Article

Motion Graphic Design and Visual Communication of Traditional Henan Folk Custom Visual Symbols

Yi Zou[1] and Nur Farazilla Binti Mohd Arsad[1,*]

[1] City University Malaysia, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
* Correspondence: Nur Farazilla Binti Mohd Arsad, City University Malaysia, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia

Abstract: With the rapid development of digital media technologies, traditional folk culture is shifting from static visual presentation to motion-based and interactive digital expression. Traditional Henan folk custom visual symbols embody rich regional aesthetics, symbolic meanings, and historical memory. Yet, in globalized media environments, they face significant challenges in cultural inheritance, visual adaptation, and audience engagement. This study examines the motion graphic design and visual communication of these specific symbols. Drawing on established theories of visual communication, motion graphics, and digital media art, and utilizing literature analysis, visual analysis, and case studies, it analyzes their decorative patterns, color systems, image symbols, and composition forms. Furthermore, it explores how these traditional elements can be effectively transformed into a dynamic visual language for modern audiences. The analysis suggests that motion graphic design can significantly enhance the visual vitality and communicative efficiency of traditional folk symbols through dynamic transformation, visual rhythm, animated narrative, and interactive expression. This integration not only helps reconstruct the contemporary aesthetic value of the symbols, but also extends their application to digital cultural creativity, new media communication, animation design, and cultural branding. Consequently, it may strengthen audience participation and cultural identity among younger generations. Ultimately, the study offers valuable theoretical references and practical design strategies for the digital revitalization of traditional Chinese folk visual culture.

Keywords: motion graphics; visual communication; digital media; folk culture; visual symbols

1. Introduction

This section presents the research background, key questions, objectives, and academic significance, and provides an overview of the paper's organizational structure [1].

1.1. Research Background

With the rapid development of digital media technologies, internet platforms, and mobile terminals, visual communication is undergoing a profound transformation from static display to dynamic, interactive, and immersive presentation [1]. Amid the growth of short video platforms, digital exhibitions, social media, and the digital cultural and creative industries, motion graphic design has become one of the major forms of contemporary visual communication due to its vivid visual expression, strong information-carrying capacity, and effective communication. Integrating graphic design, animation design, video art, and digital media technologies, motion graphic design enhances the efficiency of information transmission and audience engagement through movement, rhythm, transition, and narrative structure, opening new possibilities for the innovative presentation of traditional culture.

As an indispensable part of traditional Chinese culture, folk custom culture embodies profound historical memory, regional characteristics, and national aesthetic values. As a vital carrier of folk culture, folk custom visual symbols record local cultural traditions and

Received: 19 September 2026
Revised: 10 November 2026
Accepted: 23 November 2026
Published: 26 November 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

social life through patterns, colors, shapes, and symbolic meanings. Henan, an important birthplace of Chinese civilization, possesses a profound historical and cultural heritage and abundant folk art resources. Its traditional folk custom visual symbols are widely found in woodblock New Year prints, paper-cutting art, embroidery patterns, folk architectural decorations, traditional crafts, and folk festivals [1]. These visual symbols are distinctively decorative and artistic, and carry profound cultural connotations such as auspicious symbolism, folk beliefs, and cultural identity.

Nevertheless, amid globalization and digitalization, traditional folk custom culture faces challenges including limited outreach channels, declining public attention, and weakening cultural identity. Among young people in particular, conventional methods of presenting traditional folk custom visual symbols do not align with the information-receiving habits of the digital era; a questionnaire survey of 291 respondents aged 18 to 30 in Tianjin indicated low familiarity with New Year prints [2]. As a result, their cultural value and artistic charm remain underrepresented. How traditional visual elements can be applied in contemporary visual communication design has become an active research topic, and achieving the innovative expression and effective outreach of traditional folk custom visual symbols through digital media technologies is therefore a key issue in cultural inheritance and design innovation.

Characterized by dynamic presentation, visual narration, and multimedia integration, motion graphic design provides a new method for the digital adaptation of traditional cultural resources. The dynamic reconstruction of traditional folk custom visual elements can enhance visual appeal, improve cultural communication effectiveness, and support the innovative development of traditional culture in modern society [2]. Accordingly, exploring the application and communication mechanisms of Henan folk custom visual symbols in motion graphic design holds theoretical and practical significance for advancing the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional culture.

1.2. Research Questions

In recent years, research has addressed the digital communication of traditional culture, the application of traditional visual elements in design, and motion graphic design. However, existing studies mostly focus either on the protection and inheritance of traditional cultural resources or on the technologies and expressive forms of motion graphic design, while research on the dynamic visual transformation and communication effects of Henan folk custom visual symbols remains insufficient [3].

First, Henan folk custom visual symbols possess rich visual features and cultural connotations, yet relevant studies mainly concentrate on artistic value and cultural interpretation, and their visual language systems have not been systematically organized. Second, the current literature lacks in-depth discussion of dynamic design strategies for traditional visual symbols, and a complete methodological system for motion graphic transformation has not yet been established. Third, further research is required on how motion graphic design can enhance the communication of traditional culture, increase audience participation, and strengthen cultural identity in the digital media environment.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What are the visual characteristics of Henan folk custom visual symbols? (2) How can these traditional visual symbols be transformed into the visual language of motion graphic design? (3) What communication value does motion graphic design create for traditional culture in the digital media context?

1.3. Research Objectives

This study explores the application and communication mechanisms of Henan folk custom visual symbols in motion graphic design [1]. Specifically, it analyzes the visual characteristics of these symbols—including decorative patterns, color systems, image motifs, and compositional structures; investigates design methodologies and expressive strategies for adapting them into the visual language of motion graphics; and evaluates

the role and value of motion graphic design in enhancing traditional cultural communication, reinforcing cultural identity, and supporting digital dissemination.

1.4. Research Significance

The significance of this study can be evaluated from theoretical, practical, and cultural perspectives.

1.4.1. Theoretical Significance

This study integrates research on traditional folk custom culture, visual communication theory, and motion graphic design theory to examine the digital communication of traditional culture from an interdisciplinary perspective, thereby enriching theoretical understanding of motion graphic design in cultural transmission. By establishing a dynamic transformation pathway for traditional folk custom visual symbols, it offers a novel theoretical framework for investigating the visual communication of traditional culture.

1.4.2. Practical Significance

This study explores dynamic design strategies for Henan folk custom visual symbols, providing actionable design insights and methodological frameworks applicable to digital cultural and creative product development, animation design, short video communication, cultural brand construction, and digital exhibition design [2]. The outcomes support the digital adaptation and innovative representation of traditional cultural resources, enhancing both the communication effectiveness and societal resonance of traditional culture.

1.4.3. Cultural Significance

Traditional folk custom culture constitutes a core component of traditional Chinese culture and serves as a vital foundation for cultural confidence. Integrating motion graphic design with traditional folk custom visual symbols can revitalize the dissemination of traditional culture in contemporary society while enhancing young people's understanding and appreciation, thus facilitating its creative transformation and innovative development [4].

1.5. Paper Structure

This paper comprises five sections. Section 1 outlines the research background, questions, objectives, and significance. Section 2 surveys prior work on traditional folk custom visual symbols, motion graphic design, and visual communication in digital media, identifying key gaps in current scholarship [5]. Section 3 details the research methodology—encompassing literature analysis, visual analysis, and case study—and presents the integrated research framework. Section 4 examines the visual characteristics of Henan folk custom visual symbols and explores strategies for their dynamic transformation and associated visual communication value within motion graphic design. Section 5 synthesizes the principal findings, articulates the research contributions, and addresses limitations and potential avenues for future inquiry.

2. Literature Review

This section surveys prior research on traditional Henan folk custom visual symbols, motion graphic design, and visual communication in the digital media era, and clarifies the unresolved issues this study addresses [6].

2.1. Research on Traditional Henan Folk Custom Visual Symbols

Visual symbols are culturally coded forms through which communities express meaning, and folk custom visual symbols constitute a visual expression system shaped over the long-term evolution of regional culture. Typically manifested through patterns, colors, shapes, and symbolic meanings, they reflect local residents' lifestyles, aesthetic concepts, and cultural beliefs. As a major cradle of Chinese civilization, Henan possesses abundant folk cultural resources, with its traditional visual symbols widely featured in

woodblock New Year prints, paper-cutting art, embroidery patterns, folk architectural decorations, and traditional festivals [7].

Traditional folk custom visual symbols possess not only aesthetic value but also fulfill key social functions, including the transmission of cultural memory, the reinforcement of collective identity, and the conveyance of shared values. Henan's folk visual symbols exhibit distinctive decorative qualities, symbolic depth, and regional character. For example, the door god figures, auspicious motifs, and traditional color palettes found in Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year prints embody the cultural spirit and aesthetic traditions of the Central Plains. Similarly, the depictions of flowers, birds, fish, insects, auspicious totems, and folk narratives in western Henan paper-cuts capture the vibrancy of daily life and the rich semantic layers of local folk culture.

In recent years, advances in intangible cultural heritage protection have prompted increased scholarly attention toward the digital preservation and dissemination of traditional folk art. Current research primarily emphasizes the systematic documentation of cultural resources, the establishment of digital archives, and heritage conservation efforts; more recent work has begun exploring derivative and generative design approaches for woodblock New Year prints. However, studies addressing the visual reconstruction and dynamic communication of traditional folk custom visual symbols within digital media environments remain scarce—particularly systematic investigations into dynamic design strategies tailored to Henan's folk visual elements [3].

2.2. Research on Motion Graphic Design

Motion graphic design is a comprehensive discipline that integrates graphic design, animation art, visual communication, and digital media technologies. Its core characteristic lies in conveying information and facilitating visual communication through the dynamic organization of movement, time, and space [5]. With the advancement of digital media platforms, motion graphic design has found widespread application in film and television title sequences, advertising, digital exhibitions, brand communication, and new media content creation.

The evolution of motion graphic design reflects a transition from traditional film and television animation toward visual communication tailored for digital media environments. Contemporary practice emphasizes the dynamic arrangement of visual elements, generating vivid information experiences through graphic movement, text animation, rhythmic control, and narrative structuring. Studies have also investigated how animation complexity influences audience comprehension of conveyed information [8].

In terms of methodology, motion graphic design encompasses diverse expressive forms, including graphic deformation, path-based movement, visual rhythm, scene transitions, and narrative-driven animation. Dynamic narrative serves as a vital medium linking visual information with audience emotion. By incorporating the temporal dimension, static imagery is transformed into continuous, story-oriented visual experiences—thereby enhancing communicative appeal and interactivity [9]. Audience responses to motion graphics vary depending on design parameters as well as viewers' prior exposure to design education and practice.

With the expansion of the cultural and creative industries, motion graphic design has increasingly contributed to the dissemination of traditional culture. Notable examples include digital communication initiatives by the Palace Museum, animated festival promotions for traditional Chinese holidays, and digital exhibitions showcasing intangible cultural heritage. In Henan, the 2021 Henan Television Spring Festival Gala program Tang Palace Night Banquet employed 4K resolution, augmented reality, and mixed reality technologies to animate static cultural relics into immersive spatial backdrops; its Tang-dynasty palace figures subsequently inspired a range of cultural and creative products. Such applications demonstrate that dynamic digital presentation can significantly strengthen the communicative effectiveness and societal resonance of traditional cultural content. However, current scholarship remains largely practice-

oriented, and deeper theoretical inquiry into the dynamic design mechanisms underlying traditional folk custom visual symbols is still required.

2.3. Research on Visual Communication in the Digital Media Era

Visual communication refers to the process of information transmission and meaning construction through visual symbols [10]. With the development of the internet and mobile media, visual communication has expanded from traditional print media to digital platforms, social networks, and immersive interactive environments. Digital media have not only transformed how information is shared, but also reshaped audience reading habits and aesthetic expectations.

Visual communication in the digital age is commonly characterized by dynamism, interactivity, fragmentation, and socialization. Compared with static images, dynamic visual content is generally considered more effective at capturing audience attention and delivering stronger communication impact through multi-sensory experiences—an assumption further examined in Section 4.3.1. Especially on short video platforms and social media, motion graphics, animated videos, and digital images have become primary vehicles for cultural expression.

In cultural expression, visual communication involves not only conveying information, but also constructing social and cultural meaning, thereby contributing to cultural identity formation and value articulation. Through the reinterpretation and digital representation of visual symbols, traditional cultural content can be adapted to contemporary aesthetic standards, enhancing engagement and resonance among younger audiences. Consequently, visual communication via digital media has emerged as a key approach for the innovative revitalization of traditional culture [11].

Nonetheless, much of the existing research emphasizes digital media technologies and their functional outcomes, while a systematic framework for reinterpreting the cultural significance of traditional folk custom visual symbols—and for advancing their communication through motion graphic design—remains underdeveloped [7].

2.4. Research Gaps and Research Framework

This review shows that existing studies on the digital communication of traditional culture, motion graphic design, and visual communication have yielded valuable results, but several gaps remain. Firstly, research on Henan folk custom visual symbols mainly focuses on artistic value, cultural connotation, and intangible cultural heritage protection, while systematic analysis of their visual language structures and mechanisms for design-based transformation remains limited. Secondly, motion graphic design research is largely oriented toward technical execution and commercial application, with insufficient attention to dynamic adaptation pathways for traditional folk cultural resources. Thirdly, studies on digital media visual communication rarely examine how cultural identity is shaped through the animated presentation of traditional visual symbols, and the linkage between visual communication outcomes and cultural value transmission requires further investigation.

To address these gaps, this paper takes Henan folk custom visual symbols as its research object. From the perspectives of visual communication and motion graphic design, it constructs a research framework of "Extraction of Traditional Visual Symbols — Transformation via Motion Graphic Design — Application in Digital Media Communication". By analyzing the visual characteristics of traditional folk visual elements and exploring their dynamic design strategies and communicative significance, this paper aims to provide a theoretical foundation and practical guidance for the digital communication and innovative design of traditional culture.

3. Methodology

This section outlines the research design, the three methods employed in the study, and the resulting research framework.

3.1. Research Design

This study investigates the visual transformation approaches and communicative significance of Henan folk custom visual symbols within motion graphic design, focusing on how traditional folk visual elements can be digitally expressed and innovatively communicated through this medium. Given the research emphasis on cultural symbol analysis, visual language transformation, and communication value interpretation, a qualitative methodology is employed, integrating literature review, visual analysis, and case study [12].

The research proceeds in three phases: first, identifying the artistic features and cultural meanings of Henan folk custom visual symbols through systematic literature review; second, isolating representative visual elements and analyzing their compositional principles via visual analysis; and third, investigating the application of motion graphic design in traditional culture communication through targeted case studies, thereby formulating a dynamic design framework for conveying traditional folk custom visual symbols [2].

3.2. Literature Analysis

Literature analysis serves as a fundamental method in this research. By reviewing scholarly works on folk culture, visual communication, motion graphic design, and digital media art—both within China and internationally—this study systematically summarizes the current state of research. The analysis focuses on four key aspects: (1) the types and characteristics of Henan folk custom visual symbols; (2) the development history and theoretical foundations of motion graphic design; (3) visual communication mechanisms in digital media environments; and (4) digital communication strategies and cultural innovation pathways for traditional culture. This analysis clarifies the theoretical foundation and research direction of the study, and provides essential theoretical support for subsequent visual analysis and case studies [13].

3.3. Visual Analysis

The visual analysis method is employed to examine the visual language of Henan folk custom visual symbols. Through systematic examination of composition, color schemes, symbolic meanings, and aesthetic characteristics, this approach uncovers underlying design principles and cultural significance [14]. Representative Henan folk art resources are selected as analytical subjects, including Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year prints, Henan folk paper-cuts, folk embroidery patterns, traditional architectural decorative motifs, and visual elements associated with folk festivals. Selection is purposive rather than statistically driven: no predetermined sample size is applied, and interpretation—not quantification—guides the analysis. Source materials comprise four categories: published catalogues and scholarly literature; digital collections from museums and intangible cultural heritage platforms; photographs taken during fieldwork; and publicly accessible online images. Temporal origin is not restricted; inclusion depends solely on adherence to traditional subject matter and representativeness within its category. The analysis proceeds across four interrelated dimensions—form, color, composition, and visual style—aligned with foundational frameworks in design theory and visual perception.

3.3.1. Analysis of Graphic Symbols

This dimension examines the formal characteristics and symbolic meanings of visual symbols—including human figures, flora and fauna patterns, auspicious motifs, and mythological elements—to elucidate their cultural connotations and modes of visual representation [9].

3.3.2. Analysis of Color Systems

This dimension examines characteristic color combinations and their symbolic significance in traditional Henan folk art, focusing on the cultural connotations of foundational colors such as red, yellow, and green, as well as their role in shaping visual communication effectiveness.

3.3.3. Analysis of Composition Forms

This dimension analyzes the compositional principles underlying traditional folk custom visual symbols, encompassing symmetrical, balanced, and decorative arrangements, and distills their core aesthetic characteristics [15].

3.3.4. Analysis of Visual Styles

This dimension synthesizes the formal language, decorative traits, and artistic expression common to Henan folk custom visual symbols, establishing a foundation for their visual transformation in motion graphic design.

3.4. Case Study

The case study method is employed to investigate how motion graphic design facilitates the communication of traditional culture. By analyzing representative examples, this paper explores dynamic design strategies and visual communication pathways for traditional cultural elements [2]. Case selection adheres to four criteria: a clearly defined traditional cultural theme; the use of motion graphics or dynamic digital imagery as the primary visual medium; significant public engagement and exemplary status; and alignment with prevailing visual communication practices in the digital media era.

The selected cases are grouped into five categories: (1) digital communication initiatives originating from the Palace Museum, including the HTML5 interactive animation 'Traveling from the Palace Museum to See You' (2016), featuring animated historical figures such as the Yongle Emperor emerging from portraiture, and the Digital Palace Museum WeChat mini-program (2020); (2) motion graphic works centered on traditional Chinese festivals and solar terms, exemplified by the 24-solar-term countdown film 'Beginning of Spring', presented during the opening ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games; (3) online exhibitions of intangible cultural heritage, such as the 'Cloud Tour of Intangible Cultural Heritage' digital exhibition launched in June 2020 across multiple mainstream platforms; (4) visual branding efforts for regional cultural institutions, notably the Henan Museum's 'Lost Treasures' archaeological blind box series (2019), disseminated widely via social media posts, unboxing videos, and livestreams; and (5) the 'Chinese Festival' series produced by Henan Television, beginning with 'Tang Palace Night Banquet' (2021). Through systematic analysis, this paper identifies characteristic expressive forms, visual narrative techniques, and communicative strengths of motion graphic design in traditional cultural contexts, offering actionable insights for the dynamic representation of Henan's folk custom visual symbols [11].

3.5. Research Framework

Drawing on insights from literature analysis, visual analysis, and case studies, this paper proposes a research framework structured as follows: "Extraction of Traditional Visual Symbols — Transformation via Motion Graphic Design — Application in Digital Media Communication" (Figure 1). First, representative visual elements—such as decorative patterns, color systems, image symbols, and compositional structures—are systematically extracted from traditional Henan folk art. Second, these elements are reinterpreted through the principles of motion graphic design, enabling visual innovation via movement dynamics, visual rhythm, dynamic narration, and interactive expression. Third, aligned with the functional characteristics of digital media platforms, the framework evaluates the application potential of motion graphic design in digital cultural and creative products, short video communication, animation design, and cultural brand promotion, while examining its contribution to cultural identity construction and communication effectiveness enhancement.

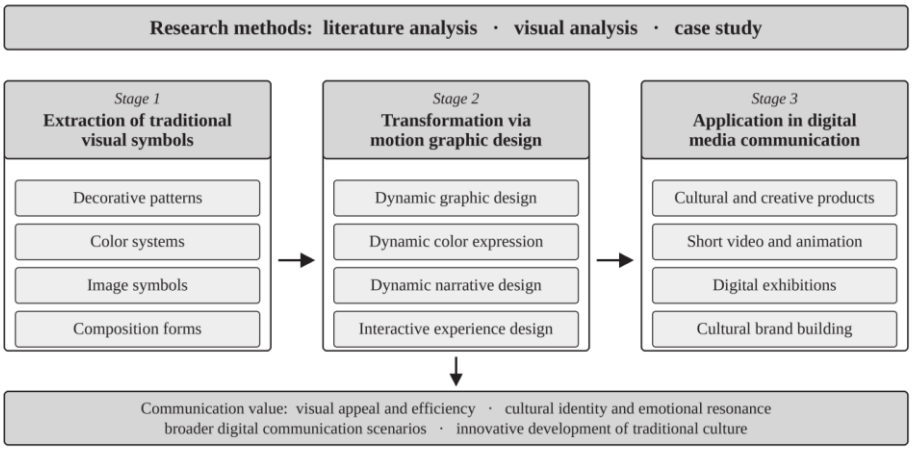


Figure 1. Research Framework

(Source: developed by the authors)

4. Analysis and Results

This section analyzes the visual characteristics of traditional Henan folk custom visual symbols, outlines strategies for their adaptation in motion graphic design, and evaluates their visual communication value [16].

4.1. Visual Characteristics of Traditional Henan Folk Custom Visual Symbols

Analysis of visual resources—including Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year prints, Henan folk paper-cuts, traditional embroidery patterns, and folk decorative art—reveals that Henan folk custom visual symbols exhibit distinctive regional cultural features and unique visual expression forms, primarily manifested in decorative patterns, color systems, image symbols, and composition structures. Decorative patterns and image symbols constitute the two principal categories identified through graphic symbol analysis, while observations on visual style are integrated into each subsequent subsection.

4.1.1. Characteristics of Decorative Patterns

Auspicious decorative patterns—including the lotus, peony, pomegranate, cloud, dragon and phoenix, and fish—are widely employed in traditional Henan folk art. These motifs serve both ornamental and symbolic functions, embodying cultural aspirations such as good fortune, prosperity, peace, wealth, and fertility. In the Zhuxian print Liannian Youyu ("Abundance Year after Year"), for instance, the visual juxtaposition of lotus and fish forms a phonetic pun signifying enduring abundance. Visually, such patterns are typically rendered through techniques of exaggeration, simplification, and stylization, yielding a highly symbolic visual language. Their clean, fluid lines, rhythmic compositional structures, and strong visual distinctiveness provide a robust foundation for motion graphic applications involving shape transformation and dynamic extension.

4.1.2. Characteristics of Color Systems

Henan folk custom visual symbols exhibit distinctive regional aesthetic characteristics in color usage [17]. Folk art forms such as Zhuxian Town woodblock New Year prints commonly employ high-purity, high-contrast color schemes. In these prints, vivid mineral and plant-based pigments—predominantly red, yellow, green, and purple—are overprinted onto a black line block. Red conveys auspiciousness and celebration, yellow symbolizes abundance and prosperity, green represents vitality and renewal, and purple adds chromatic richness; the black outlines provide structural definition and visual coherence. This color system strengthens visual impact and reinforces cultural distinctiveness. Within motion graphic design, such saturated palettes enhance visual engagement and support audience retention of traditional cultural motifs.

4.1.3. Characteristics of Image Symbols

Henan folk custom visual symbols encompass a rich repertoire of human figures, mythological narratives, animal and plant totems, and auspicious motifs. Door gods, opera characters, historical figures, dragons, phoenixes, qilin, flowers, birds, fish, and insects constitute the most representative imagery. These visual symbols typically serve strong narrative functions and carry layered cultural meanings. For instance, door god depictions—such as the paired generals Qin Qiong and Yuchi Gong in Zhuxian prints—reflect traditional beliefs in protective spiritual guardianship; dragon and phoenix motifs signify auspiciousness and dignity; and peony patterns convey connotations of abundance and flourishing. Visual analysis indicates that Henan folk image symbols are predominantly rendered in flat, stylized, and symbolic forms with well-defined compositional structures, supporting effective reinterpretation and adaptive redesign within digital media contexts.

4.1.4. Characteristics of Composition and Aesthetics

Traditional Henan folk art works emphasize symmetry, balance, and decorative richness in composition. Many adopt central or full compositions, establishing a strong sense of rhythm and visual order through the repeated arrangement of motifs. This compositional approach reflects the classical Chinese aesthetic principle of harmony and supports effective scene organization and rhythmic control in motion graphic design. Integrating dynamic transitions and spatial movement further enhances visual expressiveness and communicative impact [18].

4.2. Visual Transformation Strategies in Motion Graphic Design

Building upon the preceding analysis of visual characteristics, this section further investigates specific pathways for translating Henan folk custom visual symbols into the language of motion graphic design. Furthermore, Table 1 summarizes the correspondence between these visual characteristics and the motion graphic design strategies proposed in the current study.

Table 1. Visual Characteristics of Henan Folk Custom Visual Symbols and Corresponding Motion Graphic Design Strategies

Visual Element	Representative Features	Motion Graphic Design Strategies
Decorative patterns	Lotus, peony, pomegranate, cloud, dragon-and-phoenix and fish patterns; concise, rhythmic and stylized lines	Path movement, shape transformation, rotation and scaling, particle animation
Color systems	High-purity, high-contrast red, yellow, green and purple over black line work, with symbolic cultural meanings	Color gradient, color transition, light and shadow change, dynamic emotional guidance
Image symbols	Door gods, opera characters, dragons, phoenixes, qilin, flowers, birds, fish and insects with narrative functions	Dynamic narrative, character animation, timeline design, scene switching
Composition forms	Symmetrical, balanced, central and full compositions with a strong sense of order	Visual rhythm control, dynamic transition, spatial movement design

(Source: developed by the authors)

4.2.1. Dynamic Graphic Design

The core feature of motion graphic design is to endow static graphics with movement attributes. For Henan folk custom visual symbols, dynamic expression can be realized through path movement, shape transformation, rotation and scaling, and particle animation. For example, continuous flowing animation can simulate the drifting of cloud patterns in woodblock New Year prints; path animation can present dragon and phoenix totems soaring and circling; and the unfolding and folding of paper-cut patterns can be animated to evoke the traditional handmade production process. A widely recognized

HTML5 animation released in 2016 applies similar principles by animating figures from historical court portraits and classical paintings. Such dynamic processing enhances visual interest and strengthens the expressiveness and appeal of traditional cultural content.

4.2.2. Dynamic Color Expression

In motion graphic design, traditional folk colors serve not only decorative functions but also play a vital role in emotional expression and visual guidance. Dynamic techniques—including color gradients, smooth transitions, and evolving light-and-shadow effects—enhance visual depth and spatial perception. For example, rhythmic alternation of red and gold evokes festivity in works centered on traditional celebrations, whereas green-based gradients combined with animated lighting reinforce spatial dimensionality and organic vitality in ecological or nature-themed designs. The Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games' Beginning of Spring countdown film exemplified this methodology, progressing through the 24 solar terms via seasonally shifting imagery. Such dynamic color application strengthens the emotional resonance of cultural symbols and refines audience engagement.

4.2.3. Dynamic Narrative Design

Traditional folk custom visual symbols are not merely decorative elements, but also important carriers of cultural stories. Their narrative functions should therefore be fully utilized in motion graphic design. Traditional folk images can be transformed into narrative visual content through timeline design, scene switching, and transitions. For example, dynamic narrative structures based on folk myths can convey cultural connotations through character movements and plot development, strengthening the audience's sense of immersion and participation. Tang Palace Night Banquet illustrates this approach: by letting Tang palace figures move through relic-based virtual scenes as if walking through an ancient painting, it transforms static artifacts into a continuous narrative experience. Dynamic narration enriches visual communication content and enhances the readability and appeal of traditional cultural communication [10].

4.2.4. Interactive Experience Design

With the advancement of digital media technologies, audiences have transitioned from passive information recipients to active participants in communication. Consequently, motion graphic design increasingly integrates interactive technologies to enhance user experience. Touch interaction, motion-sensing input, and immersive display technologies facilitate richer and more varied modes of expression for traditional folk custom visual symbols. In digital exhibitions, users can trigger dynamic transformations of traditional patterns through direct interaction; on mobile platforms, they may co-create and share dynamic visual content. For example, the Digital Palace Museum mini-program enables users to rotate and zoom three-dimensional models of cultural relics. Such interactive design strategies strengthen audience engagement and broaden the scope and longevity of traditional cultural dissemination.

4.3. Discussion of Visual Communication Value

Based on the above analysis, the visual communication value of motion graphic design for traditional Henan folk custom visual symbols manifests in four key aspects.

4.3.1. Enhancing Visual Appeal and Communication Efficiency

Motion graphic design enhances information expression through movement, rhythm, and visual variation. Compared with traditional static communication, dynamic visual content tends to attract greater attention and may increase viewing duration—particularly on short-video and social media platforms—though its impact on comprehension hinges on the quality and clarity of the animation design.

4.3.2. Strengthening Cultural Identity and Emotional Resonance

The communication of traditional culture is not only a process of information transmission but also a means of constructing cultural identity. Through visual narration

and emotional expression, motion graphic design can align traditional cultural content with contemporary aesthetic sensibilities, thereby enhancing young people's understanding and identification with such culture. Research on young respondents' engagement with AI-generated New Year print cultural and creative products indicates that purchasing and sharing these items positively reinforces cultural identity.

4.3.3. Expanding Scenarios for Digital Cultural Communication

After being transformed through motion graphic design, Henan folk custom visual symbols can be widely applied in digital cultural and creative products, animation design, short video communication, digital exhibitions, and urban cultural brand building, enabling the diversified development and utilization of traditional cultural resources. The extension of the Tang Palace Night Banquet characters from a television program into cultural and creative merchandise illustrates how dynamic visual imagery can traverse media platforms and product categories; this included a mystery-box series co-developed with the Henan Museum and a leading collectible brand [6, 12]. Digital exhibitions further broaden these application scenarios: a cloud-based intangible cultural heritage initiative streamed over 1,600 heritage documentaries across eight platforms within a single week in June 2020. Similarly, local cultural brands have achieved notable market resonance—the Henan Museum's archaeological blind boxes sold 5,000 units within five days following widespread online circulation of a promotional post in December 2020.

4.3.4. Promoting the Innovative Development of Traditional Culture

Motion graphic design offers a novel visual communication approach for traditional culture in digital contexts, transforming folk custom visual symbols into innovative expressions while preserving their core cultural meanings. This methodology supports the revitalization and practical application of cultural resources, charting a sustainable development pathway for traditional culture amid digital transformation [9, 11].

5. Conclusion

This section summarizes the main findings and discusses theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and future research directions.

5.1. Research Conclusions

As digital media technologies and visual communication practices continue to evolve, the dissemination of traditional culture is increasingly transitioning from static representation to dynamic, digital, and interactive forms. This study focuses on visual symbols derived from Henan folk customs, examining their visual characteristics, strategies for dynamic design, and potential for digital cultural communication through the lenses of visual communication and motion graphic design.

Analysis reveals that these visual symbols exhibit pronounced regional cultural traits and a coherent visual language system, expressed through decorative motifs, chromatic schemes, iconic imagery, and compositional structures. These elements hold significant artistic and aesthetic merit, embody layered cultural meanings and historical memory, and form a vital component of Central Plains traditional culture.

Motion graphic design proves effective in facilitating the digital transformation of such folk visual symbols. By employing dynamic graphic treatment, evolving color application, time-based narrative construction, and interactive experience frameworks, static traditional motifs can be reimagined as vivid, accessible, and engaging visual content—thereby strengthening the appeal and efficacy of cultural transmission.

Moreover, motion graphic design contributes not only to visual presentation but also to the reinforcement of cultural identity. Dynamic visual formats align closely with contemporary information consumption patterns—particularly among younger audiences—potentially increasing awareness, engagement, and affective connection with traditional culture, though empirical validation of this impact remains pending.

5.2. Theoretical Contributions

This research contributes to theory in four respects. First, it integrates scholarship on traditional folk custom culture, visual communication theory, and motion graphic design theory, establishing an interdisciplinary research perspective that enriches inquiry into the digital communication of traditional culture. Second, through systematic analysis of Henan folk custom visual symbols, it identifies their distinctive visual language features and modes of cultural expression, offering a new analytical framework for related studies. Third, it proposes a methodological pathway—'Extraction of Traditional Visual Symbols → Transformation via Motion Graphic Design → Application in Digital Media Communication'—thereby extending applied research on motion graphic design within traditional cultural communication. Fourth, from a visual communication standpoint, it examines how motion graphic design can support the construction of cultural identity, yielding novel insights into the communication mechanisms of traditional culture in the digital media era.

Compared with existing studies, this research differs in both focus and level of analysis. Prior work has centered on AI-generated New Year print products and derivative generative design methods for woodblock prints, emphasizing final artifacts; in contrast, this study focuses on the dynamic articulation of individual visual symbols and formalizes a mapping from visual features to design strategies (Table 1). Another line of inquiry has analyzed ritual space construction at the programmatic level in televised festival series; this study operates instead at the granular level of patterns, colors, images, and composition. Unlike empirical audience-response studies, however, it does not measure reception outcomes—a limitation acknowledged in Section 5.4.

5.3. Practical Implications

This research provides practical guidelines for the digital communication and design of traditional culture. First, within the digital cultural and creative industries, Henan folk custom visual symbols offer rich design resources and profound cultural value. Applying these symbols to digital product development via motion graphic design significantly enhances both visual expressiveness and market influence. Second, in animation design, short video production, and digital media content creation, traditional folk visual symbols supply abundant materials and cultural narrative resources. Reconstructing this dynamic visual language improves communication effectiveness and the overall audience experience of cultural content. Third, for museums, cultural institutions, and intangible heritage protection organizations, motion graphics diversify digital exhibitions and cultural dissemination. This approach increases public participation and educational effectiveness, thereby supporting the revitalization of traditional cultural resources. Finally, regarding local cultural branding and urban image promotion, modernized Henan folk custom symbols establish a visual communication system with distinct regional characteristics and cultural recognizability, ultimately amplifying the influence and communicative value of local culture.

5.4. Research Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, it relies primarily on qualitative methods—including literature analysis, visual analysis, and case study—without incorporating large-scale user surveys or quantitative data; consequently, the evaluation of motion graphic design's communication effectiveness remains partially subjective. Second, the study centers exclusively on Henan folk custom visual symbols and does not conduct in-depth comparative analysis with folk cultures from other regions, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Third, its scope is largely confined to visual communication, with minimal engagement with emerging technologies such as AI-assisted design, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and immersive media in the context of traditional cultural communication. Fourth, case selection prioritized prominence, potentially overrepresenting successful outcomes; moreover, the strategies summarized in Table 1 were derived analytically rather than validated through design prototyping.

Future research could advance along four principal directions: (1) conducting empirical studies on motion graphic design's communication effectiveness by developing design prototypes and evaluating them via questionnaire surveys, user testing, and eye-tracking experiments; (2) undertaking comparative investigations of traditional folk visual cultures across diverse regions to support the development of a more generalizable design framework for digital traditional cultural communication; (3) examining novel visual communication modalities enabled by AI-assisted design, VR, AR, and the metaverse; and (4) establishing a dedicated evaluation system for motion graphic design of traditional culture to strengthen both theoretical foundations and practical guidance for the digital cultural and creative industries.

In conclusion, the motion graphic design of Henan folk custom visual symbols serves not only as a vital channel for the digital communication of traditional culture but also as a catalyst for its creative transformation and innovative development. In the digital media era, leveraging motion graphic design to achieve visual innovation and communication enhancement of traditional cultural resources holds significant potential for strengthening the reach and resonance of traditional Chinese culture.

References

1. P. Messaris, *Visual Persuasion: The Role of Images in Advertising*, 1998.
2. S. R. Barnes, "Studies in the Efficacy of Motion Graphics: The Effects of Complex Animation on the Exposition Offered by Motion Graphics," *Animation*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 146–168, 2016.
3. J. Krasner, *Motion Graphic Design: Applied History and Aesthetics*. Taylor & Francis, 2013.
4. G. R. Kress and T. Van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*, 1996.
5. L. Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 2002.
6. A. Ó. Baoill, "Jenkins, H. (2006). *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press. 336 pp. $29.95 (hardbound)," *Social Science Computer Review*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 252–254, 2008.
7. W. Wong, *Principles of Form and Design*. John Wiley & Sons, 1993.
8. R. L. Solso, *Cognition and the Visual Arts*. MIT Press, 1994.
9. D. Buragohain, Y. Meng, C. Deng, Q. Li, and S. Chaudhary, "Digitalizing cultural heritage through metaverse applications: challenges, opportunities, and strategies," *Heritage Science*, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 295, 2024.
10. N. G. Rahmadieni and J. A. Wempi, "The role of motion graphics in social media advertising: A qualitative study on audience engagement and visual storytelling," *Jurnal Spektrum Komunikasi*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 133–150, 2025.
11. G. Song, "Application of motion graphics in visual communication design," in *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, vol. 1744, no. 4, p. 042165, IOP Publishing, Feb. 2021.
12. N. Babic, J. Pibernik, and N. Mrvac, "Media study: Motion graphics," in *Proc. 50th Int. Symp. ELMAR*, vol. 2, pp. 499–502, Sep. 2008.
13. J. A. Brandão, "Motion graphics ergonomics: animated semantic system, for typographical communication efficiency," *Procedia Manufacturing*, vol. 3, pp. 6376–6379, 2015.
14. S. Painuly, "Analysis of motion graphics for effective visual communication in animation," *Int. J. Manage.*, vol. 11, no. 10, pp. 2910–2918, 2020.
15. Z. Tian, "Dynamic visual communication image framing of graphic design in a virtual reality environment," *IEEE Access*, vol. 8, pp. 211091–211103, 2020.
16. M. dos Santos Lonsdale, D. J. Lonsdale, M. Baxter, R. Graham, A. Kanafani, A. Li, and C. Peng, "Visualizing the terror threat: The impact of communicating security information to the general public using infographics and motion graphics," *Visible Language*, vol. 53, no. 2, 2019.
17. N. I. A. Abdul Nasir, N. A. Mohd Lazim, M. Omar, E. Mohd Muslim Tan, and S. N. Ishak, "A visual analysis study of motion graphic effect as visual communication for mental health empowerment," *Idealogy J.*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 49–54, 2024.
18. Y. Cho and T. Yamanaka, "An approach for understanding motion graphics in visual communication: Focused on design experience," in *Proc. Int. Conf. Biometrics and Kansei Eng.*, pp. 256–259, Sep. 2011.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of Publisher and/or the editor(s). Publisher and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.