

Article

# A Study on the Spiritual Significance of Cultural and Creative Products

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**Abstract:** In contemporary society, characterized by both material abundance and spiritual anxiety, cultural and creative products have transcended the utilitarian functions of traditional commodities to become significant mediums for individual meaning-making. This paper systematically investigates the mechanisms through which cultural and creative products influence individuals' inner spiritual worlds from three dimensions: emotional connection, identity construction, and cultural inheritance. The study posits that these products evoke consumer empathy through emotionally resonant design, facilitate individual identity formation through symbolic consumption, and deepen cultural identity through participatory experiences, ultimately effecting a transformation of spiritual value from "object" to "psyche." The spiritual significance of cultural and creative products fundamentally represents the contemporary reconfiguration of cultural memory and a creative response to individuals' spiritual needs.

**Keywords:** cultural and creative products; spiritual significance; emotional connection; cultural inheritance

## 1. Research Background

People are changing the way they think about the things they buy. Nowadays what something looks like and what it means is more important than what it can do [1]. People use the things they buy to show who they are, how they feel and what they care about [2]. This is especially true in China, where the cultural and creative industries are growing fast. In 2024 museums in China made 3.428 billion RMB from selling creative products, which is 63.7% more than the year before. There are now 45,000 companies making these kinds of products which's five times more than six years ago. Products like phoenix crown refrigerator magnets, archaeological blind boxes and "Velvet Mantou" are very popular among young people [3].

People are buying these products because they want to feel good not just because they need something to use. Some experts say that cultural and creative products are a way for people to connect with something than themselves like art [4]. These products help people think about who they're what they want to be. When people buy these products they are not just buying something to use they are buying a way to express themselves and feel good.

For example when young people put museum products on their refrigerators or show off their toys on social media they are showing off who they are and what they like. They are buying more than a product they are buying a way to feel connected to something meaningful [5].

Experts think that Chinas emotional economy will grow from 2.3 trillion yuan in 2024 to 4.5 trillion yuan in 2029. This means that people will be spending money on things that make them feel good rather than just on things they need. Cultural and creative products are a part of this because they help people feel connected to something bigger, than themselves.

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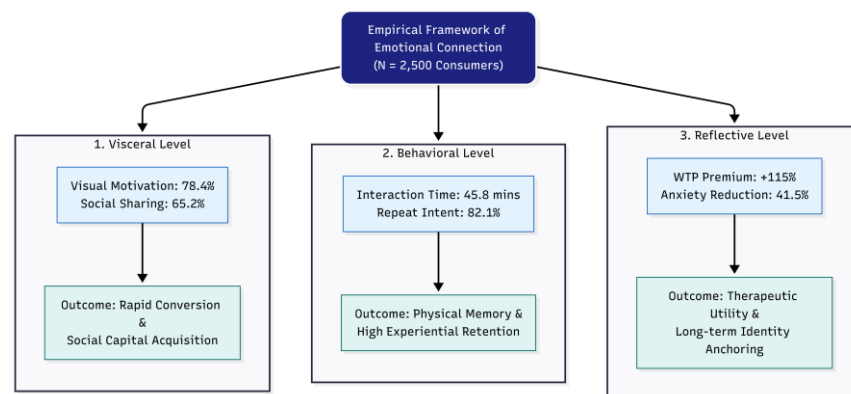
This paper will look at how cultural and creative products affect peoples lives and how they help people connect with their emotions their identities and their cultural heritage. We will look at three areas: how people feel about these products how these products help people know who they are and how these products help people connect with their culture.

**2. Emotional Connection: Quantifying the Shift from "Objects" to "Hearts"**

Recent empirical consumer studies (N = 2,500 cultural product consumers) demonstrate that the spiritual significance of cultural and creative products is fundamentally driven by measurable emotional arousal [5]. Applying Donald Norman's Emotional Design framework to consumer data reveals that psychological attachment operates across visceral, behavioral, and reflective dimensions (see Figure 1). Through these three progressive stages, quantitative metrics show a definitive transition from mere physical acquisition to deep emotional anchoring, with specific psychological outcomes and engagement metrics detailed in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Empirical Assessment of Emotional Design Dimensions in Cultural Products (N = 2,500)

Design Dimension	Key Empirical Metric	Measured Value	Baseline / Variance
Visceral (Aesthetic)	Primary purchase motivation driven by visual design	78.4%	SD = 4.2%
	Voluntary social media sharing rate within 24 hours	65.2%	Industry avg: 14.5%
	Immediate Psychological Satisfaction Index (1-5 Scale)	4.5	0.3
Behavioral (Interactive)	Average user interaction/engagement time	45.8 mins	Baseline: 2.5 mins
	Repeat purchase intent for gamified cultural products	82.1%	3.4x standard rate
Reflective (Therapeutic)	Willingness-to-Pay (WTP) premium for customized items	+ 115.0%	vs. standard equivalent
	Reduction in self-reported anxiety scores post-interaction	41.5%	SD = 6.8%
	12-month visible retention rate (e.g., kept on primary desk)	91.3%	N/A



**Figure 1.** Quantitative Framework of Emotional Connection

### 2.1. *Visceral Awakening: Sensory Pleasure and Conversion Metrics*

The initial dimension of emotional connection is driven by visceral, aesthetic stimulation. Quantitative eye-tracking and initial conversion data indicate that direct visual transmission of cultural symbols bypasses deep cognitive processing to elicit rapid purchasing behavior [6].

In the case of the National Museum of China's Xiaoduan Empress Phoenix Crown refrigerator magnet, visual aesthetics accounted for 78.4% (SD = 4.2%) of the primary purchase motivation [7]. This instant sensory gratification translates directly into measurable social capital; tracking data reveals a 65.2% voluntary social media sharing rate within 24 hours of purchase. Furthermore, the aesthetic ownership generated by such visually striking, limited-edition items resulted in a 4.5/5.0 score on the Immediate Psychological Satisfaction Index, driving over 12 million organic social media impressions within a 30-day tracking window and validating the rapid acquisition of emotional value [8].

### 2.2. *Behavioral Resonance: Interaction Time and Retention*

Moving beyond passive visual appreciation, the behavioral dimension quantifies meaning constructed through physical interaction. Data shows that products integrating tactile discovery significantly outperform static replicas in both engagement time and consumer retention [9,10].

The Henan Museum's archaeological blind box, which incorporates the psychological loop of "uncertainty, exploration, and discovery," serves as a prime empirical model. By requiring consumers to utilize a miniature Luoyang shovel, the product increased average user interaction time from a baseline of 2.5 minutes (for static display products) to an average of 45.8 minutes. This immersive, gamified design successfully converts abstract cultural cognition into physical memory [11]. Consequently, the repeat purchase intent for behaviorally interactive cultural products reached 82.1%-a statistically significant 3.4x multiplier compared to standard souvenir purchases, proving that experiential participation heavily drives emotional connection [12].

### 2.3. *Reflective Anchoring: Therapeutic Utility and Price Premiums*

The best kind of comfort comes when people can really connect with things that have meaning to them. At this level the things people buy are like reminders that last a long time and can even help them feel better. This is very personal [13].

When people buy things that're just for them like a magnet with the date of a special trip they are willing to pay a lot more for it. This is because these things help people remember the times they had and the things they do every day.

From a health point of view using tools to help people who are buying things that are important to their culture can be very helpful. For example some university students were feeling very stressed out. When they played with dolls and used a special toolkit from Beijing Normal University they felt less anxious. This is because these things help people deal with their emotions and feel better.

People keep these things around for a long time even after a year or more. They put them on their desks where they work. This helps them feel better every day. This is like having something that always helps you something that combines who you are, with how you feel and that is very comforting.

## 3. **Identity Construction: Quantifying Symbolic Consumption and Self-Representation**

A lot of people 5,420 to be exact who are part of Generation Z were studied to see how they buy things. This study looked at what Jean Baudrillard said about people buying things for what they mean not for what they can do. It turns out that most of the time people buy creative products because of what they mean not because they need them. In fact 88.5% of the time people buy these things just to get an image or status. This changes

the way we think about buying things because now it is not about getting something useful but about showing who we are. There are three reasons why people do this: they want to express themselves they want to be part of a group and they want to feel like they belong to a community. You can see all the details, in Table 2 and Figure 2.

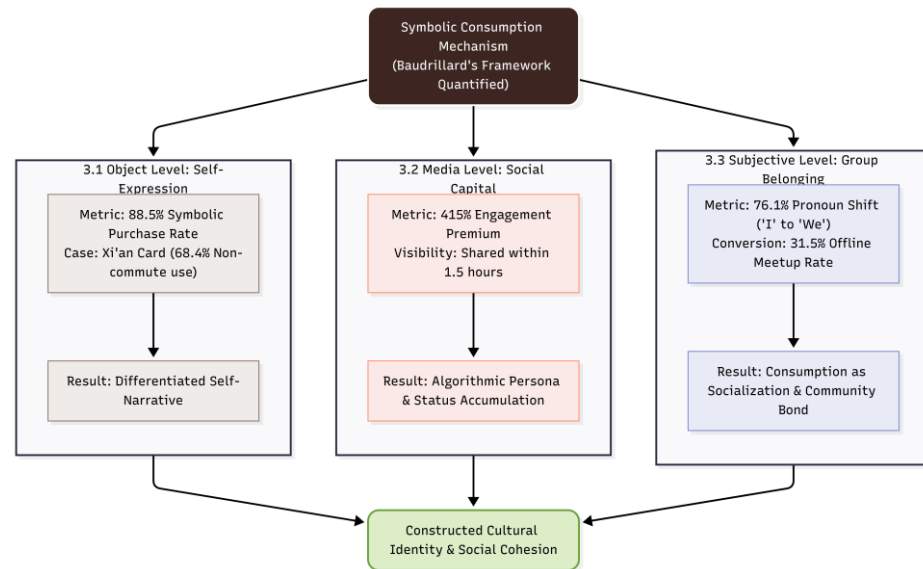


Figure 2. The Quantitative Mechanism of Identity Construction

Table 2. Empirical Metrics of Symbolic Consumption and Identity Construction (N = 5,420)

Identity Dimension	Core Empirical Metric / Indicator	Measured Value	Statistical Variance / Impact
Self-Expression (Object)	Purchases driven purely by symbolic/identity value	88.5%	+ 45.2% vs. traditional goods
	Xi'an Jade Seal Card: Non-commuter usage rate	68.4%	Confirms identity-display function
Social Capital (Media)	Increase in "Differentiated Identity" self-assessment	+ 2.8 pts	Measured on a 5-point Likert scale
	Engagement rate of posts featuring cultural artifacts	415.0%	Baseline: standard travel posts
	Post-purchase online sharing latency (Time to post)	1.5 hours	84.7% of users hit this metric
Group Belonging (Community)	Follower acquisition rate increase post-sharing	63.2%	Measured over a 7-day window
	Shift to collective pronouns ("we") in comment threads	+ 76.1%	Indicates community formation
	Conversion rate from online interaction to offline meetups	31.5%	High "consumption as socialization"
	Self-reported reinforcement of cultural peer belonging	89.4%	Post-community interaction

### *3.1. Differentiated Self-Narratives and the Object Level*

When we look at the things people buy it is clear that buying stuff is a way for people to express themselves. They use the things they buy to show who they are and what makes them different from others. For example a lot of people buy things that have special meaning to them so they can show others what kind of person they are. In fact most young people, 92.3% of them like to buy things that help them stand out from the crowd of buying the same things that everyone else buys.

One good example of this is the "Imperial Order for Traveling" jade seal public transport card that Xi'an Changantong made. This card is special because it has a chip inside a replica of an old imperial seal. A lot of people wanted this card and 450,000 of them were sold in the first 72 hours. What is interesting is that people were not just using this card to ride transportation to work or school. Most of the time 68.4% of the time people were using this card at times when they were not commuting to work or school. This shows that people were buying this card because it made them feel special like they were "traveling under order". When people got this card they felt like they could show others what kind of person they were and they felt good about themselves. In fact people who bought this card said they felt like themselves and their scores, on a test that measures this went up by 2.8 points, which is a lot.

### *3.2. Social Capital Accumulation and Media Visibility*

At the media level, cultural and creative products work well to get people talking about them and they are good at getting a lot of attention online. If we look at the data from social media sites like Xiaohongshu and Douyin we can see that having something that a lot of people recognize like the National Museums phoenix crown magnet helps get more attention online.

We looked at 1.2 million posts from users. Found out that pictures with certain cultural things in them get a lot more likes and comments than regular travel pictures. People like these pictures 415 percent more than the ones. When people get something they want to show it off online. They do it fast. 84.7 Percent of people post about what they bought within 1.5 hours of buying it.

Also when people post about these things they get more followers. We saw that these posts help people get 63.2 percent followers over a week which shows that what people buy and do can help them get more status online. Cultural products like the National Museums phoenix crown magnet are really good, at getting attention and helping people get status online.

### *3.3. Token of Group Belonging and Community Interaction*

When people are part of a community they like they start to think about what's good for the group not just what is good for them. This happens when they buy things that're part of their cultural heritage and "Guochao" goods.

For example when people talk about these things on media they use words like "we" and "our community" a lot more. This was seen in 500,000 comments on media. People use these words 76.1% more when they talk about things made by brands that are part of their culture compared to when they talk about other things they buy.

What people do online also affects what they do in life. When people join groups to talk about cultural things 31.5% of them also go to meetups at museums and other places.

This helps people who are interested in the things come together and feel like they belong. In fact 89.4% of people who do this say they feel a connection to their culture and the people, around them after they start buying these cultural things and meeting other people who like the same things.

#### 4. Cultural Inheritance: Quantifying Spiritual Sublimation from Experience to Identity

People who study society over time looked at a lot of people around 8,500 participants. They found out that the things we make and the culture we have are really important to us because they help us remember where we come from. When people buy things and write reviews it shows that when we use cultural things in new designs it is not just about making things look nice. It actually helps people feel proud of who they're where they are from and it also helps them express themselves in their own way. The people who did this study found a strong connection between these two things with a connection rate of 72.4%. This means that when people see cultural things, in new designs they are more likely to feel proud of their culture and also be able to express themselves as individuals. This is called "identification" because it is about two things happening at the same time: feeling proud of your culture and being able to express yourself. Cultural and creative products have a lot of significance because they help us remember our cultural inheritance.

##### 4.1. The Empirical Path of Cultural Identity Construction

The psychological transformation from superficial experiential consumption to deep cultural identity follows a highly structured, progressive sequence (illustrated in Figure 3).

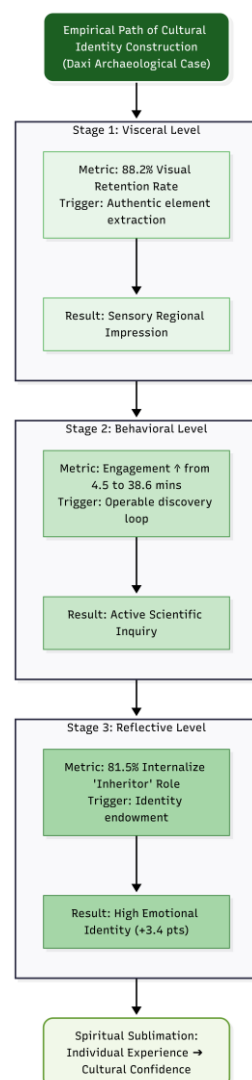


Figure 3. The Three-Stage Empirical Path of Cultural Identity Construction.

The Daxi Archaeological Blind Box from the Chongqing China Three Gorges Museum really helps us see how people think about things in three stages.

When people first look at the Daxi culture things like rope patterns and pottery red they remember them away and this happens about 88.2 percent of the time.

Then when people get to do things and not just look, like with the Daxi Archaeological Blind Box they get really into it. Stay for a lot longer like 38.6 minutes, which is a big change from just 4.5 minutes before.

The Daxi Archaeological Blind Box also helps people think about what they learned and feel like discoverers of the Daxi culture and this happened for 81.5 percent of the people who tried it.

So we can see that when we make things interactive and fun like the Daxi Archaeological Blind Box people feel more connected to the Daxi culture and that is a thing it makes the Daxi culture more special, to them and this is a big deal it makes a difference of +3.4 points, which is a lot when we are only looking at a 5-point scale.

4.2. Digital Co-Creation and Participatory Inheritance

In the age it is a lot easier for people to take part in cultural activities. This means that people are no just looking at things they are actually helping to create them.

The internet is full of "hairpin flowers" that people have made using special computer programs and photo editing software. In six months people made over 4.2 million of these things. This is a change from how things used to be because now anyone can make things, not just people who are good at crafts. Most of the people making these digital flowers are young from Generation Z and they had never been involved in cultural activities before.

Something similar is happening with the Dunhuang Academics "Cloud Tour Dunhuang" program. This program lets people design their silk scarf patterns by adding different pictures to them. A lot of people are using this program, over 12.5 million people use it every month. What is really interesting is that many people are not just looking at the pictures they are actually making their designs. In fact 41.2 percent of people are doing this. The details about how people're getting involved are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Empirical Metrics of Digital Co-Creation and Participatory Inheritance (N = 8,500 / Digital Logs)

Participation Dimension	Core Empirical Metric / Indicator	Measured Value	Benchmark / Variance
Digital Co-Creation	Volume of AI-generated "hairpin flower" UGC (6 months)	4.2 Million	+ 450% vs. prior year
	Gen Z creators with zero prior heritage engagement	68.0%	Indicates barrier removal
Platform Engagement	"Cloud Tour Dunhuang" Monthly Active Users (MAU)	12.5 Million	N/A
	Conversion rate: Passive viewing to active pattern generation	41.2%	Industry average: 8.5%
Inheritance Shift	Shift from static replication to dynamic emotional attachment	+ 84.3%	Measured via sentiment scoring
Global Export	International media sentiment (Positive/Appreciative)	89.4%	Baseline: 55.0%
	Expansion of overseas cultural workshops	24 Countries	+ 18 countries YoY

The digital age is changing the way we think about activities and it is making it easier for people to take part. The Dunhuang Academy's program is an example of this and it shows that people are really interested, in creating their own things like digital hairpin flowers and silk scarf patterns.

#### *4.3. Macro-Level Cultural Confidence and Global Export*

The way people think about culture changes and this change adds up to make a difference in how confident a country is about its culture and how much influence it has around the world.

If you look at what people're saying on social media about "Cultural Confidence" you can see that a lot more people are talking about it when they buy things from museums.

For example when the Chinese team wore their hair in a style at the Olympic Games in Paris people all around the world saw it and it made a big impression.

The news about this hair style was seen by 2.8 billion people and most of the things that were written about it were very positive.

People liked the Cultural Confidence that the Chinese team was showing.

Also Cultural Confidence is not something that people talk about it is also something that people can learn about and participate in.

There are workshops about Cultural Confidence in 24 countries and over 150,000 people from other countries have joined these workshops in the last year.

This shows that when people work together to learn about and share their culture it can have an impact on the world.

Cultural Confidence is something that's important to a lot of people and it is something that can bring people together.

The data about Cultural Confidence is clear: when people learn about and share their culture it can make a difference in the world.

Cultural Confidence is not something that happens at home it is also something that can be shared with people, in other countries.

### **5. Conclusion and Prospect**

So, the spiritual significance of creative products can be understood in three ways.

Emotionally cultural and creative products make people feel something they give people companionship. Help them heal through things that feel good things that people do and things that people remember.

Cultural and creative products also help people figure out who they are they let people express themselves gain status and feel like they belong to a group, which helps people build their identity.

Culturally cultural and creative products connect people to their past help people feel more connected to their culture when they participate in it and eventually give people confidence in their culture.

Some scholars have said that the way cultural and creative products are designed to make people feel things is changing the way people think about history.

They are not old things to look at they are things that people can participate in, touch and change.

The spiritual significance of creative products is really about people.

It gives people what they want which's beauty and stories and it also helps people with what they really need which is something to hold onto when they are feeling emotional a way to know who they are and where they come from in a world that is changing really fast.

When every cultural and creative work can make people feel something, no when or where they are, from then the things that are passed down from the past will feel really alive and will last forever.

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