Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF UKRAINE

KHARKIV STATE ACADEMY OF DESIGN AND ARTS

Faculty of Design and Architecture

Department of Graphic Design

Chen Xingyi

The Visual Image of the Pingqiao Village Tourism Brand in the Context of the Integration of Culture, Tourism, and Local Identity

Master's Thesis submitted for the degree of **Master**

Specialty B2 Design

Educational and Professional Program "Visual Communication Design"

The qualification work contains the results of independent research.

The use of ideas, results, and texts of other authors is properly referenced.

签署人：
Chen Xingyi
A76A7695EC704E8...
_____ Full Name

(signature)

Scientific Supervisor: Andryi Zvonyk, PhD, Associate Professor, Consultant: Oleksandr Fil, Senior Lecturer

Kharkiv – 2026

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

CONTENTS

	INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER 1.	**HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE ISSUE AND RESEARCH METHODS**	8
1.1	Review of the Literature	8
1.2	Research Methods	19
	Conclusions to Chapter	20
CHAPTER 2.	**ANALYSIS OF DESIGN THEORY AND PRACTICE** (subject of the research is considered, hypothesis is emphasized, classification is carried out, obtained results are summarized, etc.)	22
2.1	Theoretical Foundations of Design	22
2.2	Investigation and Analysis of the Current Status of Tourism Brand Development in Pingqiao Village, Liyang	26
2.3	Strategies for Tourism Brand Development in Pingqiao Village, Liyang, Under the Integration of Agriculture, Culture, and Tourism	32
	Conclusions to Chapter 2	36
CHAPTER 3.	**DESIGN PROPOSAL** (relating to the research subject)	38
3.1	Idea. Concept	38
3.2	Project Description	39
3.3	Practical Implementation	40
	Conclusions to Chapter 3	42
	CONCLUSIONS	44
	LIST OF REFERENCES	46
	APPENDIX A (analogues)	49
	APPENDIX B (sketch and project proposal)	51

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

ABSTRACT

Chen Xingyi.The Visual Image of the Pingqiao Village Tourism Brand in the Context of the Integration of Culture, Tourism, and Local Identity— Manuscript. Master's Thesis submitted for the degree of Master, specialty B2 Design, Educational and Professional Program "Visual Communication Design." — Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts. Kharkiv, 2026.

Pingqiao Village is located on the Liyang No. 1 Highway in the Yangtze River Delta and is one of the more famous rural areas in the delta. This project creates a tourism brand identity of the village. The design is based on the essence of what's special about the place: the old Pingqiao Stone Dam, the relatively untouched forest ecosystem, the traditions handed down through the generations of farming, and the folk traditions that still exist. From these assets, a brand-new IP character is created, along with a visual system which includes colour standards, logotype design, merchandising and promotional materials. What emerges is a working visual identity the village can put to use in day-to-day tourism operations.

There are a number of issues that affect Pingqiao Village at once, with the study identifying three that directly affect the brand: Pingqiao Village is in a challenging market position; marketing is scattered; and its relationship with local heritage does not penetrate the surface. Using Aaker's brand equity framework together with established branding principles, the design process brings visitor expectations, heritage protection and commercial viability into line with one another. The water-conservancy heritage of the Stone Dam is treated as the chief point of difference, so that the outcome does not simply repeat what other villages in the region have already done.

The study is in keeping with Jiangsu Province's current policies on rural revitalisation and cultural tourism, and it builds on existing scholarship in destination branding and in the integration of agriculture, culture and tourism. First-hand material came from field visits made over several rounds, face-to-face semi-structured interviews with villagers and with people running tourism businesses, and more than 230 usable

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

questionnaires filled in by visitors on site. The team also examined more than a dozen well-established rural tourism brands in China and drew on what those places had got right, in order to refine the final branding strategy and design proposal. By joining theoretical analysis to hands-on design work, the study hopes to offer other resource-rich villages in the Yangtze River Delta a practical reference when they set about building tourism brands. The Stone Dam at Pingqiao carries ecological value and cultural meaning that are not easily found elsewhere, which gives the village a genuine basis on which to grow into a destination with a distinct cultural character. For these reasons the thesis takes Pingqiao Village as its object of study, under the title Research on Tourism Brand Development of Pingqiao Village in Liyang from the Perspective of Agricultural, Cultural and Tourism Integration.

Keywords: Agricultural, Cultural and tourism integration; Rural revitalization; Rural tourism; Brand development; Pingqiao Village, Liyang

INTRODUCTION

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

Relevance of the research: National policy on rural revitalisation now leans towards growing agriculture, culture and tourism together. Against that background, rural tourism in China is moving away from simply exploiting whatever resources happen to be at hand and towards development led by strategy and brand.Pingqiao Village in Liyang possesses a considerable amount of natural and cultural resources to leverage, foremost of which is the old Stone Dam, extensive bamboo and tea forests, and traditional farming practices that are not yet extinct. Despite all these benefits, it has not been spared of the challenges faced by the general industry. It's identity in the market is almost identical to that of the nearby villages; the narrative it can deliver to visitors regarding its own heritage is relatively weak; marketing is outsourced with no shared message; and it offers visitors little variety or something to absorb.

To address these limitations, the study first makes an inventory of what Pingqiao currently possesses, both materialistically and immaterially, and an inspection of the current assembly of Pingqiao's brand. Next, it questions how branding for this specific location can help to consolidate the resources of various sectors, elicit cultural stories that have been previously untold, and increase the monetary investment of visitors. The framework that emerges provides options for ways of working that Pingqiao can do to become more visible as a destination, to be more attractive to visitors and to continue functioning for the long term.

Purpose of the research: In order to know the current state of Pingqiao Village, its operating mechanism and the restriction to its development, the research combines the agriculture, culture and tourism aspects based on Aaker's Brand Equity Model and destination branding. At the heart of the investigation is a new narrative on local resources that have long been overlooked: the water heritage of the Stone Dam and the bamboo and tea systems associated with it, and the ways of life still lived in the village. These are what are informing the branding plan and the unified visual identity system (VIS). To see if the plan can work on the ground it is translated into design outputs: original IP character, a series of creative products for merchandising and promotional products for the village.

To achieve this purpose, the **following objectives** are set:

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

– Integrate the basic concepts, theories and literature on agri-cultural-tourism synergy, dynamics of rural destination and place branding and build a theoretical foundation for further empirical application and design implementation.

–Conduct fieldwork in Pingqiao Village to explore its geography, agricultural resource distribution, cultural background and the actual situation of everyday life to recognize potential unexploited competitive advantages and potential unexploited development areas.

– To assess the current state of tourism brand development in Pingqiao Village using Aaker's Brand Equity Model, with particular attention to brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand associations, perceived quality, and other proprietary brand assets.

–To propose targeted branding strategies in response to such issues as homogeneous positioning, insufficient cultural exploration, and an incomplete communication system.

– To extract regional design elements from the Pingqiao Stone Dam, streams, bamboo forests, tea plantations, and other local resources; to define the brand positioning; and to establish a tourism visual identity system.

– To carry out design practice involving an IP character, cultural and creative products, promotional posters, and visitor guidance materials, and to evaluate their value for agricultural, cultural, and tourism integration as well as brand communication.

Object of the research – The development of the tourism brand of Pingqiao Village, Liyang, and its model of agricultural, cultural, and tourism integration.

Subject of the research – The resource base, current development status, branding strategies, and visual design practice of Pingqiao Village's tourism brand. The study also addresses a very practical point which has great significance: how the three assets already available at the site – the water heritage of the Stone Dam, the farming system of bamboo and tea and the genuine ways of life in the village – can be transformed into brand equity which is unique and which can be conveyed through multiple communication channels simultaneously.

Chronological framework of the research – It is not a purely theoretical research. It is based on the empirical study on Pingqiao Village's tourism branding for three years,

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

spanning from 2024 to 2026. This period represents one complete cycle of agricultural practises: the first launches of agriculture-culture-tourism projects and the first positioning exercises, and the introduction of the main operational improvements. In parallel to this, the study integrates the present-day branding in the village's historical context: the intangible cultural assets that are passed down from generation to generation are incorporated into the system of identity that is emerging from the study.

Territorial framework of the research – Pingqiao Village, Tianmuhu Town, Liyang, Jiangsu, and the repeated field surveys and first-hand data. The spatial frame is not limited by administrative boundaries, but also covers the Liyang No. 1 Highway scenic corridor as a regional reference point, ensuring that the brand is not inward-looking and deviates from the wide spatial planning.The empirical scope reaches further still, to the behaviour of consumers across the Yangtze River Delta, so that the finished identity system matches what visitors from within the region are looking for.

Research methods: This research adopts a multi-method mixed research framework that tightly combines theoretical sorting and hands-on design practice, covering six core approaches: targeted literature review, repeated field investigation, semi-structured in-depth interview, on-site visitor questionnaire, comparative case study, and iterative design practice.

The research team first systematically sorts out and interprets national and local policy documents related to rural revitalization and cultural tourism, alongside existing peer-reviewed academic literature in the fields of agriculture-culture-tourism integration and destination branding. After that, the team completes long-term on-site observation of the village’s daily tourism operation, conducts face-to-face interviews with local villagers and small tourism business operators, and collects over 230 valid questionnaires from on-site visiting tourists. On the basis of these first-hand empirical data, the team carries out targeted comparative analysis on 12 mature, widely recognized rural tourism branding cases across China. All the conclusions drawn from the above steps are finally integrated into the complete, actionable tourism brand visual design practice tailored for Pingqiao Village.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

Practical significance of the research: Anchored in the hydraulic heritage of the Pingqiao Stone Dam and complemented by the surrounding bamboo-tea agro-ecosystem, this study yields an operational visual identity system (VIS) tailored for rural tourism. The practical product includes the main elements of destination brand: positioning statement to distinguish the village, standardised logos and colour schemes, an IP character developed based on a story, scene illustrations to encourage visitors to immerse themselves in the atmosphere, a visitor map, selected merchandising and promotional material for use across channels.

The system is more than a series of independent graphic elements: it is a comprehensive blueprint for destination management over time. It is directly linked to the presentation of local culture, study tours focused on water conservancy, packaging of specialty farm products, targeted social media campaigns and upgrading of public facilities. Nor is it limited to Pingqiao; other rural communities in the Yangtze River Delta with their own resources can implement the model and take it further.

Publications on the topic (if any): NO.

Structure and scope of the thesis.

The work consists of an introduction, three chapters, conclusions, a list of references (__ items), and an illustration album (__ items). The main body of the research comprises … pages, the total volume with appendices is … pages.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

CHAPTER 1

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE ISSUE. RESEARCH METHODS

1.1. Review of the Literature

1 Research Background

Rapid socio-economic transformation has blurred the boundaries between industries, making integrated development across sectors increasingly valuable. The integrated development of agriculture, culture, and tourism is a notable example of this trend. In recent years, the economic, cultural, and social importance of integrating cultural and tourism industries has received widespread attention from the central and local governments in China. These governments have continuously promoted rural revitalization and the integrated development of cultural and tourism industries. The integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism has evolved from an optional industrial-development approach into a national strategic priority. A series of policies has encouraged rural areas to draw on local agricultural, cultural, and ecological resources, cultivate distinctive rural tourism brands, and advance the transformation and upgrading of rural industries.

China’s 14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural and Tourism Development calls in so many words for culture and tourism to be brought together in rural areas, for high-quality destination brands to be developed, and for the sector as a whole to work more efficiently, all as levers of lasting revitalisation. This policy setting supplies local practice with the institutional backing it needs and with a strategic direction, when agricultural resources, cultural heritage and place-based branding are combined. The 2024 No. 1 Central Document set out the same aim: a modern rural industrial system that ties agriculture, culture and tourism closely together.The 2025 No.1 Central Document further emphasized the need to promote deeper integration between rural cultural resources and the tourism industry, positioning the cross-sector integration of agriculture and tourism as one of the core engines to activate long-underutilized rural resources, and smooth the two-way flow of production factors between urban and rural

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

areas. The 2026 No.1 Central Document continued to deepen this policy direction, proposing to further expand the depth of agriculture-culture-tourism integration and drive the full upgrading of rural tourism products and services.

This integrated development model takes rural communities as its core spatial carrier, local characteristic agriculture as its industrial foundation, local villagers as the main participants and beneficiaries, unique regional culture as its core distinguishing soul, and tourism operation as the key connecting link. It drives deep cross-sector collaboration and coordinated interaction among all relevant stakeholders in the rural value chain. This model also pushes the whole industry to complete three core transformations: shifting from single-function superficial sightseeing to diversified immersive experiences, moving from blind inefficient resource exploitation to precise targeted investment, and upgrading from extensive rough operation to meticulous user-centered services, so as to realize the overall quality leap of rural tourism. The following section sorts out a series of representative national and local policy documents that guide the integrated development of agriculture and tourism in detail.

At the current stage, rural tourism has become one of the fastest-growing tracks in China’s entire tourism industry, with the total number of tourist visits to rural destinations hitting 1.36 billion. Guided by the overall Rural Revitalization Strategy, rural tourism is going through a full process of modernization, transformation and quality upgrading, and has already grown into a key pillar supporting the high-quality development of rural economy. It plays an irreplaceable role in accelerating the cultivation of distinctive local rural industries, constructing livable and beautiful countryside, and consolidating the achievements of poverty alleviation in underdeveloped mountainous areas.

After years of rapid expansion, China’s rural tourism market has gradually entered a new development stage marked by stock competition and brand-led competition. The traditional extensive development mode that makes use of local natural resources but never invests in brand building can no longer adapt to the increasingly segmented and diversified market demands. As tourist groups’ consumption concepts continue to mature, visitors are no longer satisfied with the most basic rural sightseeing experience.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

Instead, they are paying growing attention to authentic local cultural experiences, slow-paced immersive leisure, and the consumption of distinctive, well-designed cultural and creative products. Correspondingly, tourists have put forward much higher requirements for rural tourism destinations in terms of brand recognition, on-site experience quality and the depth of unique cultural presentation.Branding, differentiation, and high-quality development have therefore become inevitable trends. Meanwhile, the integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism provides a key pathway for addressing the homogenization of rural tourism and the simplification of rural industries. Through the three-dimensional integration of agricultural, cultural, and tourism empowerment, it can maximize the value of rural resources and shape a distinctive core for rural tourism brands. Promoting the cross-sectoral integration of rural tourism with agriculture, culture, and other industries helps overcome the limitations of single-purpose sightseeing, fully release the composite value of diverse rural resources, enrich tourism experiences, and enhance market attractiveness and competitiveness.

Liyang City is located in southern Jiangsu Province, at the junction of Jiangsu and Anhui Provinces, and features diverse landforms, including low mountains, hills, plains, and polder areas. Liyang has actively promoted the deep integration of all-for-one tourism and rural revitalization. Relying on the Liyang No. 1 Road to connect rural resources across the city, it has focused on developing demonstration models of ecological, cultural-tourism, and health-and-wellness villages, while continuously promoting the transition from attraction-based tourism to all-for-one tourism. As an important rural node in western Liyang, Pingqiao Village possesses scarce resources, including Pingqiao Stone Dam—the largest masonry arch dam in Asia—pristine forests and farmland, and traditional local folk customs. These resources provide the core endowment for integrated agriculture–culture–tourism development. However, compared with the mature rural tourism brands in the surrounding areas of Liyang, Pingqiao Village faces such problems as lagging brand development, superficial resource development, and insufficient distinctive identity. Its high-quality resources have not yet been transformed into brand advantages or economic advantages.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

Systematic brand building is therefore needed to activate endogenous rural development momentum and support the high-quality development of all-for-one rural tourism in Liyang.

In summary, incorporating the concepts of cultural-tourism integration and brand development into the rural tourism industry can effectively overcome rural development bottlenecks. How to capitalize on the cultural characteristics of rural areas, develop carriers of rural cultural memory, and explore the connotations of cultural-tourism industry brands are important issues for enhancing rural core competitiveness and necessary pathways toward the sound and sustainable development of the rural tourism industry.

2 Current Status of Domestic Research

(1) Current Status of Domestic Research on the Integration of Agriculture, Culture, and Tourism

As a new development model, the integration of culture and tourism involves the deep integration of concepts, functions, resources, industries, and technologies, and represents an important means of transforming traditional tourism resources into modern industrial forms. At the national level, a series of policies, including the National Rural Industry Development Plan (2020–2025), has explicitly proposed promoting the development of distinctive rural industries and leisure tourism through the integrated development of the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors. Within rural industrial integration, agriculture, as the primary sector, provides a stable basis for income growth and constitutes the foundation of rural revitalization; culture embodies rural memory and symbols and serves as the soul of rural revitalization; and tourism, as a service industry, broadens channels through which farmers can increase their income and achieve prosperity, functioning as a carrier of rural revitalization. How to explore the resources of these three sectors, plan and operate the integrated industries, and enable governments, enterprises, and villagers to collaborate in industrial integration in order to maximize benefits and value are all issues worthy of study. Existing research has developed a substantial body of discussion on the actors and models involved in industrial integration.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

At the end of the twentieth century, Chinese scholars began to study forms of integration between agriculture and tourism. Liu Dahua (1989) first proposed the concept of "integrating agriculture and tourism." Taking Huizhou, Anhui Province, as an example, he explored practical approaches to a "tourism–industry–agriculture" development strategy [1]. Liu Ming (1989) argued that the mutual penetration of urban tourism and suburban tourism had given rise to tourism agriculture as an emerging industry [2]. Zhang Baiqi (1992) further clarified that sightseeing agriculture is an emerging industry based on the integration of tourism and agriculture [3].

In the twenty-first century, domestic academic research on the integration of agriculture and tourism gradually deepened. Ying Ruiyao and Chu Baojin (2002) systematically differentiated the concepts of tourism agriculture and rural tourism, arguing that rural tourism is a broad extension of tourism agriculture whose connotations encompass agricultural production, rural sightseeing, farm-work experiences, and the presentation of rural culture [4]. Yang Junjie and Han Bo (2002) proposed that sightseeing agriculture is a new form of ecotourism based on agriculture and rural areas. Gradually separating from the traditional agricultural economy, it has evolved into a new economic form. This efficient agricultural model combines agriculture with modern tourism, integrates agricultural production, technological applications, artistic creation, and tourists' participation in farming experiences, and realizes the extension and penetration of the primary sector into the tertiary sector; it is thus an emerging industry at the intersection of agriculture and tourism [5].

During the 2010s, Chinese scholars began to focus on practical models and representative cases of agriculture–tourism integration. Xing Qishun (2018) argued that cultural industries in ethnic minority areas of Southwest China developed and prospered under the impetus of tourism. At the same time, ethnic cultural industries endowed tourism with rich content, creating a pattern of mutually reinforcing and integrated development. Yang Yun and Jia Ding (2021) proposed an integrated development model of "agriculture + culture + tourism," arguing that local tourism should be developed through the strength of agricultural and cultural industries, and that rural tourism should ultimately drive the comprehensive development of local rural

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

economies. Their research puts particular emphasis on the path to advance comprehensive rural revitalization through targeted cultural empowerment and cross-sector industrial integration, and points out that brand building is a core missing link in many local integration practices [6]. Chen Jia'ao and co-authors published their findings in 2021, noting that the cultural sector and tourism industry share highly aligned long-term development goals, and there exists a logically consistent internal connection between their operational logics. Rural spaces are complex natural-social composite ecosystems, which carry rich accumulated humanistic and historical resources, superior inherent ecological endowments, and deep-rooted connotations of traditional agricultural civilization. This determines that the high-quality development of these regions cannot be separated from the deep integration of local culture and tourism. By digging into local cultural assets with thorough field research, applying these cultural elements effectively in tourism product design, and smoothing the two-way flow of people and resources between urban and rural areas, the integration of culture and tourism can further empower rural revitalization through multiple practical paths: systematically integrating scattered resources across different sectors, driving the coordinated development of related industries, realizing the superimposed value of different functions, raising the added value of all production factors, optimizing the original industrial structure, and continuously improving the overall public service functions of rural communities [7].

(2) Current Status of Domestic Research on Rural Tourism

Domestic academic research recognized rural tourism relatively early. However, with the vigorous development of the rural tourism industry, rural brand building based on destination culture has continued to break through rural development bottlenecks, making more comprehensive and in-depth theoretical research in related fields necessary. Cai Kexin (2018) pointed out that rural tourism is, in essence, the result of the integrated development of tourism services and traditional agriculture, and it has brought multiple positive effects to rural development. As China has intensified rural reform, its rural tourism industry has shown unprecedented prosperity, and rural tourism has gradually become a core pathway for implementing the Rural

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

Revitalization Strategy [8]. Zhu Yunhai (2020) argued that rurality is not only the core characteristic of rural tourism but also its unique attraction. Since rural and urban areas are interdependent, rurality in rural tourism should be understood from the perspective of lifestyle and dynamically adjusted within the opposition and unity of urbanity and rurality. Rural tourism not only highlights rural characteristics but also reassesses the value of rural resources. The quality of rural tourism experiences is influenced and constrained by the landscape-based expression of rurality. Continuously developing rural tourism has produced positive effects and impacts across many aspects of society [9]. Xu Shuhong (2020) noted that the economic effects generated by rural tourism do not depend solely on the inherent endowments of natural resources; more importantly, they are closely related to the development level of upstream and downstream industries associated with rural tourism and to the construction of transport-network infrastructure [10]. Sun Jiuxia and her co-authors put forward their core viewpoints in the 2023 special issue focused on rural tourism and common prosperity. They pointed out that rural tourism carries irreplaceable practical value in driving targeted poverty reduction in underdeveloped rural areas, promoting balanced social equity between urban and rural communities, and meeting the growing spiritual and cultural needs of the general public. These values are highly consistent with the core connotation of China's common prosperity goal, which has been elevated as one of the key features of Chinese path to modernization. Centered on three core development directions — promoting the high-quality transformation of rural tourism, advancing the integrated two-way flow of urban and rural resources, and realizing the all-round development of local villagers — the research team constructed an innovative development path for rural tourism resource exploitation. Three features define this path: resources are used efficiently, several parties share the work of governance, and ecological and cultural sustainability is treated as a long-term matter. Together they give rural tourism a clear framework to act on, one that in the end helps bring common prosperity closer at the local level [11].

(3) Current Status of Domestic Research on Agriculture–Culture–Tourism Branding

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

Zhang Qingnian, Qin Jianxin, and Yang Yun (1999) noted that, in early 1996, sightseeing agricultural areas could establish public recognition, favorable reputation, and strong market competitiveness through corporate identity (CI) planning and implementation [12]. This was the first study to emphasize the practical value of visual design in tourism agriculture. By the 1990s, sightseeing agriculture in China had taken shape, and, in addition to tourism experiences, people began to attach importance to visual aesthetics during travel. With the in-depth implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy, the integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism has become an important pathway for advancing agricultural branding.

Against the background of integrated agriculture–culture–tourism development, enhancing rural tourism destination brands has become a research focus. Based on an investigation of rural tourism destination brands in Zhengzhou, Chen Hui (2022) proposed improving the brand competitiveness of rural tourism destinations through such measures as optimizing brand image, improving service quality, and strengthening cultural connotations. The research explicitly points out that the core of high-quality rural tourism branding lies in two mutually complementary priorities. On one hand, it must dig deep into the unique local cultural genes that cannot be replicated by neighboring villages, and present these cultural connotations in a way that is easy for tourists to perceive and resonate with. At the same time, destinations have to put together a range of experiences that keep pace with the way visitors' behaviour changes; otherwise they risk ending up like everywhere else [13].

Systematic visual branding is recognized as an important means of connecting agriculture, culture and tourism as the Rural Revitalisation Strategy has been implemented throughout the country. It's becoming increasingly apparent that a consistent visual expression that reflects local culture is more than just window dressing. It is a strategic capital, it penetrates the market clutter and embeds the brand in the minds of the target groups.Through a study of the visual design of Yinli Village's agriculture–tourism brand, Li Zhulin (2023) explored how innovative visual-symbol design can communicate local cultural characteristics and strengthen tourists' awareness and identification with agriculture–culture–tourism brands. The study

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

showed that visual design should not only reflect local characteristics but also adopt contemporary forms of expression to attract younger consumer groups. Chinese scholars have also examined regional differences and development trends in agriculture–culture–tourism brand design [14].

Chinese scholars have further explored the role of agriculture–culture–tourism integration in enhancing agricultural brand value and promoting the upgrading of agricultural industrial structures. Duan Xiaokun's 2024 research takes Hechuan District, Chongqing as a typical empirical case, and systematically explores how the deep integration of agriculture, culture and tourism can reshape the unique regional cultural tourism brand image. After sorting out the full picture of Hechuan's three-dimensional resource endowment across agriculture, local culture and tourism sectors, the study puts forward three targeted optimization paths to boost the overall value of the regional cultural tourism brand: further tapping the unique local cultural resources that carry regional memory, iterating and upgrading the whole chain of tourist experience links, and building a more recognizable and consistent overall brand image [15].

Based on the field investigation of the local agriculture-culture-tourism integration practices in Nanchang, Ma Fufang and her co-authors published their targeted research conclusions in 2024. They proposed that local regions should break the original fragmented resource boundaries, integrate scattered agricultural, cultural and tourism resources in a coordinated way, so as to cultivate a batch of distinctive local agricultural brands with strong regional recognition, and effectively enhance their core competitiveness in the consumer market. The study also points out that this cross-sector integration can not only effectively extend the original short industrial value chain of local characteristic agriculture, but also significantly raise the added value of agricultural brands through the dual empowerment of unique cultural connotation and immersive tourism experience [16].

3 Current Status of International Research

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

(1) Current Status of International Research on the Integration of Agriculture, Culture, and Tourism

In international academic circles, there is still no unified, universally accepted explicit definition for the exact concept of "agriculture-culture-tourism integration". Instead, existing relevant research mostly focuses on the synergistic coordination and close interactive linkages among the agricultural sector, cultural and creative industries, and tourism, as well as how their cross-sector collaboration can drive sustainable rural development. However, in real-world practice, many countries have carried out integrated development of these three sectors for decades, and accumulated a large number of widely recognized classic local cases, which provides a rich practical reference and empirical foundation for subsequent in-depth academic research.

Japan’s mature agriculture-culture-tourism development model takes local characteristic agricultural production, the deep value-added processing of local agricultural products, and immersive leisure tourism experiences as its three core pillars. Led by top-level government guidance, the system provides targeted support and professional guidance for local communities to tap their own advantageous tourism resources within specific administrative regions, and nurture highly distinctive localized agriculture-culture-tourism projects. Representative practices include the historic old street regeneration initiatives and the world-famous One Village One Product Movement, both of which are highly successful community co-construction practices in Japan’s characteristic rural village-building campaigns. France boasts a centuries-long history of agritourism development, and has gradually formed a highly professional farm-centered operation model. By focusing on the high-quality development of eco-friendly green agritourism, leveraging the power of non-governmental industry organizations to promote and standardize the orderly development of agritourism, and developing a diversified portfolio of characteristic farm experience projects, the country has achieved remarkable comprehensive benefits covering economic growth, social cohesion and ecological protection [17].

International academic research on agriculture-culture-tourism integration covers four core dimensions: the multi-dimensional impacts of rural tourism, targeted

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

development strategies, the internal driving logic of cross-sector integration, and long-term sustainable development paths. Pearce published his classic research in 1990, systematically analyzing the unique economic effects of farm tourism practices in New Zealand, and pointing out that well-designed rural tourism projects can create stable additional non-agricultural income for local farmers, while effectively stimulating the growth of surrounding related supporting industries [18]. From a professional sociological research perspective, Kneafsey's 2001 study explored and verified the significant positive role of rural tourism in enhancing local community cohesion and promoting the intergenerational inheritance of unique local cultural traditions [19]. Busby and Rendle summarized the practical experience of global sustainable agritourism models in their 2000 research, and put forward a series of development frameworks with strong practical guiding value, including but not limited to the "enterprise + rural household" operation model, the "government + enterprise + rural tourism association + travel agency" multi-stakeholder collaborative model, and the decentralized "rural household + rural household" mutual cooperation model [20].Fleischer and Felsenstein (2000) argued that the central driver of rural tourism is the pursuit of differentiated experiences: tourists seek to escape the monotony of urban life and experience rural nature and culture through rural tourism [21]. Fleischer and Tchetchik (2005) examined the motivations for integrating agriculture and tourism and argued that agritourism is an effective means of optimizing agricultural structures and promoting diversified agricultural operations [22]. Through research on the integrated development of agriculture and tourism in Japan, Yasuo Ohe et al. (2013) found that rural tourism can not only promote the sale of agricultural products but also diversify rural economies. This finding further verifies the contribution of agriculture–culture–tourism integration to rural economic development [23].

(2) Current Status of International Research on Rural Tourism

At the conceptual level, Campón (2017) summarized the defining characteristics of rural tourism as territoriality, culturality, ecological value, experientiality, and leisure orientation [24]. Alarcón (2021) argued that rural tourism is a means of inheriting and promoting rural culture. Rural communities are home to a wealth of

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

well-preserved historical heritage, time-honored cultural traditions and vivid local folk customs. These unique, non-replicable cultural assets allow visiting tourists to immerse themselves in authentic local life and gain in-depth, first-hand understanding of this precious cultural heritage, which in turn effectively drives the active intergenerational inheritance and targeted protection of these long-overlooked cultural treasures [25]. Hussain shows that rural tourism, when it is properly organised, works on two fronts at once, economic and environmental. It builds a framework sturdy enough to hold together local income, care for the ecosystem, and a working relationship between the community and its surroundings [26].

On the question of cultural value, Falak argues that a destination can thrive only if its growth is rooted in local capital that is genuinely its own: everyday architecture, folkways still practised, and habits of daily life specific to the place. These are what drive competitive difference in the first place. Curated with care, rural tourism brings outside visitors into contact with local heritage, which keeps cultural transmission going and lets it adapt to the present [27].

Prabhakaran makes a related point: for rural tourism to grow, natural and socio-cultural assets that have lain idle must be put to work. Drawing on resources that were previously underused opens up new sources of revenue, gives neighbouring sectors a push, and adds directly to household income earned off the farm [28]. Mwesiumo (2022) takes the argument further, holding that success over the long term depends in the end on protecting the environment, with several stakeholders sharing the responsibility.The widespread promotion and public dissemination of rural tourism concepts can make more members of the general public fully realize the irreplaceable importance of protecting the rural ecological environment, thus significantly raising the overall public awareness of ecological and environmental protection [29].

(3) Current Status of International Research on Agriculture–Culture–Tourism Branding

Against the backdrop of the continuous boom of global tourism and the steady rise of consumers' brand awareness, targeted brand design for agriculture-culture-tourism integrated projects has gradually grown into a key research focus that draws

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

widespread attention from both academic circles and industrial practice communities. International scholars have carried out systematic, in-depth examinations covering multiple core dimensions of such brands, including value enhancement paths, systematic visual design, consumer brand loyalty cultivation, and regional public brand building. Their research outputs provide highly valuable practical references for both theoretical innovation and on-site industrial development in this specific field.

International studies on the value of agriculture-culture-tourism brands mainly center on two core directions: consumers' subjective perception of brand value, and their actual diversified demands for such value. Academic consensus has been reached that consumers' perception of agricultural product brand value covers four mutually complementary dimensions: emotional resonance value, social identity value, functional utility value, and cognitive recognition value. From the unique perspective of social media operation, Barcelos put forward his core argument in 2019: the modern definition of a tourism brand focuses more on the destination or tourism enterprise's overall brand image and accumulated public reputation across various social media platforms. This includes all positive information about the destination or enterprise disseminated through official social media accounts, massive authentic user-generated content shared by real tourists, and all kinds of two-way interactive communications between the brand and its target audiences [30].

Liang's 2020 research points out that tourism brands need to precisely align the core value of the destination or its featured products with the real needs and implicit expectations of target consumer groups, through well-designed effective branding strategies and multi-channel systematic communication. Ultimately, the journey in this direction creates a coherent public image and a unique brand identity. The success of the destination to continue to attract visitors is primarily based on three factors: products with some originality, services that are dependable and experiences that are absorbing and not easily replicable [31]. Mandagi (2021) extends the lens, and places place branding in four dimensions which are interdependent: a story that is place-specific, experiences of place, place environment, and place stakeholders.Among them, well-told local stories are positioned at the absolute core of the brand, which can

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

effectively attract tourists by vividly presenting the destination's unique history, time-honored culture and precious folk traditions. Tourist experiences refer to the exclusive, personalized feelings and lasting precious memories that visitors gain throughout their entire travel journey. The destination environment covers all tangible elements including local natural scenery, characteristic architectural style, and the overall intangible social atmosphere. Meanwhile, local governments, operating enterprises, village communities and individual villagers are all key stakeholders that play irreplaceable, crucial roles in the whole process of tourism brand establishment and long-term sustainable growth [32].

The visual design of agriculture–culture–tourism brands should emphasize interactive experiences between brands and consumers. Packaging design, visual symbols, and brand stories can communicate a brand's core value and enhance consumer identification and loyalty. Ulrich R. Orth (2008), a professor at Oregon State University in the United States, proposed that authentic brands should adopt natural packaging design, whereas powerful brands require sophisticated design; a brand's visual identity should correspond to its core values and brand positioning [33]. Schoormans et al. (2015) proposed a systematic design approach, arguing that brand visual design should begin with consumer research to understand consumers' perceptions of product attributes and brand value, followed by the formulation of design guidelines that visualize product attributes and brand values. By combining consumer research with design guidelines, brand value can ultimately be communicated with precision [34].

1.2. Research Methods

(1) Literature Review Method：Based on the research topic and objectives, this study reviews documentary materials concerning Pingqiao Village in Liyang in order to understand its historical and cultural context, current market demands, and design trends. Appropriate theoretical foundations and practical rationales are identified to provide theoretical and practical references for the development of Pingqiao Village's tourism brand.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

(2) Field Research Method : Through on-site investigation, photographic documentation, and site observation, this study examines local cultural resources and tourism development, and gains an in-depth understanding of the area's social and cultural conditions and historical background. It identifies Pingqiao Village's practical needs for this design research, thereby providing an empirical basis for brand research and improving the subsequent practice of tourism brand development in Pingqiao Village.

(3) Case Study Method : This study reviews domestic and international research reports and successful, relevant cases of agriculture–culture–tourism brand development. It analyzes their theoretical concepts, design methods, forms of element extraction, and approaches to integrating culture with regional characteristics. This process offers direct insight into design outcomes and provides references for the research in terms of design forms and strategies.

(4) Design Practice Method : By integrating the overall cultural and resource endowments of Pingqiao Village in Liyang, this study combines theoretical knowledge with design practice. It applies contemporary brand-design methods and develops visual design proposals to create an integrated tourism brand system for Pingqiao Village, including a logo, standard typeface, brand IP design, wayfinding system, cultural and creative products, and packaging for distinctive agricultural products. In this way, the study seeks to support the development of the tourism industry in Pingqiao Village, Liyang.

Conclusions to Chapter 1

This chapter discusses the research background, the current status of domestic and international research, and the research methods for tourism brand development in Pingqiao Village, Liyang. First, against the policy background of the Rural Revitalization Strategy and the continuing deepening of agriculture–culture–tourism integration, rural tourism is gradually shifting from extensive, resource-driven development toward branding, differentiation, and high-quality development. With distinctive resources such as Pingqiao Stone Dam, forests and farmland, and local folk customs, Pingqiao Village has a sound foundation for integrated agriculture–culture–

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

tourism development and tourism brand building. However, it still faces such problems as an indistinct brand image, superficial resource development, and insufficient market recognition.It is therefore highly necessary to systematically boost the local tourism appeal and overall market competitiveness of Pingqiao Village through a well-planned, full-coverage brand design system.

Second, a comprehensive review of relevant domestic and international research findings confirms that a solid, mature theoretical foundation has been established across three core research fields: the integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism, high-quality rural tourism transformation, and targeted tourism brand building. Existing studies have reached a broad consensus that the coordinated integration of scattered agricultural, cultural and tourism resources plays an irreplaceable role in upgrading local rural industries, steadily increasing farmers' household income, protecting and inheriting precious local cultural heritage, and realizing long-term sustainable rural development. At the same time, rural destinations set themselves apart through a visual language that is distinct, cultural narratives that ring true, and experience design that draws people in. These concepts from literature coalesce to provide Pingqiao Village with a baseline for its branding cycle.

The method in the inquiry is a combination of literature review, field surveys, similar case evaluations, and application design. All of this serves to analyse the village's history, agricultural and ecological resources, current state of tourism and the unmet needs of the community, as well as doing all of this from multiple angles simultaneously. Based on that, the study creates the visual identity system (VIS) for the local conditions. The project connects theory and practice in a specific location and leads to an identity that resonates with the local culture, is memorable to the public, and can be adapted and applied over multiple channels, providing the brand a platform on which to build and evolve over the years.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF DESIGN THEORY AND PRACTICE

2.1. Theoretical Foundations of Design

The Integration of Agriculture, Culture, and Tourism

The Agriculture, Culture and Tourism nexus is not a one-size-fits-all combination of different sectors, but rather a collaboration between them. Once the old dividing lines between sectors are removed, resources can be shared both ways and the sectors can cooperate in earnest. Out of that exchange come offerings and experiences that mix culture with tourism, the kind no single sector could produce on its own, which in turn makes the destination more appealing and strengthens the region's cultural influence.

As the sectors involved develop, convergence comes to depend more and more on planning that covers space as a whole, on bringing scattered regional assets together

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

on purpose, and on several stakeholders coordinating what they do. These demands have pushed the field's conceptual framework out into more dimensions, resting all the while on the established theory of industrial convergence.This theory emphasizes the deep penetration and interactive convergence of the agriculture, cultural and tourism sectors, and its core goal is to realize long-term coordinated and high-quality industrial development through full resource sharing and complementary advantages among different industries.In practice, models such as rural tourism complexes and agricultural theme parks have emerged, successfully integrating rural culture, natural landscapes, and tourism experiences and providing abundant practical examples of such integration. However, this trend also imposes higher requirements on brand building. Brand development should deeply explore and integrate local cultural and agricultural characteristics, and create brand images with both cultural depth and aesthetic value according to the principles of creativity, recognizability, and sustainability. This not only enhances the competitiveness and market influence of agriculture–culture–tourism industries, but also offers new ideas and directions for the sustainable development of rural industries.

With the acceleration of economic globalization and technological progress, the rapid development of computers, the Internet, and communication technologies has broken down the technological barriers of traditional industries and stimulated cross-industry technological integration. As industrial boundaries have gradually blurred, industrial integration theory has emerged and quickly become a new driving force for optimizing economic structures and promoting economic growth. In this context, the integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism, as an important practical form of industrial integration, has become a key pathway for advancing rural revitalization and regional economic development. With the in-depth implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy, rural ecological, cultural, and agricultural resources have been re-explored and integrated, making the convergence of agricultural, cultural, and tourism industries an inevitable trend. The integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism is not only a breakthrough in traditional industrial models but also a comprehensive upgrading of rural economic, cultural, and social functions.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

By organically integrating the core productive function of local characteristic agriculture, the intergenerational heritage function of unique rural culture, and the immersive leisure experience function of tourism, the agriculture-culture-tourism integration forms a highly synergistic composite industrial model of "agriculture + culture + tourism". This model not only effectively raises the added value of local agricultural products, but also drives the inheritance and innovative transformation of precious rural cultural traditions, while greatly enriching the supply of high-quality, distinctive tourism products.

At the same time, against the backdrop of continuous consumption upgrading and the public's growing pursuit of a higher quality of life, this integrated development model opens up entirely new possibilities for fully meeting tourists' diversified, personalized experience demands, and injects lasting new vitality into the long-term sustainable development of the rural economy. Digital infrastructure and platforms that work across several channels extend how far cross-sector integration reaches and how deeply it goes. With synergy between online and offline contact points, rural destination can advertise its farm products, cultural products and hospitality services to a larger group of consumers, creating brand equity and making the destination more competitive and more visible.

Beyond its effect on economic growth, this model of convergence suggests new ways of planning the urban–rural continuum and of governing rural areas more generally. Conceptually, industrial convergence theory provides the scaffolding for agriculture-culture-tourism synergy, while practical work in the field puts those theoretical claims to the test. The two feed each other and, in the end, drive economic, cultural and social renewal across rural areas.

Rural Tourism

Rural tourism covers the trips people make to the countryside in order to experience rural life, culture and natural scenery. It takes rural areas as its main destination and sets out to develop the local economy and carry local culture forward, while giving visitors something they do not find in the city. The idea took shape in 1970s Europe, at a time when people were beginning to pay closer attention to what

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

urbanisation was doing to the countryside. It was meant to reconcile rural economic development with care for the environment, and it has since become one of the mainstays of the global travel industry, drawing a wider range of travellers each year.

Variety and personalisation are what define rural tourism today. Differences in natural ecology and cultural heritage from one region to the next produce a wide range of offerings, from scenic landscapes and unpolished farm life to food that belongs to a particular locality and folk traditions rooted in place. More and more, the sector puts its weight behind tailor-made service, so that travellers can put together itineraries and activities to suit their own preferences.

Aaker's Brand Equity Theory

Brand equity entered marketing discussion in the 1980s. The idea is that a brand carries commercial value beyond what the product does for the user, and that this value rests on what consumers think and how they feel about the brand. It took hold in academic work and in management practice after David A. Aaker's 1991 book Managing Brand Equity. Aaker (1996) went on to break the concept down into five dimensions: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary brand assets. Taken together, they show that what customers know about a brand is the main source of strategic difference; it lets a firm charge more, keep its customers, and defend itself in markets where competition is already crowded.

Brand-Building Theory

With the ongoing advance of globalization and increasingly intense market competition, brands have become a key factor enabling enterprises to establish a foothold in the market. The development of brand-building theory has progressed from singular to diversified approaches and from practice to theory, providing enterprises with a rich range of brand-building methods and strategies. The origins of brand-building theory can be traced to the early twentieth century, when economists began to focus on the value of corporate brands. In Confessions of an Advertising Man, Ogilvy (1923) proposed the concept of brand image and related theoretical propositions in 1961. These ideas were subsequently supplemented and developed, giving rise to theories of brand equity, brand identity, and brand positioning. David Ogilvy argued

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

that a brand is not merely a name or a logo, but an image with distinctive value and personality; his concept of "brand image" is representative of this stage.

In the brand relationship stage of the 1990s, scholars began to examine relationships between tourism consumers and brands and proposed brand relationship models. Brand-building theory at this stage emphasized establishing and maintaining long-term, stable relationships with tourism consumers in order to improve brand loyalty and word-of-mouth communication. In the twenty-first century, the widespread adoption of the Internet and social media has profoundly changed the environment for brand building. Brand-building theory has begun to focus on the position and role of brands within ecosystems. In The Future of Branding in the Digital Age, Harris (2005) emphasized collaboration and interaction between brands and other stakeholders in order to achieve sustainable brand development.

Positioning theory is a marketing theory proposed by Ries and Trout in The Battle for Your Mind in the 1970s. It emphasizes how enterprises can establish a distinctive brand image through differentiation and focus in market competition, thereby attracting target tourism consumer groups and gaining a competitive advantage. Positioning is the most central, fundamental, and earliest concept within positioning theory. Ries, Trout, and other scholars proposed key positioning strategies, including focused positioning and differentiated positioning. Focused positioning holds that enterprises should concentrate on meeting the needs of specific target tourism consumer groups rather than attempting to appeal to all tourism consumers. By concentrating on a particular market segment, enterprises can better understand the needs of target tourism consumers and provide more precise products or services. This type of focused positioning can help enterprises establish a leading position in the target market. Differentiated positioning holds that enterprises should establish a distinctive brand image by emphasizing their differences from competitors. Differentiation can be reflected in product characteristics, brand image, pricing strategies, and other aspects….

The second chapter analyzes design theory and practice, considers the subject of the

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

research, emphasizes the hypothesis, carries out classification, and summarizes the obtained results.

2.2. Investigation and Analysis of the Current Status of Tourism Brand Development in Pingqiao Village, Liyang

1 Basic Conditions for the Development of Agriculture, Culture, and Tourism in Pingqiao Village, Liyang

Pingqiao Village sits in Tianmuhu Town, Liyang, Jiangsu, and shows the mountain-and-water settlement pattern typical of southern Jiangsu. Because it lies along the Liyang No. 1 Highway tourism corridor and is close to well-known anchors such as Tianmu Lake, the village can pick up some of the visitors who spill over from them, which gives it a starting point for short-distance leisure, family trips and educational tourism. The terrain itself is a mosaic of low-lying hills and stream valleys, and cropland. The woodland on the slopes, bamboo groves and watercourses merge with the organized farmland in a natural environment which, in contrast with the urban built environment, provides the brand with a unique aesthetic foundation.

At the centre of this spatial arrangement, the old Pingqiao Stone Dam and the network of water connected to it form the destination’s main spatial anchor and its most recognisable feature.This historic stone dam not only creates a highly attractive waterscape node that stands out from ordinary rural destinations, but also carries precious collective spatial memories of local villagers, covering the whole process of water storage, farmland irrigation, and various lively waterside activities in traditional rural production and daily life. Paired with the surrounding gurgling streams, quiet valleys and vast bamboo groves, it lays a solid natural foundation for the unique immersive landscape experience themed "listening to the murmuring waterfall at the ancient stone dam". Extending outward from the stone dam as the core, the village can organically connect scattered farmland, characteristic tea plantations, vast bamboo forests and existing village roads, to build a complete visitor experience route that integrates sightseeing, casual strolling, rest stops and hands-on farming experience. This unique combination of multiple heterogeneous resources provides a solid, multi-

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

dimensional foundation for the tourism brand development, covering visual presentation, on-site experience and cross-platform communication.

As for farming resources, Pingqiao Village has a series of handsome working landscapes: tea plantations laid out in neat rows on the hillsides, thick bamboo groves, wide rice paddies, and crops that change with the season. The distinct linear textures of terraced tea plantations, the unique vertical spatial sense of tall bamboo forests, the broad open views of rice fields, and the dynamic flowing forms of various water bodies are not only basic agricultural production resources, but also high-quality creative materials that can be fully transformed into diversified tourism experience projects and highly recognizable visual design elements for the local tourism brand.In conjunction with seasonal changes, activities such as tea picking and processing, field observation, agricultural-product tasting, and rural sketching can be organized, allowing agriculture to become an experiential content that visitors can participate in and perceive rather than merely a backdrop. Pingqiao Village is therefore well suited to use ecological agriculture as its foundation and integrate agricultural products and farming activities with tourism consumption, creating conditions for agriculture–culture–tourism development that are “tourable, learnable, purchasable, and memorable.”

The cultural value of Pingqiao Village is first manifested in the memory of water-conservancy engineering represented by Pingqiao Stone Dam. The dam is not only an important landmark within the village’s mountain-and-water landscape, but also reflects the local practical wisdom of adapting water resources in mountainous areas to local conditions in order to serve agricultural production and residents’ lives. Compared with ordinary natural attractions, this water-conservancy culture gives Pingqiao Village a layered narrative characterized by “engineering heritage + ecological landscape + everyday memory,” making it a key resource that distinguishes the village from rural tourism destinations based solely on bamboo forests or tea plantations. The village also retains the farming lifestyle and memories of neighborly interaction characteristic of mountain villages in the Jiangnan region. Tea cultivation, bamboo-grove management, field work, and settlement environments built in response to mountains and water together constitute a local culture imbued with everyday

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

warmth. Such cultural resources are not primarily characterized by grand historical monuments; rather, they are embedded in production tools, dietary customs, seasonal activities, local dialect stories, and village life. Brand development should avoid reducing them to superficial symbols. Instead, it should transform dispersed memories of daily life into cultural content that visitors can understand and participate in through oral histories, interpretive wayfinding, study-tour activities, and cultural and creative products.

2 Analysis of the Current Status of Tourism Brand Development in Pingqiao Village, Liyang, Based on Aaker's Brand Equity Theory

(1) Brand Awareness

At present, the tourism brand awareness of Pingqiao Village exhibits a polarized pattern of being "well known locally but niche among non-local visitors." Within Liyang and surrounding counties, Pingqiao Stone Dam, as a locally well-known attraction, has a certain degree of regional recognition. It is visited by local residents and people from nearby cities for short-distance leisure and family outings, and has become a niche check-in destination in the outskirts of Liyang. However, in the all-for-one tourism market of the Yangtze River Delta, Pingqiao Village has very low brand awareness. Most non-local visitors know only such well-known scenic destinations in Liyang as Tianmu Lake and Nanshan Bamboo Sea, and have limited awareness of Pingqiao Village and Pingqiao Stone Dam.

The shortcomings in awareness-building are mainly reflected in three aspects. First, brand exposure is insufficient. Pingqiao Village has not undertaken systematic brand promotion and lacks a dedicated promotional slogan, promotional videos, and an official communication matrix; it relies only on tourists' voluntary check-in posts, resulting in limited exposure. Second, the landmark IP has not been activated. The core resource of Pingqiao Stone Dam has not been developed into an exclusive brand label, and its resource advantages have not been transformed into awareness advantages. Third, communication is confined to a narrow audience segment, consisting mainly of local leisure visitors and failing to reach core tourism source markets in the Yangtze

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

River Delta. The brand's geographic reach is extremely limited, and its overall market awareness remains at an early stage.

(2) Brand Loyalty

Overall tourism brand loyalty for Pingqiao Village remains at a relatively low level, which is directly reflected in the extremely low rates of tourist repeat visits and active word-of-mouth recommendations. Questionnaire surveys and in-depth field interviews confirm that the current visitor base is overwhelmingly dominated by one-time pure sightseeing tourists. Most of these travelers only stop at the village as a brief stop on a short regional trip, with very limited visiting time and almost no access to in-depth local experience opportunities. It follows that they feel little connection to the place while they are there, and form no real attachment to it.

The main practical weakness is the narrow range of experiences on offer. Tourism at present leans heavily on passive sightseeing around the Stone Dam and on superficial check-ins for social media. Hands-on farm work, study routes built around local culture, shops selling creative goods, things to do in the evening—none of these are available, though they are what travellers now expect. Because the range is so narrow, visitors seldom form a lasting attachment to the village.

Things are made worse by infrastructure and service. There is a lack of uniformity in small guesthouses, in local restaurants that do not serve guests, in a place that guests can sit and rest, in signs that show them where they are going, and in the first hand service that guests receive. There is also no follow-up system to communicate with people after they leave – no membership system, no follow-up. This leads to a one-and-done customer experience and can make it difficult to create brand loyalty or retain customers.

(3) Brand Associations

Pingqiao Village has no clear identity in the tourism market at present. Visitors come away with little beyond a basic impression: the old stone dam and ordinary scenery. No single, recognisable brand image has taken hold in the public mind.

What associations do exist stay on the surface. They leave out the cultural heritage, the farm experience and the quiet that set Pingqiao apart from the villages

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

around it. Neighbouring villages have a sharp hook to sell themselves on, such as tea culture, health retreats or intangible cultural heritage. Pingqiao has no such anchor and no story of its own. Its landscaping, spatial design and choice of products share no common thread either. Natural, farming, water and cultural assets each sit apart instead of forming one brand. Tourists therefore come away without a sense of the place as a whole; they remember scenery with no context and notice neither the local heritage, nor the character of its industries, nor the brand itself, which leaves the village hard to tell apart from its competitors.

(4) Perceived Quality

Visitors' overall perceptions of the Pingqiao Village tourism brand are relatively one-sided and low-end, indicating limited brand-perception quality. Most visitors define Pingqiao Village as "a free niche check-in destination" or "a temporary short-distance rest stop." Their perceptions remain at the level of low-end sightseeing, with limited awareness of the village's historical and cultural value, agricultural characteristics, ecological advantages, and cultural-tourism potential. On the one hand, the village has not conveyed core content such as the history of the stone dam, local folk customs, and agricultural culture through interpretive signage, cultural display panels, or site interpretation; cultural presentation is therefore inadequate. On the other hand, tourism products have not been developed with sufficient quality or distinctive character. The village lacks dedicated cultural and creative products and distinctive experience programs, making it difficult for visitors to perceive brand value.

Moreover, tourism services in the village remain relatively extensive, lacking a standardized and refined tourism service system, which further weakens visitor perceptions of the brand. Overall, visitors have insufficient awareness of Pingqiao Village's cultural, experiential, and quality value. Brand perception remains superficial and low-end, making it difficult to establish an impression of a high-quality, premium brand.

(5) Other Proprietary Brand Assets

Pingqiao Village has a serious shortage of ancillary brand assets, resulting in weak capacity for brand value creation. With respect to intellectual-property assets, the

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

village has not registered a dedicated tourism brand trademark and lacks an exclusive logo, IP character, visual identity system, proprietary cultural and creative products, and distinctive tourism products. Its brand intellectual-property assets are effectively absent. With respect to channel assets, the village lacks an official tourism-promotion platform and cooperative tourism channels, and it has not been systematically operated through mainstream online travel agency (OTA) platforms; its communication channels are fragmented. With respect to reputational assets, there are few visitor reviews on online platforms, their content is limited, there is no accumulated high-quality reputation, and mechanisms for reputation maintenance and operation are absent. With respect to industrial support assets, such sectors as homestays, agricultural-product sales, and cultural-tourism experiences have not yet formed an integrated system. The activation rate of idle resources is low, there are no regular or large-scale cultural-tourism operations, and the brand lacks industrial support.Overall, Pingqiao Village's other brand assets are almost entirely undeveloped and cannot support brand-value enhancement or long-term development.

2.3. Strategies for Tourism Brand Development in Pingqiao Village, Liyang, Under the Integration of Agriculture, Culture, and Tourism

From the perspective of deep integration among agriculture, culture, and tourism, and in light of Pingqiao Village's resource endowments and existing branding problems, this study establishes an overall branding approach that is "resource-based, culture-centered, brand-led, experience-focused, and communication-extended." Building on the village's three core strengths—its stone-dam water-conservancy culture, indigenous farming culture, and mountain-and-water ecological resources—the approach seeks to address three major problems: brand homogenization, the absence of a systematic brand framework, and fragmented communication. It is built based on Aaker's brand equity model and forms a complete chain brand building system of positioning differentiation, systematic design, immersive experience, diversified communication and long-term operation.

The success of tourism branding in Pingqiao Village is based on five aspects that complement each other: physical elements, culture and talent, visual image, the

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

activities that can be offered to visitors, and the media/vehicle used to approach visitors. The material starting point is provided by the physical resources, farming conditions and ecology and space. Culture is the main component of the system. What made the village stand out among the other villages that entered in the same area was the water heritage of the Stone Dam and the farming customs that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Brand elements execute the operational work: they translate the strategy into a clear position, a coherent and uniform visual identity and an IP architecture which tells the story and is easy to remember. Experience design is where brand and visitor converge – it's the doing that creates the bonding to the place, and the sense of recognition. The communication takes place in parallel on multiple channels, thereby extending the reach of the brand, both online and offline.

The unification of agriculture, culture and tourism is the binding force of all the foregoing. Experiences and culture are provided by the local farming, raw materials and products are sold through tourism. This combination supports the village's brand equity overall, as it tackles the current brand weaknesses in the village at once: scattered imagery, weak differentiation, value proposition that no one can articulate clearly.

Brand Enhancement Strategies Based on Aaker’s Model

(1) Strategies for Enhancing Brand Awareness

As a small and unique village, the strategy adopts a marker to distinguish Pingqiao Village and increase its market value. The tagline of the positioning is based on three elements of value: the old water-management culture of the stone dam, the unconventional countryside and farm customs which are authentic, and it is very easy to remember. These combine to create a sense of belonging for the village and to avoid the uniformity of lots of rural tourism.

Second, a multi-layered, diversified brand communication matrix will be built from the ground up. The village will launch official accounts on mainstream social media platforms, and release high-quality, targeted content on a regular basis, covering the natural scenery of Pingqiao Stone Dam, authentic daily farming life, little-known

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

local cultural traditions, and practical, detailed travel guides. A batch of highly recognizable viral check-in spots will be laid out across the core scenic area, paired with interactive topical campaigns that encourage visitor participation and spontaneous sharing.

At the same time, Pingqiao Village will carry out coordinated joint promotion and cross-destination route marketing with the cultural-tourism corridor along Liyang No.1 Road, as well as well-established high-profile destinations including Tianmu Lake and Nanshan Bamboo Sea. By integrating Pingqiao Village into Liyang's official high-quality all-for-one tourism routes, the village can leverage the existing large visitor flow of those mature, renowned attractions to rapidly boost its own public visibility.

In addition, the village will regularly host distinctive localized events including seasonal rural farming experience festivals, the annual Pingqiao Stone Dam landscape photography competition, and intangible local culture experience festivals. These events will be polished into fixed annual branded event IPs, which can continuously attract targeted tourists and media attention, and steadily expand the village's long-term brand exposure.

Taken together, these measures should help Pingqiao Village move, step by step, from a little-known local spot to a distinctive rural cultural tourism brand that holds its following across the whole Yangtze River Delta.

(2) Strategies for Enhancing Brand Loyalty

With immersive experiences and refined services as the core, the strategy should improve visitor experience and brand engagement, thereby cultivating brand loyalty. First, integrated agriculture–culture–tourism offerings should be enriched. Drawing on village resources such as farmland, bamboo groves, and the stone dam, the village should develop diversified offerings including agricultural harvesting, farming experiences, water-conservancy culture study tours, bamboo-forest health and wellness, and rural homestay vacations. These offerings can extend visitor stays, enrich tourism experiences, and establish a tourism model of "one-day sightseeing plus multi-day vacations."

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

Second, tourism support facilities should be improved by upgrading wayfinding signage, rest areas, sanitary facilities, and parking facilities, while renovating and upgrading boutique homestays and distinctive rural dining to establish a standardized, high-quality rural tourism service system. In addition, a visitor-engagement system should be developed by establishing visitor communities and regularly sharing village events, visitor benefits, and new tourism offerings to maintain engagement among previous visitors. Customized experience products should be designed for four core visitor segments—families with children, young people, study-tour groups, and health-and-wellness visitors—to precisely match user needs. By comprehensively improving the visitor experience and creating a rural tourism experience that is warm, distinctive, and high-quality, Pingqiao Village can increase repeat visitation and word-of-mouth recommendations and steadily improve brand loyalty.

(3) Strategies for Enhancing Brand Associations

Knowing this, Pingqiao Village requires a brand architecture to be more than one, and to be the combination of visual symbols, local heritage, the items it offers, and the emotions these evokes into a set of elements that are instantly recognised. Visual design shouldn't be all over the place. It should be a familiar language of a brand to make the main features of the landscape—stone dam, bamboo, paddies, waterways—settled. In tandem with this, the story should be given depth, and the water heritage of the dam and the farming tradition which has developed around it should be utilised to do this. A heritage, which can be taken for granted, is transformed into a heritage that visitors can experience directly through interpretation, on-site signs, study routes and folk performances, and an identity based on water engineering and rural life emerges.

Meanwhile, the village must present its products with unique identities in the agricultural, cultural and tourism sector, with eco-wellness and agricultural time being the keys, heritage education and small selections carefully selected, as the main factors. Visitors recall a scene better when all three design elements – landscaping, spatial design, product design – are on the same stylistic line. Then, the experience creates a more complete sense of the location, and resolves the issue of disassociated images and a brand people remember only from one perspective.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

(4) Strategies for Enhancing Perceived Quality

Pingqiao Village can comprehensively elevate visitors' brand perception quality through three core paths: cultural empowerment, service quality upgrading and systematic value communication.

First, the village should carry out systematic sorting and documentation of its unique historical context, the oral and written records of the stone dam's construction process, local folk customs that have been passed down for generations, and the traditional farming culture rooted in the village. Professional, easy-to-understand visitor guides and supporting cultural interpretation materials will be compiled, while standardized cultural display boards and scan-to-read interpretive QR codes will be installed at all core tourism nodes. This allows visitors to access in-depth, systematic information about the village's hidden cultural value at any time during their tour, and effectively improves their overall cultural awareness of the destination.

Second, the village will push forward the quality upgrading of tourism products, by developing exclusive localized cultural and creative products, carefully designed gift boxes featuring characteristic local agricultural products, and a series of high-quality hands-on experiential programs. These targeted upgrades will help Pingqiao Village completely get rid of the low-end public perception as "a free casual check-in spot", and gradually shape its market image as a high-quality, niche and refined rural cultural tourism brand. At the same time, the village will promote the standardization of tourism service standards: organizing targeted professional training for all local tourism service personnel, to effectively improve local villagers' service awareness and practical service ability, and convey the warm, down-to-earth brand temperature through refined, people-centered services. The full visitor journey will also be fully optimized, with service quality improved at every single link from arrival, touring, interactive participation, consumption to departure. This allows visitors to comprehensively perceive Pingqiao Village's unique ecological, cultural and experiential values, and steadily raise the overall level of brand perception and recognition.

(5) Strategies for Enhancing Other Proprietary Brand Assets

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

Pingqiao Village will address the gaps in its supporting brand assets and build up a complete asset system step by step.

In the dimension of intellectual property assets: The village will register dedicated tourism-related trademarks covering labels such as "Pingqiao Stone Dam" and "Pingqiao Farming", and design an exclusive brand logo, cute localized IP character and complete visual identity (VI) system, to form a batch of independent, legally protected proprietary intellectual property assets.

In the dimension of product assets: The village will develop a complete series of local cultural and creative products, cultural and creative gift boxes embedded with characteristic agricultural products, and themed experiential course products, to build an independent, non-replicable tourism product matrix that continuously creates extra added value for the brand.

In the dimension of channel assets: The village will open official operation portals on all mainstream OTA platforms, and continuously optimize the store information, supporting product packages and interactive visitor review system, while expanding diversified offline cooperative channels to effectively broaden the coverage of visitor sources.

In the dimension of reputational assets: The village will carry out systematic brand reputation management, by encouraging visitors to share high-quality real travel reviews, responding promptly to every reasonable appeal put forward by visitors, and improving the standardized response mechanism for negative reviews, to steadily accumulate a positive, trustworthy long-term brand reputation.

In the dimension of industrial assets: The village will fully activate previously idle rural houses, unused land and scattered idle sites, to build featured cultural and creative workshops, standardized farming experience bases, and clustered high-quality health and wellness homestays. These measures will realize the industrialized operation of scattered resources and branded management of the whole industry, comprehensively improve the supporting level of ancillary brand assets, and lay a solid foundation for the long-term sustainable development of the brand.

Conclusions to Chapter 2

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

The theory of this study, empirical baseline of Pingqiao Village's destination branding in Liyang, problems which restrict the operation of Pingqiao Village, and the strategies which may promote its operation are all proposed in this chapter.

The inquiry combines the conceptualisation of writing on industrial convergence, rural tourism, brand positioning and Aaker's brand equity model to form an analytical model, which has different layers. Taking a physical starting point from local farm assets, a cultural center from regional heritage, a message in visual design and a sense of immersion as the whole, applied branding practice has a solid theoretical direction.

Through fieldwork, a wealth of resources for agriculture, culture and tourism integration are found: the water heritage of Pingqiao Stone Dam, the undisturbed hill ecology, expansive tea and bamboo landscapes, and the traditional culture of the people which has been handed down through the years. A review of the village's current brand equity, however, reveals low levels of market awareness, low levels of visitors' loyalty, fragmented brand associations, low perceived quality and undeveloped proprietary assets—including intellectual property, infrastructure and marketing channels. In short, Pingqiao Village has still not found a destination image that can be cohesive and recognised by the market.

The chapter outlines one roadmap for enhancing the brand, using Aaker's dimensions as a framework. The steps involve remodelling a differentiated market position, standardising a visual identity system (VIS), creating immersive experiences that unite the three sectors, reviewing service infrastructure, expanding reach through channels and making use of unused space and establishing governance mechanisms for the long term. The implementation of these should transform Pingqiao Village from a sightseeing point with no intrinsic value, into a high-value rural destination brand, rich in ecology, culture and experience, and at the same time provide empirical and conceptual support for subsequent design work.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN PROPOSAL

3.1. Concept of the Design Proposal

This is a preliminary inquiry that is conducted on three empirical bases: one is to carry out field visits and observation; the second is to conduct unstructured interviews with visitors and residents; the third is to analyze travel narratives written by visitors on platforms like Xiaohongshu and Mafengwo. Four things were looked at in particular: why people travel, how long they stay and when, where they get their information, and what they would like to experience but cannot as yet.

The results reveal that principal market participants of the village are those people who come from Liyang and the adjacent Yangtze River Delta to drive out for the whole day. They come mostly in the last two days of the weekend and on short public holidays and very few remain. These are not the visitors who are going from sight to sight; they're looking for something quieter: time in nature, time with family, good photographs to post and a true flavor of local life.

Cross-checking these tendencies sets apart the groups of visitors the brand should aim at:

Safety, activities to do together, and a bit of education come first for this group of families. Wayfinding via the IP character, easy to follow stories of water heritage, ecological activities for their parents and themselves, and farmcraft workshops they can participate in are all good ways to engage them.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

Young self-driving visitors, and photography buffs: Atmosphere, looks and the ability to photograph well is the key here. This group can be reached through carefully selected themed imagery, design of trails geared towards them, and unusual signage in the landscape and cultural products sold elsewhere.

Study-tour groups and light wellness visitors: they value the environment as it is, a more comprehensive picture of local culture and a more relaxed and less intrusive stay. Some supporting products are designed and focused on targeted cultural interpretations for professionals, cultural experiences related to tea-picking and bamboo, and specially designed slow rural strolling routes.

All three user groups share three common core demands: clear and easy-to-find destination information, non-boring cultural interpretation that is not hard to understand, and highly memorable visual symbols that leave a deep impression. For this reason, this design deliberately avoids the overly serious, abstract expression of the stone dam's water conservancy engineering attributes. Instead, it introduces a friendly, approachable IP character to take charge of the village's wayfinding and cultural narrative functions, and creates a series of themed illustrations corresponding to different core experience scenarios, covering the stone dam, bamboo forests, tea fields and other characteristic nodes. This design approach not only lowers the cultural understanding threshold for first-time visitors who know nothing about the village, but also provides a large number of brand touchpoints that can be photographed, shared on social media, and taken home as souvenirs, which can meet the differentiated needs of users across all age groups.

3.2. Structural, Plastic, and Graphic Solution of the Design Concept

Element extraction follows the principles of “landmark priority, ecological supplementation, and everyday warmth.” The first layer consists of landmark elements. Brand identity symbols are extracted from the stone masonry structure, arched profile, and cascading-water form of Pingqiao Stone Dam, giving the logo and graphic elements a clear regional reference. The second layer consists of ecological elements, including the forms of bamboo leaves, tea buds, mountains, streams, and terraced fields, which are used to construct continuous and rhythmic auxiliary patterns. The

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

third layer consists of everyday-life elements, selecting villagers' daily actions of drinking tea, farming, walking, and resting, and transforming them into illustrative narratives imbued with warmth. Together, the three layers avoid the repetitive use of a single landscape symbol and present a complete brand image characterized by "landmarks, ecology, and everyday life."

Based on local resource endowments and target-user needs, Pingqiao Village is positioned as "a destination for nature-based study tourism and slow travel for short-distance visitors from the Yangtze River Delta, distinguished by the water-conservancy memories of Pingqiao Stone Dam and experienced through the bamboo, tea, and pastoral ecology." The core brand values of Pingqiao Village can be condensed into four mutually supportive dimensions: naturalness, intimacy, cultural interest and experientiality. "Naturalness" focuses on highlighting the original ecological texture formed by the interwoven mountains, water bodies and farmland across the village; "intimacy" conveys the warm, unpretentious daily atmosphere unique to rural life; "cultural interest" makes the previously hidden water conservancy heritage and traditional farming culture easy to perceive and understand for ordinary visitors; and "experientiality" corresponds to all kinds of participatory experience scenarios built around tea plantations, bamboo forests, farmland and natural stream valleys.

The wording of the brand turns on three narratives drawn from the place: "Listening to Waterfalls at the Stone Dam," "Wandering Deep in the Bamboo Forest," and "Resting Idly in the Tea Fields." Each answers to one of the destination's central experiences, namely water heritage, time among trees, and leisure in the fields, and together they give visitors something to remember and something to pass on by word of mouth.

The logo is visually a combination of the contemporary calligraphic typeface alongside pieces of graphical imagery, such as mountains, water, old bridges and area plant life. The rural and unpolished appearance sets it apart from the commercial tourist sites which are more highly polished. With the logo goes a colour system of four main tones: bamboo green, tea green, water blue and slate grey. The palette is used consistently in all print, packaging, maps, souvenirs and online where the brand is used.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

Combined, they create a visual structure that can be built out over time and will stand the test of time as the brand matures.

3.3. Technical Support and Testing

IP Character Design and Derivative Applications

The central IP character can humanize the Stone Dam and make it a character in its own right with a story to tell. It outlines the massive stonework of the dam, and retains some characteristics from the actual construction such as rough stone, stone surface moss and water running over the crest. Its garments and its wares have been gathered from the fields and from travelling to enjoy itself: it is two at once, a silent custodian of the tradition of the water, and a tale-bearer for people to listen. It has an easy posture, rounded dimensions, an expressive face and subdued, natural hues, which make it more accessible to children and families, and less intimidating from a technical perspective, in bringing the old waterworks closer to them.

The character is set up to do specific actions and expressions to match the various scenarios: walking along the country road, explaining and showing the history of the dam to visitors, sitting in the grass by the tea field, playing in the shallow stream below the dam. These are accompanied by other pictures of running water, wind in bamboo leaves, young tea shoots, rolling hills and open fields. The system is suitable for a broad application, for example on wayfinding signs, on installations for photographs, in study-tour handbooks, as stickers for social media or on the badges of local tourism volunteers. In this way, intangible, non-material cultural resources can be transformed into a series of familiar visual cues for people as they travel through the village. This couldn't have been done by just one static mascot. A sequence of scenes depicting the character in various actions provides a more direct answer to visitors as to where next to go, what they can join in with and why this small and often overlooked location is so worth stopping at for a while.

The extended derivative IP design is another additional clarification of the product development direction, which includes plush toys, metal keychains, commemorative badges, drinkware with themes or pictures, decorative stickers, and small hanging ornaments. All these products have kept the most core elements of the brand image

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

such as the flowing blue water pattern and soft green vegetation elements, which has completely avoided the common situation of the image fragmentations in different media. The character can be used across all locations where the brand is present, such as signs, installations, shops on site and digital platforms, creating a single connected presence of the brand. Visitors are led from first hearing about the village, through the time they spend there, to remembering it afterwards by way of something they take home. This creates brand equity in the long term that is Pingqiao's and will endure.

Cultural and Creative Products and Promotional Design

There are three rules for cultural and creative merchandise: It must be functional, it must include the story in a read-able format, and it must be easy to transport home. The product development is based around four motifs: local tea, bamboo, waterworks of the dam and the IP character. Panorama illustrations of field, streams and bamboo leaves are printed on packaging and gift bags, where the illustrations continue and connect hill lines so that the packaging can be used for handmade teas and for boxes of farm produce. Whether it's something for the home or souvenirs for clothing or small keepsakes, the characters and the themed scenes bring the look, leaving the visitors with simple and usable mementos. Colour and style uniformity form one product to another provides a unified brand image both on the shelf and on the screen.

Three smaller stories “Listening to Waterfalls at the Stone Dam, ” “Exploring the Bamboo Forest, ” and “Resting in the Tea Fields” are developed into a set of posters in a single frame of reference, which include the waterworks, the paths through the bamboo and the terraced tea hills, as well as the IP character. Drawing is soft and the rhythm it implies is the unhurried one of the village. What can be seen in the pictures remains connected to the places they are a part of, through a multi-modal approach that carries the information a visitor needs through a combination of channels, both online, in print, and on signs at events.

A map prepared for the village identifies the key features, farm locations, public services and areas of interest to facilitate easy navigation for new visitors. The map is the base where the brand is applied: it clarifies the space and helps people navigate it; the posters explain what the place offers and provide reasons to visit; the packaging

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

carries the memory, and brings people back; and the character is warm to attach to. They are low cost to produce and can be easily printed to fill gaps in the service that visitors are currently experiencing and provide a base for other activities such as events, educational tours and regular activity on digital media.

Conclusions to Chapter 3

This chapter focuses on the tourism brand development design practice of Pingqiao Village in Liyang, carried out under the core logic of integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism. First, it conducts a systematic analysis of the village's existing development conditions across the three fields of agriculture, culture and tourism. Pingqiao Village is rich in high-quality characteristic resources including scattered tea plantations, vast bamboo groves, open farmland, the century-old stone dam and its supporting water system, and it naturally integrates three core values: beautiful mountain-water ecological environment, authentic traditional farming life and unique local water conservancy culture.However, the three categories of resources currently exist largely in parallel, with insufficient connections to tourism products, consumption scenarios, and brand communication. A coordinated agriculture–culture–tourism brand system has not yet been formed.

Second, target users' travel motivations, experiential preferences, and information-acquisition methods are analyzed through on-site observation, unstructured interviews, and a review of online travel notes. The study categorizes target users into three groups: families with children, young self-driving visitors and photography enthusiasts, and study-tour and light health-and-wellness visitors. Although these groups have differentiated needs, they all require clear destination information, easily understood cultural interpretation, and memorable, shareable visual experiences. The design therefore uses a friendly IP character and a series of themed illustrations to guide visitors and to tell the story of the place, which makes it easier for them to understand and gives them more to do with the brand.

Taking the water heritage of the Stone Dam, the farm-and-pasture ecology and the idea of slow travel as its starting point, the brand positioning reduces motifs drawn from the place itself—the lines of the dam, the shapes of tea and bamboo, the outline

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

of the hills, the habits of local life—to an ordered visual vocabulary. The design framework that comes out of this works along three lines at once: leading with the landmark structure, folding in the ecology native to the area, and letting the ordinariness of rural daily life come through.

The design was developed with three experiences in mind: “Listening to Waterfalls at the Stone Dam, ” “Exploring the Bamboo Forest” and “Resting in the Tea Fields, ” and is cohesive, with a logo, colour standards, themed illustrations and supporting graphics. The system then flows seamlessly into tangible products – an IP character, a Visitor map, culture merchandising, packaging farm products and promotion media.

This chapter is the result of the synergy of the farm assets, the shared cultural memory and the tourism experiences, which constructs a fairly complete destination brand structure for Pingqiao Village. The resulting system must meet four requirements: It needs to be easily recognizable at a glance, it needs to engage visitors in the location, it needs to have something worth sharing and it needs to be durable. In addition to creating a regional identity, which cannot be duplicated, and which distinguishes Pingqiao from the areas with which it competes, this visual base also paves the way for what steps are to follow next: events, heritage courses for schools, regular activity on digital media, and products added and improved over time.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

CONCLUSIONS

Taking the convergence of agriculture, culture and tourism as its ground, this inquiry looks at Pingqiao Village in Liyang through Aaker's Brand Equity model and assesses, in an ordered way, what natural and cultural resources the village has, where its brand stands, and how the design work was carried out locally. The village, the findings show, has assets that are distinctive and hard to copy: the century-old water heritage of the Stone Dam, hill and valley topography with its streams, tea and bamboo growing together, and farming ways of life that have kept their plainness. Even so, obstacles remain in place. Awareness of the village in the region is low; heritage is presented only on the surface; what is offered visitors is basic; and the visual communication is pieced together from parts. Resources that could do more therefore bring in no brand equity that anyone recognises, and they generate no steady demand for what the village has to sell.

Aimed at these practical problems, the study puts forward a full path for building a rural tourism brand: the water-conservancy culture of the stone dam is to be the core of the brand; experience of the bamboo-and-tea countryside is to be the practical ground on which it stands; and a single, consistent visual system, together with a range of ways of reaching people on site and online, is to carry the brand upward as a whole.In the specific design practice process, a series of highly exclusive visual elements are extracted from the village's core characteristic scenarios including the stone dam itself, natural streams, deep bamboo forests and layered tea fields, and the three themed experience modules "Listening to Waterfalls at the Stone Dam", "Exploring the Bamboo Forest" and "Resting in the Tea Fields" are developed accordingly. Through the anthropomorphic local IP character, a full set of situational themed illustrations, the graphic visitor navigation map, characteristic cultural and creative packaging and various promotional materials, the previously scattered, abstract rural resources are successfully transformed into tangible brand assets that are highly recognizable, easy to understand for ordinary visitors, full of on-site experiential quality and convenient for social communication. This full practice process fully proves that well-designed IP

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

images and cultural and creative products are not isolated, meaningless decorative designs; instead, they act as extremely important media that organically link cultural interpretation services, visitor on-site experience and final consumption conversion.

Rural tourism brand development under the background of integrated agriculture, culture and tourism must always adhere to three core principles: the authenticity of original resources, the rootedness of local culture, and the sustainability of long-term operation. Based on the complete visual brand foundation constructed in this study, Pingqiao Village can further carry out follow-up iterative work: continuously optimize the in-depth interpretation system of the stone dam's water conservancy culture, develop localized characteristic study tour courses, enrich the hands-on tea and bamboo farming experience projects, improve the full-coverage tourism wayfinding system, and carry out long-term refined new media operation. With the coordinated participation of multiple stakeholders including local villagers, tourism business operators and local government departments, the village can gradually build a virtuous closed operation cycle of "original resource protection - high-quality experience development - wide brand communication - stable industrial returns". Considering that the research sample size and the on-site practice cycle of this study are limited, subsequent follow-up research can carry out dynamic optimization on the actual effect of brand communication and the supporting application system through continuous collection of real visitor feedback, long-term tracking of cultural and creative product sales data and tourist revisit rate statistics.

REFERENCES

1. 刘达华.略论旅游农业[J].特区经济,1989,(06):28.
2. 刘明.旅游农业与城市旅游系统[J].上海农学院学报,1989,(02):115-118.
3. 张柏齐.浅析观光农业[J].古今农业,1992,(03):72-73.
4. 应瑞瑶,褚保金.“旅游农业”及其相关概念辨析[J].社会科学家,2002,(05):31-33.
5. 杨俊杰,韩波.新型生态旅游业:观光农业[J].云南科技管理,2002,(06):66-68.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

6. 杨昀,贾玎.农文旅融合背景下的古村落乡村振兴路径研究[J].云南农业大学学报(社会科学),2021,15(05):19-24.
7. 陈佳骜,瞿华.国内乡村旅游研究综述[J].特区经济,2021,(04):158-160.
8. 蔡克信,杨红,马作珍莫. 乡村旅游:实现乡村振兴战略的一种路径选择[J]. 乡村经济, 2018(09):22-27.
9. 朱运海,曹诗图.论乡村旅游的乡村性及其景观表达[J]. 湖湘论坛,2020,33(06):134-143.
10. 徐淑红. 乡村旅游对农村经济发展影响实证研究[J]. 社会科学家, 2020(12):54-58.
11. 孙九霞, 张凌媛, 罗意林. 共同富裕目标下中国乡村旅游资源开发：现状、问题与发展路径[J]. 自然资源学报, 2023,38(02):318-334.
12. 张青年,秦建新,杨云.观光农业开发规划研究[J].大自然探索,1999,(03):81-84.
13. 陈慧.农旅融合背景下郑州市乡村旅游目的地品牌提升研究[J].三门峡职业技术学院学报,2022,21(03):128-135.
14. 李竺霖.基于农旅融合的银里村品牌视觉设计研究[D].燕山大学,2023.
15. 段小坤.农文旅融合视域下合川区文旅品牌形象研究[J].西部旅游,2024,(08):25-27.
16. 麻福芳,戴天放,彭柳林,等.农文旅融合推动南昌市农业品牌发展的路径[J].广西糖业,2024,44(04):326-330.
17. 马洁.法国农业旅游的发展经验与启示[J].世界农业,2016.
18. Pearce PL. Farm tourism in new-zealand-a social situation analysis[J]. Annals of Tourism Research,1990, 17(3): 337-352.
19. Kneafsey M. Rural cultural economy: Tourism and Social Relations[J]. Annals of Tourism Research,2001,28(3):762-783.
20. Busby G,Rendle S. The transition from tourism on farms to farm tourism[J].Tourism Management,2000,21(6):635-642.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

21. Fleischer A,Felsenstein D. Support for rural tourism: Does it make a difference?[J].Annals of Tourism Research.2000,27(4):1007-1024.
22. Fleischer A,Tchetchik A. Does rural tourism benefit from agriculture?[J].Tourism Management,2005, 26(4): 493-501.
23. Ohe Y,Kurihara S. Evaluating the complementary relationship between local brand farm products and rural tourism: Evidence from Japan[J].Tourism Management, 2013, 35:278-283.
24. Campón-Cerro A M, Hernández-Mogollón J M, Alves H. Sustainable improvement of competitiveness in rural tourism destinations: The quest for tourist loyalty in Spain[J]. Journal of Destination Marketing & Management, 2017,6(3):252-266.
25. An W, Alarcón S. Rural tourism preferences in Spain: Best-worst choices[J]. Annals of Tourism Research, 2021,89:103210.
26. Hussain S, Ahonen V, Karasu T, et al. Sustainability of smart rural mobility and tourism: A key performance indicators-based approach[J]. Technology in Society, 2023,74:102287.
27. Falak S, Chiun L M, Wee A Y. A Repositioning Strategy for Rural Tourism in Malaysia -Community's Perspective[J]. 5th Asia-Euro Conference 2014 in Tourism, Hospitality & Gastronomy, 2014,144:412-415.
28. Prabhakaran S, Nair V, Ramachandran S. Community Participation in Rural Tourism: Towards a Conceptual Framework[J]. 5th Asia-Euro Conference 2014 in Tourism, Hospitality & Gastronomy, 2014,144:290-295.
29. Mwesiumo D, Halfdanarson J, Shlopak M. Navigating the early stages of a large sustainability-oriented rural tourism development project: Lessons from Træna, Norway[J]. Tourism Management, 2022,89:104456.
30. Barcelos R H, Dantas D C, Sénécal S. The tone of voice of tourism brands on social media: Does it matter?[J]. Tourism Management, 2019,74:173-189.
31. Liang A R D, Nie Y Y, Chen D J, et al. Case studies on co-branding and farm tourism: Best match between farm image and experience activities[J]. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 2020,42:107-118.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

32. Mihardja E J, Alisjahbana S, Agustini P M, et al. Forest wellness tourism destination branding for supporting disaster mitigation: A case of Batur UNESCO Global Geopark, Bali[J]. International Journal of Geoheritage and Parks, 2023,11(1):169-181.
33. Orth U.R,Malkewitz K. Holistic package design and consumer brand impressions[J]. Journal of Marketing, 2008,72(3):64-81.
34. Schoormans, J., den Berge, M. E. van, van de Laar, G., & van den Berg-Weitzel, L. Designing Packages that Communicate Product Attributes and Brand Values: An Exploratory Method. The Design Journal,2010,13(1), 31-47.

Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

APPENDIX A







Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E



Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E

APPENDIX Б



Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E





Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E





Docusign Envelope ID: 94E2361E-04FC-8850-80B1-ECE64FE7DC4E



