Study on Design Development for Character Cultural Products Based on Indigenous Culture

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Abstract : Modern society is changing rapidly due to diversification and pluralization. Such change makes people pursue and develop an inclination toward differentiation and high quality not only in their living environment, but also in their sentiments, emotions and sensitivity. In advanced countries, people’s interest in cultural products containing elements of the host country’s traditions and consciousness has already been heightened in keeping with the era of culture. Global consumption patterns indicate that the degree of preference for products that reflect the culture and character of a specific country. Despite the fact that Korea has many excellent traditions and an ample cultural heritage, we fail to make the best use of these cultural resources. Accordingly, we should contribute to the publicizing of our region and the activation of our regional economy by utilizing characters based on our unique regional culture and of developing high value added cultural products. This study attempted to create guidelines for the cultural design for the development of various products based on culture which meet the sentiment of consumers and are sustainable. In addition, this study investigated the possibility that cultural products based on the identity of native culture not only satisfied the emotional and functional desire of consumers, but also created and spread a unique cultural design style.

Key words: a Native Culture, the Emotional Value, Cultural Products, Cultural Design Style

1. Introduction

Character expressed with a specific culture as the subject is outstanding in terms of its comparative advantage originality. In addition, character and culture can seek effective differentiation and image promotion by the effects of synergy. Cultural products using a country’s character are produced with specific purposes and in various forms, but their life span is very short and sometimes they are used only for one-time promotion. Related to the diversification phenomenon of character products and culture, accordingly, is the necessity for cultural products to emerge that can satisfy consumers’ cultural desires while following changes in leisure and consumption cultures. In this study, we would like to suggest various sustainable possibilities and values that suggest cultural character products can stimulate consumers’ peevish sensibilities and offer emotional satisfaction based on original culture. Through this study, we would like to investigate the possibility of a cultural design that gives vitality to national development and fosters cultural pride by having original cultural
character products armed with differentiated competitiveness create a great deal of added value, in addition to cultural value as a first-class resource. The purpose of this study is to seek guidelines for the cultural design and development of sustainability for various products, while effectively coping with consumers’ emotions based on their indigenous culture.

2. Definition and characteristics of cultural products

Cultural products are the final outcome produced in the process of industrial activity using cultural materials. It is an idea-intensive and technology-intensive undertaking to produce high value added cultural products. As a product of culture, technology and creation, it has the characteristics of multiplicity, diversity, non-similarity and high added value.\(^1\) In modern society, cultural products mean not only material goods but also goods having various invisible values which satisfy consumers’ cultural demand.

3. Cultural consumption trend

The changes in consumers’ lifestyles and consciousness has affected society overall and has led to social activities which attempt to satisfy their original cultural values and desires, resulting in a change in the consumption of culture. In order to cope with the global industrial markets of the 21st century which place such an emphasis on cultural diversity, and to develop sensibility-pursuing character designed products that stimulate complicated senses amongst consumers who enjoy an affluent lifestyle and who hope to live in a nature-friendly environment, while at the same time offering a sense of emotional satisfaction, we should sell “pleasure” and “culture.”

4. Case of cultural products

The cases of domestic and foreign cultural products were arranged based on a survey. we tried to find the function character (visual identity) in various media which we carried out by conducting a survey on the value of indigenous culture that cultural products of relevant character have. The railroad character cultural design case was presented through my own study.

4.1 Domestic case

Regional symbols developed by character are contributing to not only the promotion of an image of the region and the public institution, but are also activating regional economy.

![Figure 1](image)

Figure 1: Hampyeongnabi character DING, BING, RING(left) and Samsung character Bichumi(right)

4.2 Foreign case

Foreign cultural design case (logo or emblem) involves pursuing various changes (patterns) among persistent factors and establishing the identity of the culture.

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\(^1\) Maeil Economic Research Center, Study on design development promotion policy of Korean cultural products (1997), P.14.
4.3. levitation train character cultural design case (own product)

The city-type magnetic levitation train to be operated in Incheon International Airport in 2012 is drawing keen attention as an environment-friendly next-generation high-tech means of transport that operates by floating due to the power of electromagnets in place of wheels. The magnetic levitation train to be commercially operated for the first time in Korea is a symbol of high-class railroad culture with a new conception, but it is insufficient in terms of degree of recognition and popularity. Accordingly, we tried to suggest the possibility of causing curiosity by publicizing its advanced domestic technology and creating additional high value by using familiar materials such as character based on the indigenous culture of the magnetic levitation train.

Character development progress will be completed from the idea search to planning, development, appraisal and conclusion.

Based on material surveys and planning conferences (idea meetings), we set the basic concept and design direction. We selected the three indigenous characteristics of the magnetic levitation train – its cultural basis as the next-generation high-tech means of transportation; its environment-friendly character that causes it to float due to the power of electromagnetism instead of wheels; and Korea’s unique position as only the second country in the world to operate this type of train – as its most significant characteristics.

By using the developed characters, we created examples of the following tie-in products:
A folding paper representation of the magnetic levitation train is an item that will encourage participation and interest from users. The method used to fold the paper is simple to ensure people can make it easily while maintaining their interest. A mobile phone chain is a practical item that people can use it selectively while experiencing a feeling of intimacy coming from so simple and cute a design.

Product: Folding paper
Size: 50 × 50 × 50
Material: Thick paper

Product: Cellphone accessories
Size: 30 × 30 × 3
Material: Acrylic

Figure 6 Creation of Folding paper and Cellphone accessories

5. Suggestion of design direction for development of culture-based character product

As the cultural materials we hold have originality and competitiveness, we need to create added cultural value by actively using each character’s value.

The suggested design direction for the development of such character cultural products is as follows:
① It should be possible to utilize various products with the character. ② Emotional exchange with consumers as a living creature, not as a simple visible material, should be possible. ③ It should possess special originality offering pleasure.

We now live in an era of culture, so we have to recognize the fact that the origin of commodity competitiveness lies in the power of interpreting culture through design and we must make efforts to do so.

6. Conclusion

For the future development of the cultural industry, we should recognize cultural values and seek ways to cope with them. This means the creation of new economic activities through culture, not the creation of simple and new culture. In this study, we grasped respective characteristics through material surveys and analysis of culture-related characters. The study was carried out by deducing the indigenous cultural characteristics of railroad transportation and grafting characters possessing special features which would be intimated by the public easily based on its characteristics. Through this study, characters possessing specific cultural values will greatly contribute to satisfying consumers’ sensitivity. It is also expected to play a role as a cultural messenger representing the culture of the era, not to mention staging various future-oriented profitable businesses.

7. Examples Citations

