

The Design of a City Gift

Building a Public Service Design System for Tourism Souvenirs

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Abstract—The tourism souvenir as the important materialization symbol of the city culture has become the effective measure and method of transmitting the featured city culture, strengthening the soft force of the city culture and escalating the consumption ability. This paper take the public service design as the core research conception, discussing the transformation of the urban culture and the regeneration mechanism to the brand construction and design development of city gift, then to the service sales and innovation transmission platform of the city gift and finally to realize the structural path of “beautiful life”, providing references for exploring the developing path of city gift.

Keywords—City Gift; Tourism Souvenirs; Public Service Design

I. INTRODUCTION

After entering the 21st century, with the fast acceleration of global urbanization, the identicalness and the homogeneity of urban construction has become more obvious and a global problem. Mr. Liangyong Wu has called this to attention and advocated for the Chinese “city cultural renaissance movement.” The theme of the World Expo in Shanghai in 2010, “better city, better life”, again corresponds to the importance of developing a characteristic urban culture. While the “City Gift”, the tourism souvenir as the important materialization symbol of the city culture, has become the effective measure and method of transmitting the featured city’s culture, strengthening the soft force of the city culture and escalating consumption ability.

According to the present research, some scholars think the city gift is the miniature materialization of a city’s culture, brand and image. Not only should it’s ability to advertise the city image be noted, but also its contribution to brand construction. (Jianhua Yang, 2011 Feng Chen, 2013; Tong He, 2009) Some raise the opinion that the innovative design of the city gift can start from the perspective of Chinese traditional elements, inheriting the historical culture, assimilating the modern city life, and presenting the local featured resources. The diverse demands of the modern consumers and issues of the increment and transformation of the design value should be acknowledged (Jinghua Fang 2011; Hui Xie 2013; Zhuowen Huang 2013). Some point out that the design evaluation could start from the perspective of representativeness, collectability, practicability, interactivity and individuality (JianFang lin etc.2010). The literature

reviews mostly target the research of the design and development of the city’s gift brand in a specific city. Normally, it’s a lack of depth in the system and the public service nature of the city gift is not considered; thus, deep research targeted at the public service design perspective is missing--and that is the key focus of this research.

II. “CITY GIFT”: THE TOURISM SOUVENIR

I would define the concept of the “city gift” from a comprehensive perspective: it is mainly created by the national tourism office in the local city (or city agglomeration). It is a general term for the exclusive brand of cultural tourism souvenirs, the themes of which advertise the spirit of the city, promote the image of the city, present the city’s cultural features and transmit the regional human style; thus, it enjoys both the trademark protection law and the copyright protection law. It is an important symbol of the material culture and spiritual culture of a city (or city agglomeration). It can present the local featured historical culture, human landscape, architecture art, folk landscape, life style and customs comprehensively through its materialization. Thus, it has the features of prestige, systematic, monumentality, scientific, humanity, creativity, practicality and fashion, thus, it’s suitable to work as the bridge and bond for international communication, political contact, commercial communication, folk emotion delivery and personal consumption reservoir.

The product construction of the city gift can be divided into three levels: the macro, meso and micro. The macro level is presented by the derivatives based on the city spirits, city signs and symbols. The meso level is presented by featured cultural resource commodities based on city history, folk customs and natural ecology. The micro level is specifically presented by calligraphy, painting products, and their derivatives, such as urban industrial creative products, traditional handicrafts and tourism souvenirs. In recent years, with the increasingly fierce competition of tourism between cities, the tourism commodities in many regions show obvious problems like a lack of cultural connotation, the coarse manufacturing techniques, and a lack of innovation awareness and service function. Besides, people’s demands towards the city gift are not limited to general sight-seeing and shopping. There is thus a need to strengthen the systematic research towards the city gifts, formulate the

healthy and effective sustainable developing strategy to better realize the aim of beautiful China.

III. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CITY GIFT AND PUBLIC SERVICE DESIGN

Since the service design was first raised (Michael 1991), it also indicated that the design has gradually transformed from the simple design of selling “materialization products” to providing a comprehensive “products and service system”, and satisfying people’s special needs better (UNEP 2002). The practical application of this public service has already taken root and blossomed in many countries. In American and European countries, public service has realized the collaboration between different subjects and stakeholders through improving public participation, innovating the public participation modal, and applying new media technology (among other methods) (Pestoff 2012) to solve the public department and social issues. (Elizabeth. Etc. 2008) The domestic scholars also realize this: Tongxu Wang etc. (2012) thinks that the public service design starts from the overall social view and that it has the possibility of improving and solving the social issues of the public sphere and public service area. Ping Xu (2010) points out that the basic public service equalization development trend in our country makes the design strategy and method applicable to the more extensive public affair area and provide solutions to social issues. Wuwei Li (2013) even points out more clearly that in the construction of a beautiful China, the creative design is more needed in serving the industrial construction and cultural construction.

“City gift” as the brand representative of the city cultural tourism souvenirs also has the property of the public service. The government in our country clearly raises the opinion to construct the “service type government”, promoting and realizing “basic public service equalization”, constructing the complete “modern public culture service system.” The aim of the public service design is to reshape the innovative mode of the public service through such designing thoughts as transitioning the process of “manufacturing for public production” towards “manufacturing with the public” -- striving to realize the mutual development off the social profits and economic profits and the sharing of the social public level. This is also applicable to the research and application of the city gift research.

IV. PUBLIC SERVICE DESIGN SYSTEM FOR CITY GIFT

This paper takes the public service design as the core research conception, discussing the transformation of the urban culture and the regeneration mechanism of brand construction and design development of the city gift. It then proceeds to the service sales and innovation transmission platform of the city gift, ultimately leading to the structural path of “beautiful life” (see fig two) and providing references for the exploration of the developmental path of a city gift.

A. Characterization of Cultural Soft Power

The construction of beautiful China depends on the realization of the beautiful city target. City image is the inseparable part of the national image of a beautiful China.

The important material carrier of the former is the “Chinese gift” while the latter is presented by the city gift. The city gift is the best carrier to present the city image and spirit and it also is an important symbol of the cultural soft force. Thus, strengthening the systematic research of the design, development, manufacturing, trade and transmission of the city gift and escalating the designing level and cultural connotation of the city gift have the important promoting effect in constructing the special city image, assisting the brand development of Chinese gift and creating a national brand of a beautiful China.

B. Transformation and Regeneration from Culture to Gift

City culture is the basis, the innovative design is the key and the city gift is the realization platform. There are two ideas to complete the innovation realization of a city gift from a city’s culture. One is around the transformation and excitation of the cultural resource and the other is the increment and regeneration of the innovative design. The focus of the former is the transformation and reform of the cultural resource. This is done by gathering the city’s cultural resources into a repository, mainly researching the transformation and assimilation of the city culture with the city gift. It not only studies the combination of the traditional industrial arts and intangible cultural heritage and the city gifts from the social manufacturing perspective, but also studies the development of the derivatives of the traditional and modern artifacts to realize the excitation and update through its existing cultural system. The latter focuses on the increment and regeneration of the innovation design and the compacting of the cultural value with urban material culture and connotation. Realizing its increment and generation through innovative product design and making it to be the iconic product which can escalate the city culture brand is the goal.

C. The Brand Building and Development of City Gifts

1) Intangible services contact points: Brand Building:

“City gifts “are the material carrier and cultural symbol of the city it represents and it also the intangible property of the city cultural image. From the present situation, there are three types of thoughts in designing and developing the city gift brand. First, from the global view, no matter from the “I love New York “from New York or “Fashion Capital” of Paris or the “100% New Zealand” of New Zealand, most of them depend on the brand of the city promotion slogan to conduct the design and development of the relative city gift. China also has the same brands. For example, “reach the acme of perfection gift from Shanxi”, “city of life quality Hangzhou city gift”, “home in Henan tourism creation products”. Second, start an affiliating brand based on the original brand of the original city promotion slogan. For example, Guiyang takes “shuang shuang de Guiyang (the happy Guiyang) as the city brand and image and name its city gift as “wu shuang Guiyang (the happy shopping in Guiyang”, to accentuate the shopping attribute of the city. Third, most of the other cities’ cultural tourism souvenir brands are named in the method of “city name (city

agglomeration) + gift”, for example, Beijing Gift, Xinjiang Gift, Wuhan Gift, Nanning Gift, Shenzhen Gift.

2) *Tangible services contact points: Brand Development:*

When it comes to the design and development of the city gift, first, the development thought of “two combinations” should be strengthened. Not only should the perfect combination of “city cultural brand” and “city gift brand” should be highlighted, but also the development mode of the combination of the “city featured culture element and traditional manufacturing techniques”+“innovative design, modern technology and time element” + “Audience consumption demand and personal service positioning”. This is how the city gift can become the symbolic product and cultural soft force of the city’s cultural brand. Secondly, the design of the city gift must closely connect to the different kinds of urban featured cultural resources. It is able to systematically dissect the cultural feature, function positioning, style and features and design additional value of the city gift from the multi-dimensional perspective of cultural digging, product innovation, packaging update and user experience. Thirdly, the design and development of the city gift should not only satisfy the shopping demands of the common tourists, but also function as a promotion of the city image and a transmission of the city spirit, which should be strengthened and finally unify the cultural value, practical value and common development of the social and economic profits.

D. *Trade and Communication Platform of the City Gifts*

1) *The Trade Platform of City Gifts:* One should actively explore the overall image design of the city gift franchise store from the experiential design perspective. The sales and operation mode of the Beijing Olympic Games, Shanghai World Expo, Guangzhou Asian Olympic Games and other grand activity souvenirs can be used as references. The successful marketing mode of Apple and Ikea and other franchise stores should also be used as a reference. On one hand investigating these brand and their conducting the systematical design from the visual VI image, storefront decoration, space display, sign system and outdoor advertising and display is useful. On the other hand, the city gift franchise store can be divided into three types according to function and application. The first kind is the brand flagship store, which is normally located on a pedestrian street in the center of the city or a tourist distribution center. It is normally in charge of the brand advertising, image transmitting, products sales and customer experience and other comprehensive service function. The second kind is the experiential shop which, compared with the former shop, focuses more on the introduction of the products and the customer’s experiences. The third kind is the brand franchise store which can be distributed throughout the main scenic spot, commercial and trade area and cultural area, etc.

2) *The Support System of City Gifts:* The creation and development of the city gift brand should not only be

constructed as a brand product but also create an interactive platform through this kind of structure, fully boosting the integration and collaboration of the entertainment, traditional manufacturing techniques, innovative design, cultural tourism and other related industrial resources, furthering the basis of the city gift, thereby creating the “one region (county, town, village) one taste”. It should also explore sustainable development, which is led by the government, operated by the market, united by the culture and the enterprises and participated in by the public, through the adoption of access permission and a competition mechanism. In short, it aims to realize the maximization of the public service profit and evaluation system and complete the talent cultivation modal through the combination of production education and research, the completion of the political and fund guarantee system, and the strengthening of the intellectual property protection and brand franchising mechanism.

3) *The New Media Communications Platform of City Gifts:* Completing the integration of marketing and innovation transmission channels of the city gift’s brand in different new media is another task. First, social media communication and feedback should be examined, represented by Weibo and Wechat. The mass data analysis should be done according to the elements of age, gender, location, occupation, reading time of the audiences. Using the data one can comprehensively make a plan for the time spot, content category of the daily information promotion, and conduct the specific analysis of the interactive modes of the fans, daily frequency and on-line and off-line activity types. The second kind is to continue completing the digitalization system represented by the network digital displace, based on the existing webpage advertising product display and sales mode, as well as the mobile transmission channel based on the smart terminal under the “wise city” background. Continue, one should escalate people’s recognition and degree of favor through the addition of more 3D displays, virtual orbits, interactive experiences and systematic introductions of the culture, history, techniques and folk customs behind different kinds of representative souvenirs. Finally, one should pay special attention to the integration and transmission of the city gift and city brand marketing activities, assimilating the city gift into it by utilizing the influences of the different kinds of regional featured cultural innovative performances, cultural celebration, display and exhibition and other innovative transmission platforms to obtain the multi-win transmission effect through the combination the blow marketing mode.

V. CONCLUSION

The core of the city gift design is the transmission of the city’s cultural spirit and also the promotion of a positive spiritual need and healthy life style. Especially when our government clearly advocates the big background of constructing an ecological and cultural society, people should be led to form a healthy consumption habit and

positive spiritual need while moving forward towards the aim of realizing the ecological, cultural life style, depending on the material support of a city gift and its transmission of the city spirit and cultural aspects.

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