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ABSTRACT

Chen Xingyi. Research on Tourism Brand Development of Pingqiao Village in Liyang from the Perspective of Agricultural, Cultural and Tourism Integration— Manuscript.

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This work centers on the tourism brand upgrading of Pingqiao Village, one of the typical rural destinations distributed along Liyang No.1 Highway in the Yangtze River Delta. The practical part of the research outputs a full-set brand design scheme tailored for the village. Instead of copying generic rural tourism design templates, the project digs into the village's unique local resources — the well-known Pingqiao Stone Dam, its well-preserved forest ecology, generations-old agricultural heritage, and the vivid folk customs passed down by local residents. Based on these native elements, the research team developed an original IP character and a complete series of derivative visual outputs, covering standardized brand color systems, original logo design, cultural and creative souvenir lines, and targeted promotion materials. The final output forms a fully operable visual identity system that matches the actual operation needs of the village's tourism sector.

Rather than discussing the topic from a single design perspective, this study observes the real dilemma of Pingqiao Village's tourism development through multiple dimensions. It sorts out three core problems that have long restricted the village's brand growth: highly homogeneous positioning with surrounding rural scenic spots, scattered and inefficient brand communication, and the shallow excavation of local unique cultural connotations. Guided by Aaker's brand equity model and classic branding theory, the whole design process deliberately balances three core demands: the experiential expectation of tourists, the protection of local traditional culture, and the commercial sustainability of tourism operation. Special emphasis is placed on the

unique engineering heritage and water conservancy culture carried by the Pingqiao Stone Dam, which is the core differentiation point that distinguishes this village from its neighbors. This targeted arrangement effectively avoids the common mistake of directly copying the popular development models adopted by other villages in the region.

The research fully refers to the latest policy documents on rural revitalization and cultural tourism development in Jiangsu Province, as well as a large number of academic studies on the integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism, and destination branding. The first-hand empirical materials were collected by the research team through multiple rounds of field visits, face-to-face semi-structured interviews with local villagers and tourism business operators, and more than 230 valid questionnaires collected from on-site tourists. The research team also analyzed more than 12 mature domestic rural tourism branding cases, extracting their applicable experience to adjust and optimize the final branding strategy and design proposal. By combining theoretical analysis and hands-on design practice, this study expects to provide a practical reference for similar resource-based villages in the Yangtze River Delta to carry out tourism brand construction. With the unique ecological value and cultural connotation carried by the Pingqiao Stone Dam, Pingqiao Village in Liyang has the inherent advantage to grow into a tourism destination with outstanding cultural characteristics. For the above reasons, this thesis selects Pingqiao Village as the research object, with the final title set as 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

Relevance of the research: Against the ongoing national push for rural revitalization and the steady rollout of integrated development models that tie agriculture, local culture and tourism together, rural tourism in China has moved well past its early resource-reliant stage and entered a phase where brand building has become the core driver of long-term growth. Pingqiao Village in Liyang is naturally well-endowed with a layered mix of local assets: the historic Pingqiao Stone Dam, its well- preserved mountain forest ecosystem, sprawling bamboo groves and tea plantation landscapes, scattered farmland patches, and a set of time-honored farming customs that local residents still follow in daily life. Even with all these advantages on paper, the village has not fully broken away from the common bottlenecks that trouble many surrounding rural tourism sites. Its tourism positioning still overlaps heavily with neighboring villages that run similar leisure tourism projects, the unique stories behind its local cultural assets have not been properly interpreted and presented to visitors, its existing brand promotion channels are scattered and lack consistent core information, and its on-site experiential tourism products remain very limited in both variety and depth. Through a systematic sorting of its tangible and intangible local resources and a full diagnosis of its current brand construction status, this research explores how targeted tourism brand development can effectively drive cross-sector resource integration, help local hidden cultural values reach wider audiences, and ultimately stimulate higher-quality tourism consumption. The work carries clear practical value for lifting Pingqiao Village's external brand recognition, improving its overall attractiveness to tourists, and strengthening the long-term sustainability of its local tourism industry.

Purpose of the research: Rooted in the integrated development framework of agriculture, culture and tourism, and guided by Aaker ' s Brand Equity Model and mature destination branding theory, this study first sorts out the basic supporting conditions, current operation status and core pain points that restrict Pingqiao Village's tourism brand growth. It focuses on identifying and deeply interpreting the local characteristic resources that have long been overlooked in previous development

practices, especially the unique water conservancy culture carried by the Pingqiao Stone Dam, the distinctive ecological landscape formed by the combination of bamboo forests and tea plantations, and the authentic daily rural life scenes that still exist in the village. On this basis, the research formulates a set of tourism branding strategies and a complete visual identity system that fully fit the actual development context of Pingqiao Village, and verifies the feasibility of the whole scheme through the specific design practice of original IP creation, cultural and creative souvenir development and targeted promotion material production. To achieve this purpose, the **following objectives** are set:

- Systematically sort out the core related concepts, supporting theoretical frameworks and existing academic research results in the three fields of agriculture-culture- tourism integration, rural tourism development and tourism brand construction, so as to lay a solid theoretical foundation for subsequent field analysis and design practice.
- Conduct a thorough on-site investigation of Pingqiao Village, covering its basic geographical environment, distribution characteristics of core agricultural resources, local historical and cultural context, and the current operation status of its tourism industry, so as to clearly map out its unique resource advantages and untapped development potential that have not been fully utilized in past development.
- 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. This work targets a core practical question: how to convert three underutilized local elements — the unique water conservancy culture attached to Pingqiao Stone Dam, the layered ecological landscape woven by local bamboo groves and tea plantations, and the immersive daily rural tourism experiences the village can offer — into tangible brand assets that carry distinct regional features and strong cross-platform communication value.

Chronological framework of the research – The research does not treat the tourism brand building of Pingqiao Village as a short-term isolated project that only exists on paper. Its main observation timeline is anchored between 2024 and 2026, covering the full practical cycle from the village’s initial launch of agriculture-culture-tourism integration construction, the first attempt at brand positioning, to the gradual implementation of the first batch of tourism operation upgrades. Meanwhile, the study never strips the current branding practice from the village ’ s long-standing historical context — it systematically sorts out and incorporates the intangible local cultural assets that have been passed down for generations in Pingqiao, making sure the newly built brand system will not break away from the real cultural roots that local residents actually recognize.

Territorial framework of the research – This research locks its core research scope on Pingqiao Village, Tianmuhu Town, Liyang City, Jiangsu Province, where the team completed multiple rounds of on-site field surveys and collected all first-hand empirical data. The analysis does not confine itself to the administrative boundary of this single village. It also takes the entire themed rural tourism corridor along Liyang No.1 Highway as a key reference dimension, to avoid the brand positioning being too isolated and out of step with the surrounding coordinated development layout. Further, the research extends its observation horizon to the broader rural tourism consumer

market across the Yangtze River Delta, to make sure the final branding scheme can precisely match the actual travel demands of target tourists outside the region.

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.

Practical significance of the research: This research delivers a complete, actionable tourism brand visual identity system that takes the profound cultural heritage of the Pingqiao Stone Dam as its core creative anchor, and draws the local layered ecological charm of bamboo groves and tea plantations as its distinctive supporting visual element. The full set of outputs covers every essential module of a usable rural tourism brand: clear differentiated brand positioning that sets the village apart from neighboring sites, original logo design and standardized brand color specifications, a custom-made local IP character rooted in the village's unique stories, a series of immersive themed scene illustrations, a user-friendly printed visitor map, a curated line of practical cultural and creative souvenirs, and a full set of ready-to-use offline and online promotion materials.

This design framework is not just a set of isolated visual outputs. It can serve as a unified, consistent design reference for Pingqiao Village ' s subsequent long-term tourism operation work, including in-depth local cultural interpretation, the development of water conservancy-themed educational tourism activities, standardized packaging for local specialty agricultural products, targeted social media content operation, and the overall iterative upgrading of the village's public tourism service system. It may also serve as a reference for tourism brand development in other resource-based rural areas of the Yangtze River Delta region.

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.

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.

The 14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural and Tourism Development lays out an explicit, clear requirement: to push forward the deep integration of culture and tourism in rural spaces, nurture batches of distinctive high-quality rural tourism brands, and continuously elevate the overall quality and operational efficiency of the rural cultural and tourism sector, so as to inject steady impetus into rural revitalization through targeted brand construction. This top-level policy orientation provides solid institutional guarantee and a clear development roadmap for local practices that integrate local agriculture, characteristic culture and tourism, and build distinctive rural tourism brands. The 2024 No.1 Central Document explicitly put forward the goal of establishing 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 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. 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. 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.

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 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 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. This path is defined by three core characteristics: efficient resource utilization, multi-stakeholder cooperative governance, and long-term ecological and cultural sustainability, which provides a clear actionable framework for

rural tourism practices that ultimately push forward the realization of common prosperity at the local level [11].

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

Branding

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. On the other hand, it needs to design a full range of diversified, immersive tourism experiences that precisely match the consumption habits of modern tourists, so as to avoid falling into the homogeneous development trap of "all villages look the same" [13].

As the Rural Revitalization Strategy has been fully rolled out across the country, the unique value of systematic brand visual design in the integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism has gradually gained widespread attention from both academic circles and local rural development practices. More and more villages have realized that a unified, culturally rooted visual identity system is not just a set of superficial decorative designs, but a core asset that can help local characteristic resources break through the information cocoon and quickly establish a unique, memorable impression in the minds of target tourists.

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 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

(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 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 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's 2023 research further confirms that well-planned rural tourism development not only serves as a steady engine for sustained rural economic growth, but also forms a sustainable tourism development model that naturally aligns with ecological protection goals and promotes the harmonious coexistence between local communities and their surrounding natural ecosystems [26].

When it comes to the multi-dimensional value of rural tourism, Falak put forward a core argument in 2014: the healthy development of rural tourism must be deeply rooted in the unique local cultural resources of the village, including well- preserved traditional architecture, time-honored folk customs, and distinctive local living habits. These cultural elements form the core differentiated appeal that sets one rural destination apart from all others. Through systematic development and targeted promotion of rural tourism, more outside visitors will get the chance to understand, recognize and resonate with these unique rural cultural traditions, thus pushing forward their continuous inheritance and innovative development in modern society [27].

Prabhakaran's 2014 study notes that the large-scale, high-quality development of rural tourism relies on the full activation of abundant rural natural and cultural resources. The reasonable, sustainable development and utilization of these previously underutilized resources can create entirely new, stable sources of local economic growth. Rural tourism can not only drive the coordinated development of a whole set of related supporting industries in rural areas, but also directly and effectively increase the non-agricultural income of local farming households [28]. Mwesiumo's 2022 research adds another critical dimension to this framework: the long-term healthy operation of rural tourism is fundamentally based on the careful protection and proper utilization of precious rural natural resources, which requires the collective participation and joint efforts of all local stakeholders. 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 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. This process will eventually help the brand build a highly distinctive, easily recognizable brand image and form a unified, positive public perception. The lasting attractiveness of a high-quality tourism brand usually comes from three core sources: creative, innovative tourism product design, consistent high-level on-site services, and one-of-a-kind, unforgettable immersive travel experiences that cannot be copied by competitors [31]. Mandagi further supplemented this theoretical framework in his 2021 study, stating that a complete, mature tourism brand building system consists of four indispensable core elements: unique local stories, memorable tourist experiences, the overall destination environment, and all relevant stakeholders. Among them, well-told local stories are positioned at the absolute core of the brand, which can 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.

(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–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, key elements including a highly recognizable brand image, standardized visual design system, vivid local cultural narratives, and immersive tourist experience design are all proven to be core driving forces that effectively enhance the differentiated competitiveness of rural tourism destinations. These systematic research conclusions provide solid theoretical insights and actionable practical references for the whole process of tourism brand development in Pingqiao Village.

Finally, this study adopts a multi-method research framework combining literature review, in-depth field investigation, targeted case study analysis and hands-on design practice. It carries out a full-dimensional, systematic analysis of Pingqiao Village's unique historical and cultural heritage, core natural and industrial resource endowments, current tourism development status, and the actual unmet needs of local communities. On this empirical basis, the research completes the full set of tourism brand visual identity system tailored exclusively for the village. By tightly integrating academic theoretical research with localized design practice, this study aims to build a distinct tourism brand image for Pingqiao Village that carries prominent regional cultural characteristics, boasts strong public brand recognition, and supports efficient multi-channel market communication, thus laying a solid, reusable foundation for the subsequent long-term tourism brand operation and iterative design practice in the village.

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF DESIGN THEORY AND PRACTICE

2.1. Theoretical Foundations of Design

The Integration of Agriculture, Culture, and Tourism

The integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism is a highly synergetic development model that organically connects the three independent sectors. It achieves full resource sharing and mutual complementary advantages through two-way promotion and deep interactive collaboration, rather than simply piling the three industries side by side in a superficial manner. By breaking the original industrial boundaries and carrying out in-depth cross-sector integration, this model can create a series of brand-new, distinctive cultural tourism products and immersive experiences that cannot be produced by any single sector alone, thus effectively enhancing the regional cultural soft power and unique tourism appeal of the destination.

As the three related industries continue to develop and iterate, this integrated development model has increasingly highlighted the importance of holistic systematic planning, coordinated activation of scattered regional resources, and multi-stakeholder coordinated progress, which has gradually promoted the formation of a more comprehensive, three-dimensional conceptual framework for this field. At the theoretical level, the complete development logic of agriculture-culture-tourism integration is mainly built on the mature industrial integration theory. 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.

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. In addition, emerging tools such as digital technologies and diversified Internet platforms further expand the depth and breadth of cross-sector industrial integration. Through smooth online- offline interactive operation, distinctive local rural agricultural products, characteristic cultural and creative works, and high-quality tourism services can be spread and promoted to a much wider audience, thus significantly enhancing the overall influence and core market competitiveness of local rural tourism brands. This integration model not only provides new momentum for rural economic development but also offers new perspectives for integrated urban – rural development and for addressing issues concerning agriculture, rural areas, and farmers. Industrial integration theory provides a solid theoretical basis for the integration of agriculture, culture, and tourism, while the latter constitutes a vivid application of industrial integration in rural areas. The two are mutually reinforcing and jointly promote the comprehensive revitalization of rural economies, cultures, and societies.

Rural Tourism

Rural tourism refers to tourism activities in which visitors travel to rural areas to experience rural life, culture, and natural scenery. As a form of tourism that takes rural areas as its primary destinations, it aims to promote economic development and cultural heritage in rural areas while providing visitors with an experience distinct from urban life. The concept of rural tourism originated in Europe in the 1970s, when growing attention was paid to the effects of urbanization on rural areas. The concept was proposed with the aim of promoting rural development and conservation through tourism activities. Over the long course of industry evolution, rural tourism has gradually grown into a widely recognized core focus of the global tourism sector, continuously drawing a rapidly expanding number of visitors from all age groups and consumer segments.

Diversity and personalization stand out as the two most defining core characteristics of modern rural tourism. Given the stark differences in natural ecological environments and inherited cultural traditions across different rural regions,

the specific content and experience forms of rural tourism are correspondingly highly diversified. Visitors can freely choose from a full spectrum of experiences tailored to their own interests: visiting unique local rural scenic spots, immersing themselves in authentic unmodified rural daily life, tasting exclusive authentic local farmhouse cuisine that cannot be replicated in urban areas, or participating in lively, one-of-a-kind local folk cultural activities with deep historical roots. Modern rural tourism also places special emphasis on highly personalized customized services, which allows travelers to flexibly select and combine travel routes and interactive experience projects that perfectly match their individual preferences and actual travel needs.

Aaker's Brand Equity Theory

Brand equity theory is a key concept that plays an extremely important role in today's business environment. Brand equity refers to the value of a brand, which derives not only from a product's actual performance but also from consumers' perceptions of, and emotional connections with, the brand. The core of this theory is that strong brand equity can provide industries with a competitive advantage, increase consumer loyalty, improve profit margins, and establish a distinctive market position. During the 1980s, the concept of brand equity gradually emerged in marketing research and practice. Beginning in the 1990s, particularly after David A. Aaker's *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name* was published in 1991, brand equity gradually became a focus of marketing research. David A. Aaker (1996) identified five principal dimensions of brand equity: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary assets. Aaker argued that these dimensions collectively constitute brand value and lay the foundation for the long-term success of a brand. The brand equity model emphasizes the importance of brand knowledge in building strong brand equity and describes in detail how marketing strategies can be used to manage and enhance it. As market competition intensifies, brand equity has become an indispensable part of industrial development and is crucial to ensuring long-term success and competitiveness. A proper understanding and application of brand equity theory can help industries gain advantages in intense market competition and achieve sustainable development.

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 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 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 is located in the Tianmuhu Town area of Liyang City, Jiangsu Province. It is a typical village in southern Liyang where mountain-and-water ecology interweaves with rural settlements. The village is connected to the rural tourism network along the Liyang No. 1 Road and can benefit from visitor flows from mature surrounding destinations, such as Tianmu Lake, as well as from regional transport conditions. It therefore possesses locational foundations for developing short-distance leisure, family-oriented experiences, and study tourism. The village features a landscape pattern in which low mountains, hills, stream valleys, and farmland are interwoven. Forests, lush bamboo groves, clear water bodies and well-organized farmland jointly shape a richly layered, three-dimensional rural ecological environment, which provides highly distinctive natural scenes completely different from monotonous urban landscapes for the local tourism brand development of Pingqiao Village.

The iconic Pingqiao Stone Dam and its surrounding interconnected water system form the most recognizable core spatial resource of the entire village. 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-dimensional foundation for the tourism brand development, covering visual presentation, on-site experience and cross-platform communication.

In terms of characteristic agricultural resources, Pingqiao Village boasts a series of beautiful rural production landscapes, including neatly arranged hillside tea plantations, lush bamboo groves, vast rice paddies and various seasonal crops. 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 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 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. As a natural result, their sense of on-site engagement and emotional attachment to the destination stays very weak.

The core underlying shortboard lies in the severely limited diversity of tourism offerings. At the current stage, the village's tourism operation still relies almost entirely on basic Pingqiao Stone Dam sightseeing and superficial rural photo check-in activities. It is still missing a full set of immersive experience products that are highly sought after by modern tourists, including hands-on farming experience projects,

localized cultural study tour routes, distinctive cultural and creative consumption scenarios, and rich nighttime leisure activities. This narrow, shallow experience spectrum makes it extremely difficult for visitors to form unique, lasting travel memories tied to Pingqiao Village.

Furthermore, the village ' s tourism supporting facilities are still far from adequate. Boutique themed homestays, characteristic local dining spots, comfortable leisure rest facilities, and systematic wayfinding signage are all still at a very basic, underdeveloped level, while the overall service standardization of local tourism practitioners is low. This combination directly leads to a generally unremarkable, unmemorable visitor experience that fails to meet modern tourists' expectations. In addition, the village has not yet built a dedicated tourist membership system or any effective fan engagement operation mechanism, and completely lacks systematic channels to maintain long-term emotional connections with past visitors. As a result, it cannot cultivate a stable, loyal core visitor base. Most visitors follow the typical "visit once and leave" travel pattern, making it extremely difficult to effectively improve overall tourism brand loyalty and sustained user engagement.

(3) Brand Associations

Pingqiao Village currently has no clear, distinct tourism brand identity in the market. Most visitors who have been to the place can only name two basic impressions: the old stone dam, and the general mountain and water scenery around the village. No unique, memorable brand image that belongs exclusively to Pingqiao has taken shape in the public's mind.

Right now, these scattered impressions are still very thin and one-sided. They do not extend to the village ' s hidden local cultural traditions, the unique farming experiences available here, or the quiet, relaxing feeling that sets this village apart from other rural scenic spots nearby. Compared with the clear brand labels of surrounding villages, such as "tea culture, " "health-and-wellness vacations," and "intangible cultural heritage tourism," Pingqiao Village lacks a distinctive core brand symbol and cultural label.

At the same time, the village 's landscape design, scene-making, and product development lack a unified thematic core. Resources such as mountains and water, agriculture, the stone dam, and local culture are distributed in a fragmented manner and have not formed an interconnected system of brand associations. Visitors are therefore unable to form a systematic brand perception through their visit. After touring the village, most visitors remember only the natural landscape and cannot perceive its cultural characteristics, industrial characteristics, or brand identity. Its brand associations are weak, and it lacks a differentiated competitive advantage.

(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 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. Drawing on Aaker ' s brand equity model, it constructs a full-chain brand-building system characterized by differentiated positioning, systematic design, immersive experiences, diversified communication, and long-term operation.

Tourism brand development in Pingqiao Village comprises five core elements: resource, cultural, brand, experiential, and communication elements. These five elements provide mutual support and work in coordination to form a complete brand-building system. Resource elements constitute the foundation: agricultural, ecological, and geographical resources provide the material basis for brand building. Cultural elements sit at the very core of this framework. The unique stone-dam water conservancy heritage and the local farming culture that has been passed down in Pingqiao Village for generations are the most solid foundation that sets this village apart from all other nearby rural tourism spots.

Brand elements are the central carrier of the whole system, covering clear brand positioning, a unified set of visual identification designs, and a complete localized IP system. These are the most direct sources for visitors to quickly recognize and remember the village. Experiential elements act as the key bridge between the brand and visitors. Well-designed immersive tourism projects can effectively deepen visitors' on-site perception of the village, and gradually build up their emotional identification with the destination. Communication elements are responsible for extending the brand's reach. By spreading content through diversified online and offline channels, the village can effectively raise public exposure and expand its market influence outside the local region.

The integration of agriculture, culture and tourism runs through the whole process as the core logical thread that ties all these elements together. Local characteristic agriculture provides rich raw materials to enrich the types of experience projects; deep local culture infuses deeper, unique connotation into the brand; and tourism operation turns these scattered resources into actual accessible products and real market value. When these parts work together, they can effectively solve Pingqiao Village's current problems including fragmented brand image, lack of distinct competitive features, and vague core value proposition, and finally realize the overall improvement of the village's tourism brand equity.

Brand Enhancement Strategies Based on Aaker's Model

(1) Strategies for Enhancing Brand Awareness

This strategy should fully target Pingqiao Village's unique resource strengths as a small, characteristic niche destination, roll out clearly differentiated brand labels, and steadily raise the village's overall brand awareness across the entire regional market.

First, the core brand positioning must be clearly defined, paired with an exclusive, memorable brand slogan. Centered on the three core selling points of the centuries-old stone dam water conservancy culture, the original idyllic ecological landscape, and the down-to-earth local farming traditions, the village will build a one-of-a-kind brand image that completely breaks away from the widespread homogenization dilemma common to most rural tourism destinations.

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 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.

All these interconnected measures will support Pingqiao Village to gradually complete its transformation, growing from a little-known local niche scenic spot into a highly distinctive rural cultural tourism brand with stable popularity across the entire Yangtze River Delta region.

(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.”

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

Pingqiao Village should integrate its core resources to construct a multidimensional brand-association system encompassing “visual identity + culture + tourism offerings + emotion,” thereby creating distinctive brand memory points. First, core brand symbols should be extracted from local elements such as Pingqiao Stone Dam, bamboo groves, rice fields, and streams to develop a unified visual-symbol system that enables visitors to quickly associate these symbols with the Pingqiao Village brand. Second, the village should deeply explore the water-conservancy culture of the stone dam and traditional farming culture. Through cultural display panels, site interpretation, study-tour courses, and folk-cultural performances, implicit culture can be transformed into explicit experiences, enabling visitors to form the distinctive cultural association of “Pingqiao = water-conservancy culture + pastoral farming.”

At the same time, distinctive tourism-offering labels should be developed. Relying on integrated agriculture–culture–tourism offerings, the village can create associations with “ecological health and wellness, farming experiences, cultural study tours, and niche check-ins,” thereby enriching the dimensions of brand associations. Village landscape development, spatial scenography, and product-design styles should be unified to strengthen integrated brand memory. This will enable visitors to form comprehensive, three-dimensional, and differentiated brand associations, effectively addressing the current problems of vague and singular brand associations.

(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

Pingqiao Village will fully make up for its existing shortcomings in ancillary brand assets, and build a complete, sound brand 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

This chapter systematically sorts out the theoretical foundations, realistic development conditions, current core challenges and targeted optimization strategies for the tourism brand development of Pingqiao Village in Liyang.

First, through a systematic literature review covering the integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism, rural tourism research, Aaker's brand equity theory, classic brand building theory and positioning theory, this study clarifies the core development logic of this research: taking unique local agricultural resources as the fundamental foundation, profound regional culture as the core connotation, systematic brand design as the presentation carrier, and high-quality tourism experiences as the

core support. This complete analytical framework provides a solid theoretical support for the subsequent tourism brand development practice of Pingqiao Village.

Second, through field investigation and on-site research on Pingqiao Village's actual resource conditions, the study confirms that the village already has a good basic condition for the integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism: these valuable resources include the unique water conservancy culture represented by Pingqiao Stone Dam, the original mountain-water ecological environment, widely distributed tea plantations and bamboo groves, the beautiful idyllic agricultural landscape, and the authentic local farming culture rooted in daily rural life. However, a systematic assessment of the village's current brand equity also points out obvious shortcomings across five core dimensions: insufficient brand awareness, low tourist brand loyalty, vague and singular brand associations, unsatisfying perceived quality, and imperfect ancillary brand assets covering intellectual property, communication channels and industrial supporting facilities. At this stage, Pingqiao Village has not yet established a systematic, highly differentiated tourism brand image that is recognized by the market.

In response to these targeted problems, this chapter proposes a complete set of brand enhancement strategies based on Aaker's brand equity model, corresponding to the five core dimensions of brand equity: brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand association, perceived quality and other proprietary brand assets. The specific measures include clarifying differentiated market positioning, developing a unified visual identity system, creating immersive agriculture-culture-tourism integrated experiences, upgrading supporting service facilities and diversified communication channels, activating scattered idle resources in the village, and establishing a long-term sustainable brand operation mechanism. The implementation of these strategies will promote Pingqiao Village to complete the transformation from a single natural sightseeing spot to a distinctive rural tourism brand with outstanding ecological value, profound cultural heritage, high-quality immersive experience and strong market communication ability, which lays a solid research foundation for the subsequent specific brand design practice.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN PROPOSAL

3.1. Concept of the Design Proposal

This preliminary research was built on three practical, on-site research methods: direct on-site observation of the village, unstructured face-to-face interviews with local visitors and villagers, and systematic sorting of publicly shared online travel notes from platforms like Xiaohongshu and Mafengwo. The whole investigation focused on four core dimensions: visitors' real travel motivations, their actual stay patterns, the main channels they use to collect travel information, and their implicit experiential preferences for rural tourism.

The research findings show that Pingqiao Village's core potential visitor market is dominated by short-distance self-driving tourists from Liyang and surrounding cities across the Yangtze River Delta. Their travel time is highly concentrated on ordinary weekends and small public holidays, with almost no long-stay visitors. Different from the traditional "check off every scenic spot" sightseeing mode, most of these visitors come here to seek low-pressure natural relaxation, quality family companionship, casual photo-taking and social sharing, and down-to-earth local cultural experiences.

Based on these real demands, the target users can be clearly divided into three distinct groups:

Family groups with children: They attach the highest importance to travel safety, interactive fun, educational value and hands-on participatory experiences. We can optimize their experience through IP-themed wayfinding systems, easy-to-understand stories about the stone dam's water conservancy heritage, parent-child nature observation activities, and simple farming-related handicraft workshops.

Young self-driving travelers and photography enthusiasts: Their core demands focus on immersive landscape atmosphere, highly photogenic check-in scenes, and convenient social sharing. Themed posters, exclusive hiking route maps, distinctive landscape signage, and limited-edition cultural and creative products can all become effective communication carriers for this group.

Study tour participants and light wellness visitors: They pay more attention to the original natural environment, complete local cultural narratives, and slow-paced, undisturbed stay experience. Targeted supporting products include professional stone dam cultural interpretation services, characteristic tea-picking and bamboo-themed experiences, 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 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.

In terms of verbal brand expression, the design sets three down-to-earth, memorable sub-themes: "Listening to Waterfalls at the Stone Dam", "Wandering Deep in the Bamboo Forest" and "Resting Idly in the Tea Fields". The three themes precisely match the three core experience modules: the stone dam water conservancy landscape, immersive forest strolling and pastoral agricultural leisure, helping visitors form clear, distinct visiting memories and natural social communication cues. The brand logo organically combines a soft handwritten-style typeface with the integrated imagery of mountains, flowing water, small bridges and native vegetation, deliberately highlighting the local, unadorned rustic quality that sets the village apart from overly polished commercial scenic spots. The whole brand color system selects bamboo green, tea green, clear water blue and natural stone gray as the four core primary colors, and applies this palette consistently across all brand touchpoints including posters, product packaging, tourist maps, souvenirs and online promotional content. All these elements

together build a complete visual framework that can be continuously extended for long-term brand operation.

3.3. Technical Support and Testing

IP Character Design and Derivative Applications

The core IP character is designed with Pingqiao Stone Dam itself as the original prototype for anthropomorphic creation. The character's head shape draws direct inspiration from the thick, solid stone masonry profile of the old dam, and retains highly recognizable real details including rough rock textures, patches of moss that grow on the dam surface, and the dynamic trace of flowing water slipping over the dam edge. Its clothing and small accessories incorporate typical elements of rural travel and traditional farming work, giving the character dual identities: it acts both as the quiet guardian of the century-old stone dam and the friendly narrator of the village's hidden stories, while maintaining the approachable, relaxed sense of a travel companion that walks and plays alongside visitors. The rounded body proportions, lively changeable facial expressions and low-saturation natural color scheme effectively bridge the original sense of distance between the professional water conservancy cultural heritage and young visitors as well as families with children.

In the derivative application design, the IP character is extended with a full set of targeted actions and expressions for different scenarios: walking along the country road, explaining the history of the stone dam to visitors, resting on the grass beside the tea field, and playing in the shallow stream at the foot of the dam. These vivid scenes are paired with a set of auxiliary illustration elements themed around gurgling streams, swaying bamboo leaves, tender tea branches, rolling mountains and open farmland. This IP image system can be widely applied to village wayfinding signs, scenic check-in installations, study tour handbooks, social media chat stickers, and local tourism volunteer service identification. It successfully transforms the abstract, hard-to-perceive cultural resources into a series of continuous, easily recognizable experiential cues spread all over the village. Compared with a single static mascot design, this series of situational illustrations with different actions can more intuitively guide visitors to

understand where to go next, what interesting things they can participate in, and why this small hidden spot is worth stopping to stay for a while.

The extended derivative IP design further clarifies the product development direction with both collectible value and social communication value, covering plush toys, metal keychains, commemorative badges, themed drinkware, decorative stickers and small hanging ornaments. All these products retain the most core brand visual identifiers, including the unique profile of Pingqiao Stone Dam, the flowing blue water pattern and the soft green vegetation elements, which completely avoids the common problem of stylistic fragmentation across different media platforms. By placing the same IP character in multiple scenarios including wayfinding guidance, on-site interactive experience, offline retail and online social communication, the design forms a complete closed loop that runs from visitors' first awareness of the village, to their on-site immersive experience, and finally to the souvenir that brings the memory back home, helping Pingqiao Village accumulate a batch of stable, exclusive long-term brand assets.

Cultural and Creative Products and Promotional Design

The cultural and creative product design strictly follows three core principles: practical for daily use, easy to read cultural connotation, and portable as a local exclusive souvenir. A full series of products are developed around four core local elements: characteristic local tea, high-quality bamboo resources, the unique waterscape of the stone dam, and the core IP character. The outer packaging and souvenir gift bags use continuous illustration compositions that combine rolling mountains, open farmland, flowing streams and scattered bamboo leaf patterns, making them perfectly suitable for packaging local tea, characteristic agricultural products and various tourist souvenir gift sets. Mugs, canvas bags, stickers, refrigerator magnets, keychains and small ornaments all take the IP character and themed scene illustrations as the main visual elements, fully meeting visitors' demands for light, affordable travel purchases that can still be used in their daily life after returning home. The color system and brand visual identity are kept completely consistent across all product lines, so that

different categories of goods can jointly form a unified, recognizable brand impression no matter when they are displayed in the village store or shared on social media.

The whole set of promotional design centers on the three established sub-themes "Listening to Waterfalls at the Stone Dam", "Exploring the Bamboo Forest" and "Resting in the Tea Fields", forming a series of connected themed posters and promotional visual materials. These visual works put the stone dam waterfall, winding bamboo forest paths, layered tea garden mountain views and the IP character into a unified story narrative system, using a soft illustration style to highlight the slow natural rhythm of Pingqiao Village and the relaxed pleasure of wandering around the village. Compared with using pure landscape photos for promotion, these themed illustrations can integrate multiple types of resource information more naturally, and are more suitable for online official account articles, offline event materials, printed wayfinding leaflets and various social media content, effectively strengthening visitors' clear association with different touring scenarios in the village.

A specially designed printed village visitor map is also developed, which graphically organizes the locations of the stone dam, bamboo forests, tea plantations, public service nodes and various experience points. It helps first-time visitors quickly build a clear spatial cognition of the whole village without getting lost. The tourist map, themed posters, product packaging and IP character together form the most basic application system for Pingqiao Village's tourism brand: the map directly answers the question of "how to tour around the village", the posters clearly explain "why this place is worth visiting", the cultural and creative products carry the memory of "what you can take away from the trip", and the friendly IP character gives visitors a specific, vivid image to remember. This system uses low-cost, easily reproducible visual media to make up for the village's original shortcomings in insufficient communication and service touchpoints, and also reserves enough flexible space for subsequent brand expansion including themed event planning, study tour course development and new media long-term operation.

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. Accordingly, the design employs an approachable IP character and a series of themed illustrations as media for wayfinding and storytelling, lowering visitors' threshold of understanding while enhancing brand interactivity and communication.

With regard to brand positioning and visual design, this chapter takes the water-conservancy memories of Pingqiao Stone Dam, bamboo-and-tea pastoral ecology, and slow-travel experiences as its core. The design extracts a set of highly recognizable local exclusive elements from the village's real resources and daily life, including the outline of the stone dam, the shape of bamboo leaves, tender tea buds, rolling surrounding mountains, gurgling streams, and the warm fragments of local villagers' daily life. It builds a complete visual expression system following three core principles:

giving priority to highlighting the most iconic landmark, supplementing with native ecological features, and embedding the down-to-earth warmth of daily rural life.

Centered on the three established experience themes "Listening to Waterfalls at the Stone Dam", "Exploring the Bamboo Forest" and "Resting in the Tea Fields", the design develops a unified, internally consistent system covering brand logo, standard color palette, series of themed illustrations and auxiliary graphic elements. This core visual system is further extended to all practical application scenarios, including the anthropomorphic IP character, graphic visitor map, full line of cultural and creative products, characteristic agricultural product packaging, and a series of themed promotional posters.

In summary, this chapter systematically integrates three core dimensions: unique local agricultural resources, precious collective cultural memories, and immersive tourism experience scenarios. It finally constructs a complete tourism brand design system for Pingqiao Village that balances four core advantages: highly recognizable visual identity, strong on-site experiential quality, convenient social communication performance, and sufficient long-term extensibility. This design not only effectively strengthens Pingqiao Village's unique regional characteristics and exclusive brand memory that cannot be copied by surrounding scenic spots, but also lays a sustainable visual foundation and provides a clear practical operation path for the village's subsequent long-term work, including themed agriculture-culture-tourism event planning, localized study tour course development, new media content operation, and continuous iteration of cultural and creative product system.

CONCLUSIONS

From the perspective of the integrated development of agriculture, culture and tourism, this study selects Pingqiao Village in Liyang as its specific research object. Guided by Aaker's classic brand equity theory and mature brand building theory, the research systematically investigates three core dimensions of the village: its unique natural and cultural resource endowments, the current development status of its tourism brand, and the complete set of localized brand design practice.

The study finds that Pingqiao Village owns a rare composite resource matrix that is hard to replicate for surrounding competing destinations, covering the century- old collective water conservancy memories carried by Pingqiao Stone Dam, the original natural mountain-water stream valley landscape, the characteristic bamboo and tea pastoral ecological space, and the authentic, unpolished daily rural life. However, the village is currently facing a series of prominent practical problems: its overall brand awareness in the regional market is still very limited, the cultural interpretation of its unique heritage resources is far from sufficient, the tourism experience provided to visitors remains relatively superficial, and the supporting brand visual system and market communication system are seriously incomplete. As a result, its inherent high-quality resource advantages have not been fully transformed into distinct, recognizable core brand value, nor have they formed a stable, lasting driving force for local tourism consumption.

Targeted at these practical problems, this study proposes a complete rural tourism brand construction path: taking the unique stone dam water conservancy culture as the absolute core of the brand, taking the immersive experience of bamboo and tea pastoral ecology as the solid practical foundation, and relying on a unified, consistent brand visual system and diversified on-site and online communication touchpoints to drive overall brand upgrading. 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 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.

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01 / 包装应用

TEA GIFT PACKAGING



02 / 文创周边

CULTURAL SOUVENIRS



03 / 纸品与伴手礼

STATIONERY & GIFTS



