

## *Xinyang Maojian Tea, Domestic and International Tea Packaging Comparative Study*

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### **Abstract**

Xinyang tea is a specialty of Henan Province, carrying the deep cultural heritage of the Central Plains. Its packaging design plays an important role in conveying product information and benefits to attract consumers' tea desire. The purpose of this paper is to explore the cultural differences and design features between Xinyang Maojian tea packaging design and domestic and international tea packaging design, and to analyze the current situation and problems of Xinyang tea packaging design. Through the study, it is found that Xinyang Maojian tea packaging has unique advantages in using traditional cultural elements and displaying product quality, but there are deficiencies in packaging design differentiation, resulting in a mismatch with modern consumer demand. Compared with foreign tea packaging, Xinyang Maojian tea packaging has gaps in design style and packaging material selection, and lacks an innovative design internationalization strategy. The results of this study provide a useful reference for improving Xinyang Maojian tea packaging design. Some suggestions for improvement are made, focusing on innovation and differentiation of packaging design, emphasizing the quality of the product's packaging design and cultural connotations, including market challenges. By improving the packaging design, Xinyang Maojian Tea can effectively communicate its unique cultural values and product benefits to people around the world in its own appealing way, in addition to enhancing brand competitiveness and continuing the legacy of traditional cultural innovation.

Keywords: Packaging Design, Tea Culture Comparison, Xinyang Maojian, Traditional Culture

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## 1. Introduction

China's cultural resources are rich and diverse, and culture, as an important part of modern industrial development, has become an important factor in attracting consumers. However, a common problem is found in the expression of these cultural resources, especially in product packaging. Cultural products lack effective use of local cultural elements featured in packaging design as shown in Table 1. This study aims to address this problem by focusing on the packaging design of Xinyang Maojian tea, a famous tea variety in the Xinyang region of Henan Province, China, as one of the ten most famous teas in China, with rich cultural and historical connotations. Nonetheless, the branding and packaging of Xinyang Maojian tea is generic and cannot effectively stand out in the competitive tea market (Hu, 2019). In addition, current packaging does not adequately reflect the connection between Xinyang tea and Xinyang culture, creating a disconnect between the product and its cultural roots. Based on previous studies by Hu (2019) and Zhao (2019), the researchers propose to conduct a comparative study of Xinyang Maojian tea packaging with domestic and international tea packaging to analyze the forms of application of culture in domestic and international tea packaging, and how to incorporate the regional culture into the packaging design so as to increase the market attractiveness of the product, improve the competitiveness of the product, and promote the wide dissemination of the regional culture.

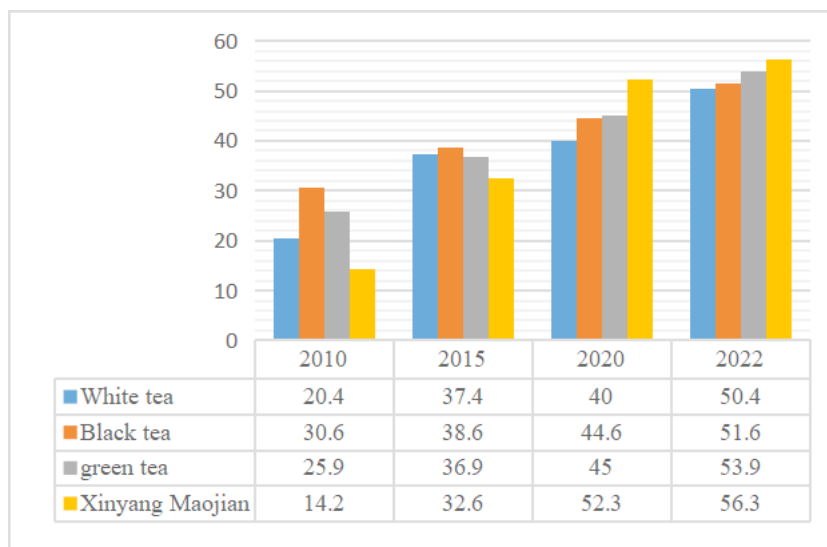


Table 1. Proportion of traditional culture integrated into tea packaging  
(Data source: <https://www.docin.com>)

Through this study, we hope to provide a model that can be used by other cultural products to enrich their market appeal while preserving and promoting their cultural roots. By proposing innovative product packaging that reflects unique cultural characteristics, we strive to enhance the sustainable development strategy of culture. This work is of great significance not only for the development of regional specialty industries, but also for the effective dissemination of local culture.

## 2. Background of Xinyang Maojian Tea Packaging

Tea originated in China and later spread to Europe, America, Japan, India and other countries. In the process of long-term social development, each country has formed a tea culture with its own cultural characteristics. China has had the habit of drinking tea since ancient times, and a

strong tea culture has been formed under this habit. Xinyang Maojian, as a representative of China's high-quality green tea, has a large consumer base and unique tea culture in the Central Plains, but also become an important pillar of economic development in Xinyang.

In the long-term development process of Xinyang Maojian tea packaging design, many problems have appeared, such as tea packaging design methodology similarity, serious imitation phenomenon, weak brand awareness and other issues, as shown in Figure 1. Xinyang Maojian as a type of tea, for a long time to "Xinyang Maojian" as the brand name of countless tea products, the formation of "Xinyang Maojian everywhere," the chaotic market situation. The lack of brand awareness has provided the soil for some tea traders to use second-rate tea as good, making it difficult to distinguish the real from the fake, disturbing the local tea market, and at the same time creating confusion among consumers, providing an opportunity for low-quality tea to counterfeit high-quality tea (Hu, 2019). In addition, the disruption of the market by some unscrupulous brands has affected the external image of Xinyang tea and tea enterprises, and the lack of branding has made it difficult to compete for quality advantages among many tea categories. In addition, the traditional Xinyang Maojian tea products are not only a kind of tea, but also a cultural symbol of the city of Xinyang. Although Xinyang Maojian has a deep cultural heritage, this is not highlighted on the tea packaging, thus losing the opportunity to connect with consumers who value products with deep cultural and historical roots (Zhao, 2019).



Fig. 1. Xinyang Maojian tea packaging  
(Source: <https://s.taobao.com>)

The packaging design style of Xinyang Maojian in the market nowadays is old-fashioned and lacks a young consumer base, exacerbating the disconnect with the consumer group. These are also one of the reasons why the popularity of Xinyang Maojian has not been proportional to its intrinsic quality in recent years." The embarrassing situation of "quality, no brand" has become a prominent problem for Xinyang Maojian.

In addition, there are some shortcomings in the tea packaging used for export, for example, the packaging design mostly follows the culture of the export target country, thus weakening the national culture, resulting in the inability to introduce the traditional Chinese culture to other countries (Wang, 2008). The commercial value of tea products has gradually replaced its own cultural and regional characteristics. Excessive packaging and homogenized packaging of tea products lead to the lack of its regional cultural characteristics (Hu, 2019), and its consumption value is much higher than its own cultural value.

In the international context of the continuous development of the cultural packaging of tea products, how to refine and apply the representative national cultural elements, combine the uniqueness of Xinyang Maojian, refine the cultural differentiation factors, inject fresh cultural blood into the packaging design of Xinyang Maojian, and utilize the packaging carriers to make it more "tasteful" and serve the cultural construction will be a topic of concern.

By comparing the cultural differences between Chinese and foreign tea packaging design, the researcher analyzes the influence of Chinese and foreign cultural similarities and differences

on tea packaging design, and provides guidance suggestions for Xinyang Maojian tea packaging design to enhance its own cultural connotations and move towards internationalization. It is hoped that it will inspire the development of innovative concepts of tea packaging design. Meanwhile, Hu (2019) also emphasized the potential benefits of incorporating local cultural elements into product packaging, and this study draws on his findings to propose a research framework for the packaging design of Xinyang Maojian tea, emphasizing its roots in the cultural characteristics of the Xinyang region. As Zhao (2019) points out, by creating an emotional connection between the consumer and the product's cultural context, this approach helps to enhance the product's appeal and market competitiveness.

### 3. Comparative Study of Chinese and Foreign Tea Packaging

#### 3.1 Cultural Influences on Chinese Tea Packaging Designs

China is one of the earliest countries with the habit of drinking tea, and the traditional tea culture is rich and diverse, containing deep spiritual connotation and aesthetic mood. Tea packaging design looks for design materials from historical allusions to traditional culture, landscapes and traditional ink paintings as shown in Figure 2, in order to demonstrate the rich cultural connotations, strong national colors and regional characteristics. Designers often use symbolic motifs to reflect the cultural nature through the implied meaning of words, colors, graphics or images, etc. The motifs are simple and novel, showing the connotation of traditional Chinese culture. Tea packaging gives emotional attributes is an important feature of traditional Chinese tea packaging design, so designers focus on humanization in modern tea packaging design. Anxi Tieguanyin tea is packaged with dragon pattern, noble yellow color and ceramic material, which meets people's life and aesthetic needs, and also shows people's emotions and pursuits.

The expression of traditional Chinese culture is relatively implicit and the scene lyric, through the scenery to express emotions and express aspirations, full of reminiscent of the flavor. Tea packaging design reflects the subtle beauty of traditional Chinese culture. For example, tea packaging is often cloudy and misty tea growing environment as a background, showing green ecological patterns, reflecting the meaning of "good tea out of good water".

Tea packaging design is an important part of tea culture, need to have a high level of artistic conceptualization, showing a certain charm, in order to present the beauty of art. For example, Pu'er tea ceramic packaging using traditional Chinese ink painting, sketching out the picturesque landscape scenery, giving people a simple and solemn artistic mood. In short, Chinese tea packaging design shows the charm of traditional Chinese tea culture through rich cultural connotation and unique artistic expression.



Fig. 2. Four Seasons Tea Packaging  
(Source:<https://image.baidu.com>)

### 3.2 Cultural Influence of Western Tea Packaging Designs

Tea packaging in Europe and the United States focuses on practicality and functionality, giving people a pragmatic impression. The purpose of packaging is to protect, store and display goods, and meeting market demand is the pursuit of packaging design. In order to enhance market competitiveness and attract customers, designers will use strong contrasting colors to highlight the modern rhythm and rhythm of the commodity, and will also use western classical figures or traditional decorative motifs to indicate the long history and traditional advantages of the commodity as shown in Figure 3. The purpose of packaging design is not only to protect and beautify the goods, but more importantly, to promote the sale of goods. Europe and the United States tea packaging design styles, both in line with market demand for the new wave of fashion style, there are also classic nostalgic style. In general, to meet market demand is the eternal pursuit of European and American tea packaging design.

In modern European and American tea packaging design, green, environmental protection and simplicity have become the mainstream consumer concept. Designers use environmentally friendly and recyclable packaging materials, adopt simple and modern personalized design elements, and focus on showing the essence of product packaging. According to the characteristics of the product, give full play to the artistic charm of combining function and form. Tea packaging in Europe and the United States reflects the principle of simplicity, not overly decorative, but concise and clear, in line with the concept of Western consumers.

Various tea packaging designs in Europe and the United States have a strong visual impact, reflecting the concern for humanistic features of the "people-oriented" concept. Designers focus on people's emotional needs, through humanized design, packaging can communicate and exchange with people's hearts. Europe and the United States tea packaging design text clear, illustrated, at a glance, for different levels and needs of the buyer has brought great convenience.



Fig. 3. American Yoga Tea Packaging  
(Source:<https://image.baidu.com>)

### ***3.3 Cultural Influence of Japanese Tea Packaging Designs***

Japanese tea packaging design style has a distinctive national characteristics, focusing on dealing with the nuances, the pursuit of natural, simple and simple design style, while attaching importance to the spiritual connotation of aesthetics.

In Japanese tea packaging design, designers advocate the modern design movement of internationalism, incorporating a sense of the times and modernity on the basis of inheriting national traditions. They tend to use natural materials or environmentally friendly materials to make packaging, such as bamboo, wood, grass and rattan, as well as various kinds of recycled paper as shown in Figure 4. These materials are abundant and cheap, non-toxic, harmless and easy to degrade, which not only give the tea packaging works a unique natural vitality, but also meet people's aesthetic demand for environmental protection. Designers focus on the overall harmony of the packaging, the balance of colors, the precision of shapes, and the use of simple lines and rustic patterns to express the deep meaning. Tea packaging usually adopts fresh colors, such as light green, soft brown, and plain gray, to show the natural beauty of tea. Design elements often use traditional Japanese painting styles, such as ink paintings or washi paintings, to present the scenery of tea gardens, the rituals of the traditional tea ceremony, and the beauty of tea utensils, in order to evoke the user's empathy and respect for Japanese tea culture. Japanese traditional patterns, such as cherry blossoms, maple leaves, peacocks, etc., as well as motifs signifying good luck and happiness, often appear in the package design, adding a unique national mood to the package.



Fig. 4. Japanese Genmaicha Packaging  
(Source: <https://image.baidu.com>)

In addition to the refinement of form and content, Japanese tea packaging design also emphasizes emotional communication with consumers. Designers are committed to creating designs that resonate with the user's soul, conveying an emotional atmosphere of tranquility, harmony and introspection through the packaging. The use of text is also very important, concise and clear text, with illustrated design, so that the packaging is more clear and easy to understand, intuitive and touching, to bring pleasure and satisfaction.

### ***3.4 Comparative Cultural Analysis of Chinese and Foreign Tea Packaging Design***

Chinese tea packaging design is concerned about "charm" and "human taste", emphasizing the mood, emotion and understanding of the spirit of packaging design.

Japanese tea packaging design attaches importance to natural beauty, the pursuit of natural design, through the performance of details, simple and intuitive to show the product fresh, vibrant features. Both the connotation of oriental culture, but also absorbed the design characteristics of Western culture, design approach will be a combination of traditional and modern.

The basis of tea packaging design in Europe and America is rationalism, which is concerned with determining the formal characteristics of packaging design through scientific analysis and judgment. Emphasizing practicality and novelty, it mostly adopts commercialized artistic methods, and the packaging has a strong commercial flavor (L. , 2006).

The application of Chinese and foreign tea culture in tea packaging design shows a deep cultural connotation and reflects different national cultural characteristics. Tea culture in Chinese tea packaging design embodies the spirit of mediocrity and harmony. Europe and the United States tea packaging design of tea culture embodies a sense of ease and pleasure, the lack of deep cultural connotations. Japanese tea packaging design tea culture embodies a profound and timeless aesthetic mood. It is these different tea culture in the tea packaging design, the formation of a unique Chinese and foreign tea packaging design. Tea culture of various countries into the packaging design, not only can let people through the tea packaging design to further understand the connotation and meaning of tea culture of various countries, but also inheritance and development of tea culture.

#### **4. The influence of Cultural Factors on Xinyang Tea Packaging**

##### ***4.1 Consumer Market Demand***

Based on the comparative analysis of domestic and international tea packaging and market trend analysis (Kotler et al., 2018), Xinyang Maojian tea packaging design will take into account consumer trends in the current packaging market and the forecasted market, especially the demand for locally produced, regionally cultured and sustainably manufactured products. Considering Tea Market and Consumer Trends In order to match packaging design with consumers' changing preferences and behaviors, the researcher analyzes the domestic and international tea packaging market and consumer trends as an important part of the proposed design theory. This is in line with the views outlined by renowned marketing experts, such as Kotler et al. (2018), who emphasize the important impact of market dynamics and consumer trends on product development and design.

In recent years, more and more consumers expect goods to be locally produced and to have important cultural connotations as well as sustainability. With this in mind, incorporating cultural factors into packaging design can help meet consumer expectations and increase the market appeal of goods. In addition, domestic and international tea market trends can help provide insights into the most effective ways to communicate the cultural and sustainable characteristics of a product to customers. For example, different color schemes, symbols or product descriptions may be more effective than other methods in conveying these characteristics, and this effectiveness depends on current tea packaging market trends.

For example, as one of the most important elements in a country's culture, the script symbols reflect the country's cultural characteristics and cultural heritage, and are the essence of traditional culture. In the long course of history, human beings have created various styles of

fonts, which contain certain cultural connotations and reflect the cultural characteristics and design genres of different historical stages.

Decorative graphics is a subjective summary description of objective things, is an important form of visual art, which emphasizes the aesthetic factors, has a rich variety of expression methods, and is also widely used in packaging design. Traditional decorative patterns are an important source of decorative graphic styles, such as Chinese auspicious patterns, character patterns, artifact patterns, ancient Greek and Roman decorative patterns, Japanese traditional patterns and so on. These Chinese and foreign decorative graphic shapes are colorful, reflecting the rich national cultural atmosphere.

Color, on the other hand, is the most vivid element in packaging design, which can be expressed in the most direct and powerful way in the design. Color can give consumers the most direct visual experience, attract their attention, and make them gain intuitive understanding and memory. Color as an important element of packaging will be influenced by regional culture, for example, in traditional Chinese packaging design, white is rarely used, they think it is an inauspicious color, on the contrary, red will be used a lot, while Europe and the United States believe that white is a pure and sacred color, in Japan white is treated as a kind of white in the picture.

In addition, a grasp of consumer trends can serve as a compass for the development of packaging design that incorporates elements of utility and comfort. For example, if customers increasingly prefer packages that are easy to open or resealable, these features can be incorporated into the design.

#### ***4.2 Sustainable Design Needs***

Taking into account current tea packaging market and consumer trends in the proposed design solution will ensure that the packaging design of Xinyang Maojian tea products not only supports local culture and sustainable practices, but also continues to be relevant and attractive to customers in a competitive market.

In keeping with sustainable design principles and to meet the growing consumer demand for eco-friendly products, packaging design will incorporate sustainable packaging trends. This includes exploring innovative packaging materials and design practices that are environmentally conscious. Sustainable packaging materials, such as biodegradable or recyclable materials, are becoming increasingly popular as consumers become more environmentally conscious. Xinyang Maojian packaging design should consider the feasibility and availability of using such materials for tea product packaging, aiming to minimize the environmental impact of packaging throughout its life cycle. In addition to materials, design practices also contribute to sustainability. Xinyang Maojian packaging design will explore the use of minimalist design methods to minimize the use of excess materials and waste. Simplified design also contributes to cost savings, consistent with the economic dimension of sustainable design. In addition, the concept of up-cycling or reuse of packaging materials can be incorporated into the framework. By designing packaging that can be reused or transformed into other useful products, Xinyang Maojian packaging design can contribute to a circular economy and reduce waste.

By incorporating these sustainable packaging trends into design solutions, tea packaging design not only promotes cultural heritage, but also contributes to environmental protection



and the overall sustainability of the region. This can enhance the appeal of the product to eco-conscious consumers, making it a responsible and ethical choice in the marketplace.

### ***4.3 Cultural Appropriateness Needs***

To ensure cultural sensitivity and respect, Xinyang Maojian packaging design will consider the concept of cultural appropriateness in packaging design. This includes understanding the significance of cultural symbols, icons and customs used in the packaging and avoiding any misrepresentation or misuse that may offend or misinterpret the local culture. In order to authentically reproduce the local culture of Xinyang City, the Xinyang Maojian package design will emphasize the participation of local stakeholders in the design process. Local artisans, community members and cultural experts will be consulted to provide insights and feedback on the package design to ensure that it resonates meaningfully with the community.

Based on the principles of cultural representation and semiotics, the brief will encourage the use of storytelling and cultural narratives in packaging design. By conveying the historical context and cultural significance of tea products through visual and textual elements, packaging can evoke a sense of cultural pride and foster a deeper connection with consumers.

The tea packaging will explore the creation of a unique brand identity for Xinyang City's tea products that is consistent with the city's regional cultural heritage. The packaging design will strive to evoke positive associations with the cultural values and traditions of the region, positioning the product as an embodiment of local character and reflecting brand identity and cultural relevance.

Recognizing the dynamic nature of culture, tea packaging design will encourage the fusion of modern design elements with traditional elements. This approach will create visually appealing and culturally relevant packaging designs that resonate with a wide range of consumers, including those from different cultural backgrounds, and achieve a fusion of modern and traditional elements.

By incorporating these aspects into design theory, packaging design can strike a balance between promoting rural culture, meeting consumer needs and supporting sustainable development. It can contribute to the preservation and promotion of Xinyang City's unique cultural heritage while embracing contemporary design principles and market trends.

## **5. Conclusion: Implications of the Study and Directions for Future Research**

The relationship between tea packaging and national culture is explored from the perspectives of text, color, graphics, materials and other aspects of Chinese and foreign tea packaging culture. The establishment of a sustainable tea culture packaging design framework needs to respect the development of national culture and the inheritance of regional culture, and fully consider the impact on the sustainable development of the local ecological environment and the establishment of brand image, so as to form a good tea culture market as shown in Table 2. In China, which pays attention to cultural inheritance, it should actively respond to the diversity of world cultures, draw on modern design elements at home and abroad to form complementary advantages, and show cultural intermingling and inheritance while expressing local national culture.

The researcher has conducted a systematic study on the cultural comparison of Chinese and foreign tea packaging design, and there are still many shortcomings due to the limitation of time and energy. Therefore, the information is preliminary and not comprehensive enough, and the collection of information needs to be further expanded and organized.

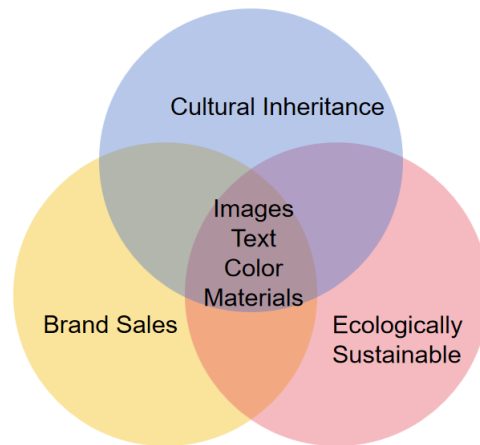


Fig. 5. Packaging Sustainability  
(Source: Richards, 2005)

For the cultural exploration of tea packaging, it is still in the exploratory stage, and for further research, researchers need to analyze the regional culture in depth to establish a perfect theoretical framework for sustainable tea culture packaging design. It is hoped that the design framework can provide theoretical support for cultural heritage and packaging design development.

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