Autonomous County in Guangdong Province in the east to Wenshan Zhuang and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province in the west, extending to the Beibu Gulf in the south and bordering Vietnam in the southwest (Wang, 2023). The *Ecological Aesthetics Research on Zhuang March 3rd* emphasizes the cultural and ecological significance of this festival, highlighting its deep roots in Zhuang social traditions (Wang, 2023). The Zhuang people also possess a long historical and cultural lineage. Archaeological discoveries in areas such as Liujiang and Laibin have revealed numerous prehistoric cultural sites, demonstrating early human activity in the region (Liu, 2024; Li, 2018). Furthermore, *Research on the Folk Culture of the Zhuang Ethnic Group in Wuming, Guangxi, on March 3rd* provides valuable insights into the historical context and cultural expressions associated with the “Zhuang March 3rd” festival (Li, 2018).

2. Design and Creative Practices Related to the “March 3rd” Festival

The celebration of the “March 3rd” festival involves various ceremonial artifacts and ritualistic objects, which hold symbolic and aesthetic value for the Zhuang people. In addition to natural materials such as cliff paintings, artificial crafts play a central role in embodying the festival’s spirit. Duan (2020) conducted a design-oriented study focusing on *Zhuang brocade tourism souvenirs*, illustrating how traditional textile craftsmanship can be adapted into modern creative design. These works not only preserve ethnic aesthetics but also contribute to the broader cultural economy by transforming traditional elements into culturally rich design products.

3. Visual Design Theory and Aesthetic Foundations

Visual design theory, as an independent aesthetic and artistic discipline, originated from the art historical and visual aesthetic movements of German-speaking countries during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This theoretical foundation emphasizes the relationship between form, perception, and meaning in visual art. By examining the principles of visual form established in early European design philosophy, contemporary scholars and practitioners can better understand how visual aesthetics shape modern design practice. The exploration of these theories provides essential guidance for integrating traditional cultural motifs—such as those from the Zhuang ethnic heritage—into modern visual communication frameworks.

4. Zhuang Cultural Heritage and Identity

Zhuang cultural heritage encompasses the acceptance, recognition, and appreciation of one’s ethnic identity through cultural inheritance, innovation, and development. This cultural consciousness fosters a deep sense of belonging and pride among Zhuang individuals. Such



identity is manifested not only in the preservation of traditional customs, language, music, and dance but also in the active reinterpretation of historical narratives and moral values. By promoting both continuity and creativity in cultural practice, Zhuang heritage exemplifies how ethnic traditions can adapt to contemporary social and aesthetic contexts without losing authenticity.

5. Tourism and the Cultural Economy

The integration of tourism and culture has become a significant avenue for promoting ethnic heritage and regional development. Cultural and creative products—often designed for cities, museums, and tourist destinations—serve as tangible expressions of local identity and aesthetics. These items, which tourists purchase as souvenirs, embody distinct regional and ethnic characteristics, bridging traditional artistry with modern consumer culture. Within the context of the “Zhuang March 3rd” festival, such products not only stimulate local economic growth but also function as cultural ambassadors, fostering intercultural understanding and enhancing the visibility of Zhuang traditions in the global tourism market.

Conceptual Framework

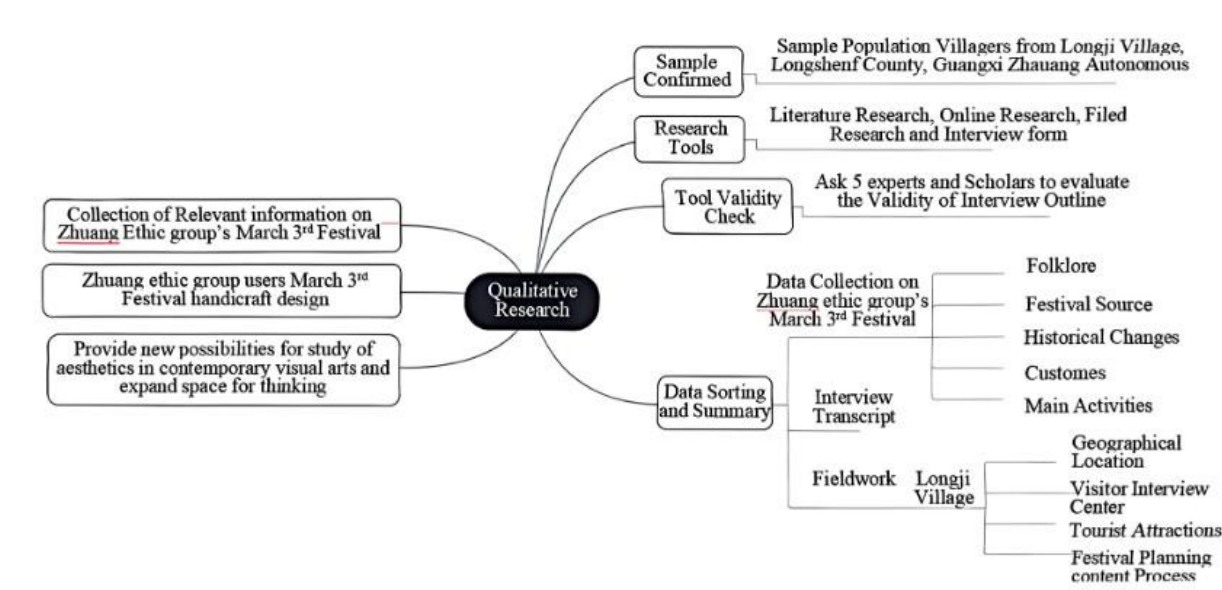


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Methodology

In this study, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research will be used :

1. Literature review: Guangxi "Zhuang March 3rd"



Study relevant literature both at home and abroad regarding Guangxi "Zhuang March 3rd", visual form innovation.

In this study, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research will be used. Exploring the cultural identity of Zhuang tourism souvenirs (the history of the March 3rd festival in Daoqiao Town, Wuming District, Nanning City, Guangxi, the evolution of tourism souvenirs, the design characteristics of Zhuang culture, and Zhuang craftsmanship)

2. Field observation

Analysis and research from the cases of myths and legends, Understand the thoughts of local villagers in Daoqiao Town on intangible cultural heritage tourism, as well as their interest in Zhuang tourism cultural souvenirs and the cultural value of Zhuang culture. Finally, evaluate the design of tourist souvenirs from the perspectives of aesthetics,

3. Interview

Choose inheritors of Zhuang handicraft skills with no less than 30 years.

Choose experts who are familiar with the history and development of festival activities. Formulate the outline of the investigation questions, then contact the survey subjects, and finally conduct interviews with individual subjects, and obtain detailed and comprehensive information.

Research tool

Research tools for collecting data will be used objectively to achieve the objectives of investigative and experimental research. The details are as follows:

1. Population and Sampling

The population is tourists, experts, inheritors, and some residents of Daoqiao Town, Wuming District, Nanning City, Guangxi Province, as follows:

1.1 The providers of the relevant information on the Zhuang nationality on March 3 are:

According to the data of the seventh national census released by China in 2021, the resident population of urban areas is 42,000. Choose 3 inheritors of Zhuang handicraft skills with no less than 30 years. Experts who are familiar with the history and development of festival activities.

1.2. The research area is Daoqiao Town, Fucheng Town, Wuming District, Nanning City, Guangxi Province, which is one of the birthplaces of Zhuang culture, and is the main venue and worship site of the "March 3rd of the Zhuang nationality".

1.3. According to population and sample research, during the "March 3rd" holiday in 2024, Wuming District received a total of 557,200 tourists.

Take samples of _4000 tourists to make a questionnaire. Visitors aged between 20 and 50 years (regardless of gender or occupation).



2. Observational table

Enter Wuming District, Nanning City (the birthplace of the Zhuang March 3rd Festival) for on-site observation, understand the history, cultural characteristics, and art of the Zhuang March 3rd, and finally obtain a summary of the information and present the observations with descriptive analysis.

3. Interview form

Table 1 See the basic information of the respondents

Respondents	Last name	Connection with the Zhuang nationality on March 3rd	Occupation	Job responsibilities	Working years
Respondents 1	Huang Cun	Inheritor	representative inheritor at the county level	The main organizer of folk activities	30
Respondents 2	Huang Li	Inheritor (teaching teacher)	representative inheritor at the county level	Advanced workers of intangible cultural heritage	35
Respondents 3	Qin LI AN	Inheritor (teaching teacher)	representative inheritor at the county level	The main organizer of folk activities	40

Source: Author (2025)

Interview the staff of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Center in Longsheng County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China.

Interview the director of the festival, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Center in Longsheng County.

Interview question 1: Basic information about the interviewees

Interview question 2: The current situation of the March 3 Festival of the Zhuang nationality

Interview Question 3: The future development prospect of the Zhuang March 3 Festival.

4. Questionnaire

The survey target of this questionnaire is residents of Fucheng Town, Wuming District, Nanning City, and 4000 questionnaires were distributed on the online platform.

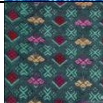
The researcher will collect the data through a questionnaire survey. The main research purpose is to investigate the village names of "Jinzu Zhuang Village" and tourists' interest in intangible cultural heritage tourism and festival cultural souvenirs. At the same time, to let consumers evaluate the aesthetic, festival, satisfaction, and other aspects of the festival value.

Data Analysis

Design case analysis

Analyze and study the patterns and color design of Zhuang brocade in Zhuang culture, and further investigate the design of creative handicrafts and tourist souvenirs, and further study how modern visual design highlights the cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities, As a handicraft with distinct national cultural characteristics of the Zhuang nationality, There are three types of brocade, more than 20 varieties, and more than 50 patterns, Zhuang brocade mainly has geometric patterns and various animal and plant patterns in terms of graphics (Zhou, 2010). Zhuang people prefer to juxtapose high-purity colors, and take red, yellow, blue, green, and other basic colors as the main colors, which reflects the courage of Zhuang folk artists to break through.

Table 2 Zhuang brocade pattern implies gene bank

Categories	Name	Legend	Morphological sampling	Pictographic meaning	Spiritual connotation
Geometric patterns	Cloud and thunder pattern		Clouds, thunder	Worship of the God of Thunder	Good weather
	Wanzi pattern		Sun	Worship Totem	Sun All the best
	Sun pattern		Sun	Worship Totem	Sun Eliminate misfortune and bring good fortune
	Disk length pattern		Auspicious Knot	The knot is continuous	Forever, prosperity, and good fortune
	Evergreen pattern		Evergreen	Erennialevergreen , with green fruit	Good luck and longevity

Categories	Name	Legend	Morphological sampling	Pictographic meaning	Spiritual connotation
Plant patterns	Figure		Chrysanthemums and plum blossom	lower goddess belief	A long and healthy life, happiness on the face
	Tree pattern		Cotton and maple trees	Tree totem worship	Shelter to eliminate disasters
	Persimmon stem pattern		Persimmon stem	Persimmons sound similar to things	Everything goes well.
Animal patterns	Butterfly pattern		Butterfly		Good fortune and happiness
	Fish pattern		Fish	Reproductive worship	To have many descendants and a surplus every year
	Frog pattern		Frog	Son of Thunder Frog Totem worship	Good weather offspring,
	Bird pattern		Birds	Bird totem worship	happiness, well-being, and a bountiful harvest
	Phoenix pattern		Phoenix	Phoenix Totem worship	Bestow blessings upon people and bring peace and prosperity to the country.

Source: Author (2025)

Results

Based on the research objective of creating handmade tourism souvenirs for the traditional festival of March 3rd of the Zhuang ethnic group, the following related results are:

1. Handicraft tourist souvenir design from the traditional festivals of the "Zhuang March 3rd"

1.1 Silk scarves and pillows (Zhuang Jin bookmark)

Forms: Use butterfly and swallow patterns.

Color: The main body of the scarf adopts pink and yellow as the main colors, and each flower on top is lifelike.

Material: Zhuang brocade material.

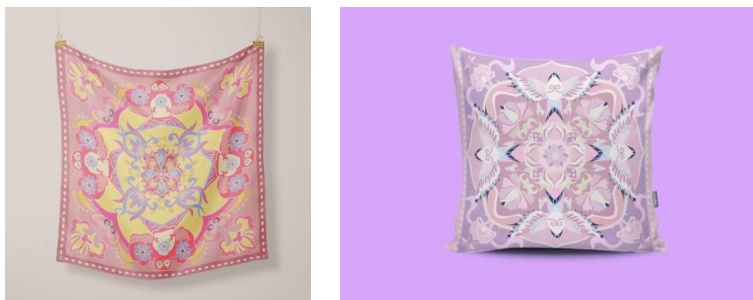


Figure 2 Zhuang Jin bookmark

Source: Author (2025)

1.2 Keychain, postcard (Zhuang ethnic pattern keychain, postcard)

Forms: The design uses butterfly patterns, which symbolize auspiciousness and beauty

Color: The keychain features a blue and white design, and the postcard comes in three representative colors of the Zhuang ethnic group: blue, purple, and green.

Material: The keychain is made of PC material, and the postcard is made of recycled paper.

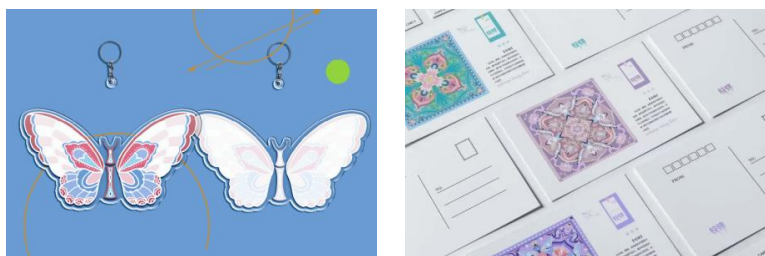


Figure 3 Zhuang ethnic pattern keychain, postcard

Source: Author (2025)

2. Expected revenue

2.1. By understanding the history, culture, and characteristics of "March 3rd of the Zhuang nationality" as the entry point for the development and continuation of contemporary society, demonstrate the integration of "traditional heritage" and "contemporary design". The traditional



festival culture of "Zhuang March 3rd" in Guangxi Province has become the name card of communication between countries (Liu, 2024).

2.2. This study will be for visual design, such as VI design, product design, creating souvenirs, based on the Guangxi government research results, to improve the local tourism economy, improve the market position of minority tourism commemorative products, and change their single-product nature.

2.3. Research on the visual form of the Zhuang March 3 will provide the theoretical basis and practical guidance for the typed and stylized expression of the innovation and application of visual design, providing a theoretical basis for design practice and art education with the rapid development.

Discussion

Based on the results of the current study, Silk scarves and pillows (Zhuang Jin bookmark) and a keychain, postcard (Zhuang ethnic pattern keychain, postcard) were divided into three parts as Form, Color, and Material as follows:

Silk scarves and pillows (Zhuang Jin bookmark): 1) Forms: Use butterfly and swallow patterns. 2) Color: The main body of the scarf adopts pink and yellow as the main colors, and each flower on top is lifelike. 3) Material: Zhuang brocade material

Keychain, postcard (Zhuang ethnic pattern keychain, postcard): 1) Forms: The design uses butterfly patterns, which symbolize auspiciousness and beauty. 2) Color: The keychain features a blue and white design, and the postcard comes in three representative colors of the Zhuang ethnic group: blue, purple, and green. 3) Material: The keychain is made of PC material, and the postcard is made of recycled paper.

All forms, colors, and materials have effects of emotional consistency. The studies of Japanese graphic design master Kenya Hara emphasized that while dealing with shape, color, material, and texture is vital in design, an equally important concern lies in evoking human perception. "The main point is not how to create, but how to make someone feel something," he stated, describing this as *sensory design*—a design approach that triggers emotional and perceptual response (Hara, 2007; Kenya, 2003). This concept highlights the importance of engaging human senses as a core design strategy, an idea that has also been supported in recent design research (Zhu, 2024; Armstrong, 2009; Zhang, 2023). Moreover, Liang Tingwang pointed out in "Introduction to Zhuang Culture" that the third day of the third lunar month is the main date of the Qingming Festival, and it is also a grand song festival. Among the Longsheng Zhuang people, it is also a day to commemorate the birth of Shennong (Liang, 2000; Li, 2020). Spengler remarked that studying world history is studying the history of various cultures. Great culture originates from





the deepest foundation of the spirit, and each culture has its own basic symbols that are manifested in various aspects of that culture. (Farrenkopf, 1991; Spengler, 1918; Jin, 2023).

Hence, all forms, colors, and materials not only evoke consistent emotional responses but also reflect design themes related to ethnic minority culture and art. Therefore, the choice of design techniques should be comprehensively considered in order to make the visual image of ethnic minority tourism commemorative products both novel, unique, and rich in cultural connotation (Zheng, 2022).

A monograph published by Ye Investigation. The book combines literature to analyze the identity of the Zhuang nationality in Guangxi and Yunnan. On this basis, it conducts a systematic investigation of the theoretical construction, institutional design, and related policies of the Chinese government on ethnic issues, which has had a great influence on the study of the Zhuang nationality in the past ten years (Kaup, 2000).

Entry point for the development and continuation of contemporary society, increase the cultural identity of the Zhuang visual design, drive the development of the local tourism economy in Guangxi Province, and enable more international friends to understand and participate in it. The traditional festival culture of "Zhuang March 3rd" in Guangxi Province has become the name card of communication between countries.

Conclusion

1. Understanding the history, culture, and characteristics of "March 3rd of the Zhuang nationality" as the entry point for the development and continuation of contemporary society increases the cultural identity of the Zhuang visual design.

2. To meet the visual aesthetic needs of tourists from the perspective of Guangxi Zhuang culture design, based on the cultural element of "March 3rd of the Zhuang ethnic group", create works closely integrating the "March 3rd" festival with rice culture.

3. "Zhuang March 3rd" is integrated into the intangible cultural heritage tourism industry to create tourism souvenirs, release research results to the Guangxi government, improve the local tourism economy, and enhance the market position of ethnic minority tourism.

4. Apply visual form theory to art design and artistic creation, providing a theoretical basis for design practice and art education with the rapid development.

Recommendation

1. As researchers, we should pay attention to the ethnic minority culture and show the cultural characteristics of the ethnic minorities in contemporary design.

2. The Guangxi government should take the traditional festival culture of "Zhuang Sansan" as a business card for exchanges between countries.





3. As a tourist, you should improve the cultural identity of Zhuang visual design, promote the development of the local tourism economy in Guangxi, and let more international friends understand and participate.

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