

# Research on the Village Brand Building Strategy and Practical Creation

## Taking Kongmei Village, Longjiang as an Example

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**Abstract**—This paper takes candy cake of Kongmei, Longjing as the starting point, conducts on-the-spot investigation and research of Kongmei Village in Longjiang, excavates the culture of Kongmei Village, and integrates village culture stories and village effective resources to build village brand. The article explores how to effectively use and integrate cultural resources to build a sustainable village brand and establish a distinctive brand image of regional culture. It provides realistic and evidence-based creative design strategies, conduct research with investigation, cultural exploration, cultural story construction, design products, and sustainable industry extension as the main line, and then summarize the design creative methods and the design ideas for creating a complete brand system. The creation of village brands is of great significance to the economic, cultural and environmental development of the village.

**Keywords**—village brand; brand building; Kongmei Village

### I. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the economic development of cities in China is getting increasingly faster, and the construction of cultural industries is gradually improving. However, the economic construction and human development of some rural areas have stagnated, resulting in poor village economy, large cultural gap and backward rural areas. Therefore, improving the economic conditions of villages and enhancing the level of rural cultural construction is one of the important goals of building a harmonious society.

The construction of village brands has certain practical significance. The construction of village brands is one of the important ways to develop rural culture construction and rural economy. What attract people in the village's scenic spots are special resources such as the village's characteristic culture, special delicacies, special pastoral scenery and special products. According to these specific resources, we can build a distinctive cultural brand of the village area, from designing a well-designed outer packaging to narrating a brand story of regional characteristic culture and establishing a product brand image and distinctive brand characteristics, thus constructing an excellent village brand. General Secretary Xi Jinping said: the state needs to vigorously implement the brand strategy

of agricultural products, cultivate a number of well-known agricultural product brands at home and abroad, and protect products of geographical indication and well-known brands of agricultural products according to law<sup>1</sup>. The construction of village brand is the village construction advocated by the state to make the rural products adapt to the brutal competition of the future market, ensure the smooth flow of sales, and promote the economic development of the village. On the other hand, the village brand can strengthen the influence of the characteristic regional culture, enrich the cultural life of village, strengthen the cultural cohesion of village residents, and improve the level of village culture construction.

This paper takes the brand culture story of Kongmei Village in Longjiang and the construction of the brand system as the examples to analyze and summarize the construction methods of the village brand.

### II. THE CONSTRUCTION STRATEGY OF THE VILLAGE BRAND

#### A. Literature Collection and Development of Brand Building Plan

In response to the poverty alleviation construction of the “Kongmei Village, Longjiang”, our school has established a research group for poverty alleviation villages and village brand construction. The groups consist of professors and students from the fields of architecture, food, design, and journalism, etc., and they cooperate with each other in groups. The outstanding village cadres have accurate position, and they create complementary ideas, exchange ideas, brainstorm ideas, and develop comprehensive detailed plans for the brand and construction. In response to the key link of getting rid of poverty and getting rich, we gradually explored a feasible model of “five-in-one targeted poverty alleviation and coordinated promotion of rural revitalization”.

<sup>1</sup> “Promoting the transformation of Chinese agricultural products to Chinese brands” Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference / <http://politics.people.com.cn/n/2015/0310/c70731-26665016.html>.

In the brand construction plan for “Kongmei Village, Longjiang”, the group makes brand construction from the local cultural development and construction, the regional transformation of Kongmei Village, the upgrading recipe of the ingredients of mung bean cake, the brand and visual design of the mung bean cake and other sweet cakes, the peripheral products of brand and travel experience products

(forms). They clarify the framework content of the brand building plan, determine the development direction and goals, and start the action together when sharing resources to ensure the smooth and timely implementation of the project and the scientific and sustainable development of the brand building plan.

TABLE I. CONFUCIUS BEAUTY BRAND BUILDING PLAN

Brand building plan	Status quo	Aims
Kongmei Village Cultural Development Construction	it has a fixed cultural ritual, but the cultural protection awareness is weak	Clarify traditional cultural awareness, and promote and spread traditional culture
Regional Reconstruction of Kongmei Village	Poor environment, no environmental awareness, and chaotic street	Beautiful environment, convenient transportation and improved environmental awareness
ingredients of Mung bean cake	Much saccharose, no preservatives, and a large amount of sugar is used for food quality.	Changing saccharose to tangerine sugar (healthy sugar suitable for diabetics)
Brand and visual design of mung bean cake and other sugar cakes in Kongmei Village	Simple paper and packaging	Creating Kongmei brand design, and make the brand have a story
peripheral products of brand of Kongmei village and travel experience products	no brand	Integrating the cultural characteristics of the village to design peripheral products

### *B. Making Field Research and Investigation to Explore the Regional Culture of the Village*

The folk customs of Chaoshan people, who live in clan and have memorial temple for every clan, were witnessed in the village. In the village, the temple is almost everywhere. During the visit, there are many elements of traditional culture or spiritual representation in the village halls and buildings, which can be used in the design and express the regional characteristic culture. The special cuisine of the village is a combination of the natural resources and geographical environment of village, with strong regional cultural characteristics. The author also visited the market's mung bean cake workshop, conducted interviews, observations, photographs and other methods and found that the cakes as one of the favorite snacks of local people have a good local consumer market. Sweet cakes are produced in rural areas and are hand-made, safe and healthy foods with no chemical ingredients or preservatives. The traditional handicrafts of Kongmei cakes have been inherited up to now and have been included in the national intangible cultural heritage. After the investigation, a deeper understanding is gained about the production process, composition, packaging, promotion of the Longjiang Kongmei Mung bean Cake, as well as the audience of the product and the consumer's perception of the mung bean cake.

In order to make the construction of the village brand have a good culture and brand foundation, we conduct in-depth field investigations on the objectives of the plan and explore or reorganize the cultural elements of the village's development to find the characteristics of the village brand. The excavation of village culture is an important catalyst that makes the construction of village brands operable and achieves long-term development.

### *C. Creating the Core Value of the Village Brand for Regional Characteristics*

In the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Kongmei Village was a place with outstanding people and a strong style of literature. The previous generation of famous persons was diligent and responsible for the people, and the history of humanities was rich. There were also outstanding talents of "7 graduates and 18 scholars", so it was also known as Number One Scholar Village. The moral characters of people in Kongmei Village are mainly “virtue”, “kindness” and “filial piety”. The people's life is simple and practical, and the villagers have also produced many unique local delicacies through their own research. In order to commemorate the ancestors' efforts, set an excellent example for future generations, and inherit the virtues and kindness, the villagers of Kongmei Village have built ancestral buildings, so that the customs of uniting the people and commemorating the ancestors have flourished in the village. The ancestral temple embodies the cultural thoughts of the same roots and the same source of the traditional villages. It is the main symbol of the unity and common life of the village. The construction of the ancestral temple is also the embodiment of the regional cultural heritage. The villagers will hold various kinds of ethnic and folk activities with cultural and regional characteristics in the ancestral temple in certain festivals.

The village's research and cultural investigations systematically summarize and extract the most valuable cultural information and cultural symbols from the village culture through local exchanges with the villagers and local visits. Then the author builds a brand story for the characteristic village culture and determines the design positioning and brand purposes.

Traditional villages have maintained cultural continuity in the process of development and inheritance [ <sup>2</sup> ]. According to the understanding and excavation of the culture of Kongmei Village, the key words for the culture of Kongmei Village are the famous sages, ancestral temple culture and cultural relics. The name of the brand is named "Confucius Beauty" brand according to the traditional history of Kongmei Village. It has clarified the brand's goal of creating a creative ancient village with culture, outstanding people and advancing with the times. It has positioned the cultural brand image of a literary family and simple folk customs for Kongmei Village, and spreads the story of Kongmei through the traditional culture of Kongmei Village. The theme of the story is divided into "seven graduates and eighteen scholars", "customs of ancestral temple", and "life morality and lifestyle". The brand story is the core value of brand culture. The characteristic brand story is the cultural basis of brand promotion and brand communication, as well as the important connotation of effective communication of brand.

### III. THE DESIGN METHOD OF VILLAGE BRAND CONSTRUCTION

#### A. Creating a Distinctive Cultural Product Based on the Brand Story

In the local research interviews, we learned that the villagers' brand building awareness is weak, and the village lacks the brand image and brand characteristics, and so on. In order to solve the problem of no brand in the village, we have built the Confucius brand as a village brand.

Among the products built by the "Confucius Beauty" brand, we have designed unique food products, tourism products and cultural peripheral products according to the theme of the story "seven graduates and eighteen scholars", "ancestral temple customs", "life morality and lifestyle". In Kongmei Village, there are the famous traditional stories such as "Hexing" company of merchants with good reputation and honesty, the typical filial piety character Tang Yijun, and the Tang Dynasty father and son. The brand effectively uses the characteristic stories to design the food products including mung bean cake, clement peanut candy, filial piety salt cake, and father and son double-graduate sugar. The "Confucius Beauty" brand is also used in the visual design of the brand by drawing the village's ancestral temple customs, the sacred tour, lighting the lamp, the first month of the lunar year, and the new cultural features into figures. Tourism products include ancestral temple cultural tourism maps and agricultural experience tourism maps; cultural peripheral products with commemorative value include mobile phone shells, dragon and tiger handbags, dragon and tiger glasses storage bags, dragon and tiger lunch cloths, and money bags, etc. with brand culture features.

The products and packaging of the "Confucius Beauty" brand create a brand name and brand positioning with cultural features through culturally features stories, achieving the brand building goal of products with stories, stories with cultures, cultures with innovations, and innovation with characteristics, so that the brand products have stories, and the product has temperature. On the one hand, the cultural story with brand characteristics can optimize the brand assets of "Confucius Beauty". On the other hand, the village culture of Kongmei Village is reflected in the packaging of "Confucius Beauty" brand. In the promotion of "Confucius Beauty" brand, it also promotes and carries forward the culture of Kongmei and realizes the cultural heritage of the village. What's more important is it not only lets the local people gradually establish the awareness of cultural protection and inheriting the good virtues of their hometowns, but also evokes the nostalgic feelings of the compatriots working out of the village.

#### B. Developing a Clear Design Orientation for the Consumer Market

For the Confucius Beauty brand gourmet products, we found that the products have defects to be solved in the investigation: the packaging is simple, unsustainable, not moisture-resistant and not environmentally friendly; the villagers have difficulty in improving the cost of packaging; the consumers of the cakes are not wide, which only cover the local market; products are produced through small home workshops, with low product popularity. In order to solve these problems, our design scheme is accurately aimed at the brand consumer market, and we design a variety of packaging styles with culture characteristics through different positioning. The consumer group of the "Confucius Beauty" brand is divided into local villagers and non-local tourists. The product line of brand design is divided into three types: one is simple and easy to use packaging products, the other is packaging products with strong cultural sense and the third is the packaging design of Confucius brand products as presents.

In response to the local residents' consumption orientation, the villagers purchase cake products as snacks for children in the family, so they do not have high requirements for packaging of sweet cakes. Based on this status, the "Confucius Beauty" brand has developed an easy-to-use package for consumers to choose. The brand has also designed a style of "custom simple packaging" for this consumer group, which is packaged with Confucius brand posters and edible wrapping paper to simply wrap food. The custom posters on the packaging have the characteristics of cultural communication, which make the packaging of foods an indirect promotion marketing chain, to promote the "Confucius Beauty" brand and inherit the traditional culture of Kongmei.

By carefully investigating the needs and hobbies of nonlocal consumers, we have designed the packaging of the "Confucius Beauty" brand as souvenir into three styles: the bulk packaging of special celebrity culture story "Seven Graduates and Eighteen Scholars", box packaging of special

<sup>2</sup> Zhang Jian. Research on the Inheritance and Renewal of Traditional Village Landscape Based on Sustainable Design — Taking Yandunjiao Village as an Example [J]. Decoration, 2017(01): 140-141.



cultural events “festival celebrations custom”, as well as “Dragon and Tiger” table linen hard packaging and comprehensive gift boxes made up of beautiful symbolic elements. The rich form of souvenirs can provide consumers with more choices, and to a certain extent it also shows the diversity of the brand culture of “Confucius Beauty”.

In the construction of village brands, the accurate positioning of consumers is an important factor in the sustainable development of village brands. The positioning of the brand determines the way of brand communication and the style of brand design. The style of brand design that is suitable for consumers' choices can attract consumers' continuous attention and achieve the purpose of brand product sales and promotion.



Fig. 1. Confucius Beauty brand packaging design (designed: Zhang Jiahui).



Fig. 2. Confucius Beauty brand poster and brand image (designed: Zhang Jiahui).

### C. Strengthening Brand Recognition and Conveying the Unique Aesthetic Concept and Cultural Value of the Brand

The logo of Confucius Beauty brand is based on the design of Kirin. The design is inspired by the sculpture of Kirin on the ancestral frame of Kongmei Village. According to the villagers, it acts as a patron saint, symbolizing good fortune and guarding the peace and prosperity of generations of the ancestors. Therefore, we used this cultural significance to design the brand logo of "Confucius Beauty". The design of the logo utilizes the cultural elements with historical inheritance, regionality and folk characteristics, and is redesigned in the style of illustrations. The representative history, folklore, humanistic spirit and art

of Kongmei Village are displayed and the unique cultural value of the brand is transmitted through the logo.

The traditional design is all in the same key, so it is difficult to attract the attention of consumers. However, the Confucius Beauty brand combines and redesigns the graphic elements and culture of the village by retaining the folklore characteristics of the village, and attracts consumers' attention with the characteristic cultural story to strengthen brand recognition.

The brand's design style relies mainly on fresh and elegant style. They draw the pattern of brand culture elements through illustrations, uses the blue-green, black and orange-red colors that is attractive to consumers as the main tone, and combines with the valuable cultural stories extracted by Confucius Beauty, such as "Seven Graduates and Eighteen Scholars", "Festival Ceremony Customs Activities", and "Dragon and Tiger Wall" of ancestral temple culture, etc. to design a series of peripheral products of Kongmei culture, Kongmei Village experiential tourism map, and Kongmei Food packaging. The brand makes redesign according to the culture and symbols of Kongmei Village and uses the characteristic story of the brand and the unique cultural value to produce the visual creative design of the brand, making the peripheral products of the brand more interesting. It not only intuitively defines the regional cultural brand image, but also attracts consumers' curiosity more quickly, accumulates consumers' attention to the brand, and achieves better brand promotion effect.

### D. Establishing Regional Cultural and Creative Industries to Promote the Sustainable Development of Village Brands

While protecting the village culture and the natural environment, we can carry out regional development for some areas of the village and promote the sustainable development of the village brand. First, relying on the effective cultural resources in Kongmei Village - the ancestral building and cultural sites, we can improve transportation and the identification system of Kongmei Village, and establish a regional cultural and creative industry. Secondly, we can develop a “Confucius Beauty” cultural corridor on the main route of the village, and hang cultural stories or illustrations on the roadside, so that tourists can go to the temple to learn about the temple scenery of Chaozhou and learn about traditional culture stories in the corridor. Third, the brand plans to use the wasteland to create a “Confucius Beauty” sweet cake production experience workshop, which not only allows visitors to experience the making process of famous cake, but also promotes the local villagers to learn the ancestral cake craft and inherit the intangible cultural heritage. While protecting the handicraft culture of cakes, the program also improves the employment rate and production economic level of Kongmei Village by construction of experience workshops. Finally, the brand can develop the farmland in the village into a farmland experience area. In the specific seasons, visitors can experience the fun of planting and harvesting in farmland, which enriches the tourism

experience project of Kongmei Village, and expand the brand equity of the village brand.

Only by establishing regional cultural and creative industries, promoting the sustainable development of village brands, and maximizing the creation of village brands can we achieve real poverty alleviation. From the perspective of cultural and creative industries, the village carries out the effective development of economy, culture and environment.



Fig. 3. Creative map of Confucius Beauty brand (designed: Zhang Jiahui).



Fig. 4. Peripheral products of Confucius Beauty brand (designed: Zhang Jiahui).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In the process of village brand construction, we conduct research on the cultural characteristics of the village. First, we can select the featured areas, establish a multi-disciplinary team, and develop a complete brand construction plan. Then, according to the regional characteristics, we should excavate the local cultural characteristics and customs, establish the core of the brand through the characteristic culture of the region, create the brand story, and establish the characteristic products and brands with regional characteristic culture. Furthermore, the marketing plan of the village's featured brands needs to clarify the positioning of the products, carry out unique aesthetic design and create cultural values according to different market positioning. Finally, when the brand has a certain influence, the establishment of the village creative culture industry is the future prospect and planning of the sustainable development of the village brand.

The construction of village brands has certain practical significance, which has greatly promoted poverty alleviation

in rural areas and is also an important strategy to promote rural development in the current era. The innovation of brand and heritage of traditional culture are ways that we can learn and apply to the revitalization of other villages.

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