

A Brief Analysis of the Application of Auspicious Culture in Brand Advertising Design

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Abstract: Advertising is an important means of disseminating information in the information era. The extensive use of Chinese auspicious culture in brand advertisement design bridges the gap between products and their audiences, highlighting unique characteristics. It visually conveys the traditional Chinese auspicious culture in advertisements, meets the audience's psychological needs for good fortune and achieves consensus and empathy with the audience's aesthetic interests while promoting excellent traditional culture.

Keywords: Auspicious Culture; Brand Advertisement Design; Visual Communication; Inclination for Auspiciousness

1. Introduction

In the era of information technology, advertising is ubiquitous and has become an essential means of communication, intricately linked to people's daily lives. For a successful product advertisement, it must not only convey product information to the audience but also capture their attention and spark interest. Ultimately, it should stimulate their desire to purchase, thereby achieving the business goal of selling products, while simultaneously establishing a unique brand image for the product. The essence of advertising design lies in its creativity, which is the key to successful product marketing. For advertisements targeting the Chinese market, the design must address both market and audience demands while also considering the distinct characteristics of the Chinese people. It should highlight the civilization and spirit of the nation, drawing on the essence of traditional Chinese culture. Such an approach aims to follow, lead, and influence the audience's values and aesthetic preferences, thereby effectively achieving the ultimate goal of advertising-stimulating consumer desire and purchasing behavior.

Chinese auspicious culture is an important part of the characteristics of the Chinese nation. It is a traditional culture with distinct national characteristics that has been inherited and developed by the Chinese people for generations. The auspicious culture of seeking good fortune and avoiding misfortune has deeply integrated into the hearts of every Chinese person. Today, auspicious culture is widely applied in brand advertising design. In addition to successfully achieving the functional purposes and value of advertisements, it also promotes the aesthetic and cultural concepts that have shaped China's millennia-long history.

2. The Continuation of Applying Auspicious Culture in Brand Advertisement Design

Auspicious culture has occupied a central and significant position in Chinese civilization for thousands of years, shaping not only the nation's traditions and rituals but also influencing its art, architecture, and even modern branding strategies. From the earliest recorded periods of Chinese history, the concept of auspiciousness has been intertwined with the cultural fabric of the nation. In ancient times, symbols of good fortune were prominently featured in various forms of material culture, from the intricately detailed bronze vessels of the Shang dynasty to the symbolic motifs found on pottery and other artifacts. One prominent example from the Shang dynasty is the "taotie" motif, which has long been associated with protection and positive energy. Moving forward through China's historical periods, auspicious motifs continued to evolve and adapt to the changing cultural and social contexts. During the Tang dynasty, the "Baixiang Flower" motif emerged as a symbol of good luck and prosperity, often seen in decorative elements on ceramics and textiles. By the Jin dynasty, auspicious imagery began to diversify and evolve further, creating a visual language that was deeply embedded in the cultural psyche of the Chinese people. By the time of the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing

dynasties, auspicious motifs had reached an advanced level of sophistication. These motifs were no longer merely decorative but conveyed deeply ingrained cultural meanings. It became common practice during these periods to adhere to the belief that "every pattern must convey meaning, and every meaning must signify auspiciousness."^[1] This reflected the widespread belief in the ability of symbols to influence both the material and spiritual realms, marking a significant phase in the development of symbolic art in China.

In contemporary China, auspicious culture remains a powerful and pervasive influence, particularly in the field of advertising and brand design. With the continued growth of China's economy and the global rise of Chinese consumer markets, advertisers have increasingly turned to the rich and layered symbolism of auspicious culture to attract and engage audiences. This cultural richness provides a potent tool for marketers looking to connect with the emotions, values, and subconscious desires of the Chinese consumer. In modern brand advertisements, the strategic use of auspicious motifs, colors, and symbols serves as a means of aligning a brand with positive connotations of success, fortune, and happiness. For example, many brands, particularly those based in China or with a Chinese market focus, have integrated auspicious imagery into their branding. Phoenix Satellite Television, a Hong Kong-based media brand, cleverly incorporates auspicious symbols in its brand identity. The phoenix, an iconic symbol of rebirth and prosperity, is featured in both the brand's name and its logo design. The logo adopts a distinctive and meaningful Chinese pattern, "Xi Xiang Feng", which translates to "joyful encounter." This motif depicts a male and female phoenix soaring together in harmony, symbolizing unity, prosperity, and positive energy.^[2] Through this visual language, Phoenix Satellite Television effectively leverages the auspicious symbolism of the phoenix to communicate its brand's message of success and harmony.

In addition to visual symbolism, auspicious language and textual elements have also become key components in modern advertising strategies. Brands often incorporate auspicious phrases and slogans that resonate with Chinese consumers' deep-seated psychological and cultural predispositions. A notable example is the herbal tea brand Wanglaoji, which has cleverly linked its product with auspicious cultural symbols through its slogan: "Drink red can Wanglaoji and celebrate a lucky year." This slogan draws upon the cultural association of the color red with good fortune, as well as the celebratory spirit of the Chinese New Year, which is considered the most auspicious time of the year. By invoking these auspicious elements, Wanglaoji not only reinforces its brand's connection with positive cultural values but also strengthens its appeal by aligning itself with the audience's emotional and psychological needs for harmony, health, and good fortune. The use of auspicious culture in modern advertising is not just a decorative or superficial element; it is a strategic approach that deeply engages the subconscious desires of the audience, strengthening emotional connections and aligning the brand with the values of prosperity, happiness, and success. By embedding auspicious motifs, language, and imagery into their advertising, brands are able to forge a stronger connection with their target market, ensuring that their messages resonate on a deeper emotional level. This alignment with cultural values helps brands to stand out in the highly competitive marketplace, enhancing consumer loyalty and driving purchase behavior.

In short, the integration of auspicious culture into modern advertising and brand design reflects the enduring power and relevance of cultural symbols in contemporary consumer society. By harnessing these traditional motifs, brands are not only able to convey their messages more effectively but also contribute to the ongoing dialogue between modern commercial practices and the rich cultural heritage of China. As such, auspicious culture continues to serve as a vital link between the past and the present, offering both brands and consumers a meaningful connection to the values and traditions that define Chinese identity.

3. Strategies for Applying Auspicious Culture in Brand Advertisement Design

3.1 Enhancing Through Auspicious Colors

Color plays a significant and influential role in advertising, serving as a powerful tool that captures attention and emotionally engages the audience. In advertising, color functions as a dynamic visual language, capable of subtly influencing the audience's psychological responses, including their perceptions, associations, and emotional states. Its importance cannot be overstated, as color is a crucial factor in generating both visual impact and emotional appeal, making it one of the primary prerequisites for effective advertising communication.^[3] The strategic use of color in advertisements can significantly enhance the delivery of the message, create memorable impressions, and ultimately

drive consumer behavior. In the context of Chinese culture, the color red holds a unique and profound significance, symbolizing a range of positive qualities such as "good fortune," "joy," and "prosperity." Historically, red has been a central element in various celebrations, particularly during festive occasions such as the Chinese New Year, weddings, and other cultural milestones. The color's omnipresence in celebratory items, including red dresses, lanterns, couplets, firecrackers, and red envelopes, further underscores its symbolic role in Chinese society. This widespread use of red in cultural and social practices reflects its deep-rooted association with happiness, good luck, and success. People's affinity for the color red is deeply ingrained in their collective consciousness. Red is far more than just a color in Chinese culture; it is viewed as a cultural totem and spiritual sustenance that carries profound symbolic meaning. Over centuries, this symbolism has been passed down through generations, becoming an integral part of Chinese identity and cultural heritage. The auspicious connotations of red permeate all aspects of Chinese life, from rituals to daily life, and have shaped the collective worldview of the Chinese people. This deep connection to red is not just a cultural artifact but a living tradition that continues to influence contemporary advertising and brand design in China. Inadvertently, this cultural significance of red in Chinese society provides an invaluable tool for advertisers, particularly those aiming to resonate with Chinese audiences. The strategic use of red in advertisements is not only a nod to tradition but also an effective way to elicit the desired emotional and psychological responses, ultimately fostering a sense of connection with the target audience and enhancing the effectiveness of the advertisement. Thus, the color red, with its rich cultural significance, continues to be an indispensable element in the toolkit of marketers and advertisers seeking to engage Chinese consumers.

Many advertising designs leverage the subconscious psychological associations that audiences have with the color red, successfully utilizing this auspicious color to enhance their impact. Red is used in advertising product packaging, product logos, backgrounds, etc., such as the red can of "Wanglaoji" and the red gift package of "Want Want". The indispensable online shopping platform "Tmall" features a signature video advertisement for its "Tmall 618" campaign, widely regarded as a classic. The video ad fills the entire background with red, with the white Tmall logo and the number 618 in the middle of the red plane, which clearly and concisely presents the key points of the advertisement. Besides, in Lancôme's New Year advertisement series, red is used to its fullest potential. In the 2020 perfume ad, featuring Wang Junkai as the spokesperson, the scene is set against a red wooden wall, with floating red lanterns bearing the Lancôme logo, while Wang Junkai, dressed in a red denim jacket, expresses his New Year wish: "My big wish for the New Year is to bring you a beautiful life and a great mood," as he catches a bottle of Lancôme perfume from the air. In addition, there is also an advertisement for Lancôme Black Bottlet (nickname of the product Advanced Génifique Youth Activating Serum because of the package color) using red color starring Zhou Dongyu. This overwhelming use of red in advertisements gives the audience a strong visual impact, amplifying the joyful and festive New Year atmosphere cherished by the Chinese. It serves as a bridge for effective communication, attracting audiences, leveraging idol appeal, and ultimately driving purchase decisions.

3.2 Conveying with Auspicious Language and Text

Exceptional advertisements adeptly address the psychological needs of their audience. The integration of auspicious language and textual elements in ad design reflects an understanding of and alignment with the deep-rooted cultural psyche of Chinese consumers, particularly their inclination to seek fortune and avert misfortune. By leveraging such culturally significant expressions, advertisements effectively communicate core themes, emphasize product value propositions, and contribute to the cultivation of a distinctive corporate culture. For example, the slogans of Want Want advertisements, "People WANT, energy WANT, health WANT!" and "Have a piece of Want Want, and you will definitely WANT!" Simple as these slogans may seem, that is precisely their success. "WANT" (the pronunciation of the character "wang") means prosperity and thriving in Chinese, is a character carrying the meaning of auspiciousness, which is universally acknowledged among Chinese people. This simple and down-to-earth auspicious language and text allow the audience to quickly accept the product name, mobilize the audience's cultural need for good fortune, and generate purchasing behavior.

Another example is the advertisement design of Jinliufu (an alcohol production company), which consistently adhered to the auspicious theme of "Fu" (good fortune) culture from its brand name to its slogans. Slogans such as "Jinliufu—the Blessing Wine of the Chinese People" and "Drink Jinliufu Wine, and Luck Will Always Be on Your Side." Jinliufu has, to a large extent, become an emotional carrier for its target consumers, symbolizing "happiness," "good fortune," and "celebration." Similarly, the auspicious slogan from Wanjiale (a supermarket chain), "Wanjiale, Le Wanjia" (translated as

"Wanjiale brings happiness to every home"), employs positive language to convey goodwill and blessings. Such expressions establish emotional connections with the audience, capturing their attention more effectively while promoting positive messaging and reinforcing the brand's values.

3.3 Highlighting Through Auspicious Objects

Auspicious objects, serving as key embodiment of auspicious culture, requires designs that synthesize geographical, historical, religious, and sociocultural elements. They should be presented in a personified and individualized manner to enhance the attractiveness and memorability of advertisements. The design of auspicious objects must align closely with the values of brand culture, ensure stylistic coherence across elements and introduce dramatic contrasts between primary and secondary visual components to serve the promotion of the brand better while maintain its distinctiveness and foster innovation. In advertisement design, the use of most auspicious objects such as Chinese knots, dumplings, red lanterns, and couplets serves to enhance the overall atmosphere. These objects visually communicate notions of fortune and festivity, which not only help in reinforcing the message but also increase the effectiveness of the advertisement by facilitating the audience's acceptance of the product and enhancing its impact.

An excellent example of employing auspicious objects into advertising is Coca-Cola's New Year campaign advertisement in China. The ad skillfully incorporates traditional symbolic objects of fortune, such as Chinese knots, dumplings, red lanterns, and couplets. Notably, Coca-Cola also designed a New Year mascot duo for the Spring Festival campaign in China. The mascots "Ah Fu" and "Ah Jiao," portrayed as young children dressed in traditional Chinese attire—alternating between red belly wraps and red Tang suits—perfectly encapsulate the themes of auspiciousness and reunion central to Chinese traditional culture. With the rapid economic development and the widespread use of the internet, more and more brands are using mascots to foster a closer connection with their audience. [4] These mascots play a pivotal role in strengthening consumer connections, enhancing brand personality and differentiating marketing strategies, which is vital in cultivating brand loyalty and maintaining long-term consumer relationships.

4. Pragmatic Analysis of Auspicious Culture in Advertising

Auspicious culture is shared and widely accepted among the Chinese people. Its extensive application in brand advertisement design stems from the psychological needs and aesthetic preferences of the target audience.

4.1 Meeting the Audience's Subconscious Need for Auspiciousness

Advertisement design must be based on consumer psychology, aiming to address the psychological needs of the audience. [6] By incorporating auspicious culture into advertising design, the subconscious desire for auspiciousness in the audience's psychology is effectively satisfied. Xu Shen's *Shuowen Jiezi* from the Eastern Han dynasty defines "Ji" (meaning auspicious) as signifying goodness and virtue, while "Xiang" (meaning propitious) denotes blessings and fortune. In classical Chinese lexicon, "Ji" embodies positive connotations of benefit and favor, serving as a conceptual counterpoint to "Xiong" (meaning adversity and inauspicious). The etymological origin of the Chinese character "Xiang" lies in its association with ritual practices. It specifically refers to the offering of a lamb—a symbol of auspiciousness—in ancestral sacrifices to invoke peace and prosperity. "Ji Xiang" means goodness and blessings. [5] China's millennia of cultural heritage have fostered a deeply rooted psychological inclination toward "seeking fortune and avoiding misfortune among its population. In the field of advertising design, the strategic integration of auspicious cultural elements—including auspicious colors, texts, and objects—functions as a mechanism to resonate with the audience's subconscious desire for positivity and prosperity. This alignment with the cultural psyche of auspiciousness enhances the visual communication of product themes, strengthens audience recall, and ultimately drives effective marketing results.

4.2 Establishing Consensus and Emotional Resonance with the Audience's Aesthetic Preferences

The aesthetic preferences of different countries and ethnic groups vary significantly. The extensive use of auspicious culture in advertising design reflects a shared understanding and emotional resonance

with the audience's aesthetic preferences. In terms of color, there is a traditional Chinese saying, "Red signifies joy, and yellow denotes nobility." Red is a traditional auspicious color in Chinese culture and is inherently perceived as beautiful within the Chinese aesthetic. The use of red in advertising not only creates a strong visual impact but also fosters a festive atmosphere, allowing the audience to pleasantly receive the product information conveyed by the advertisement. In Chinese culture, symbols such as Chinese knots, red lanterns, and the "Fu Wa" (Lucky Baby) figures are culturally recognized as representations of good fortune and celebration. The meanings of auspicious terms like "Fu" (fortune) and "Wang" (prosperity) have been internalized to such an extent that they are deeply embedded in the collective psyche, serving as conduits for the transmission of auspicious cultural values. These symbols, aligning with the aesthetic tastes of the audience, foster emotional connection and generate a sense of happiness and well-being.

5. Conclusion

The incorporation of auspicious culture in advertising design serves as a distinctive representation of traditional Chinese culture and reflects the cultural psychological traits of the Chinese people. By integrating visual elements of auspicious culture into advertising design, brands can convey deeper and more positive values, helping them stand out in the competitive market.^[7] Auspicious culture has become a bridge between products and audiences, effectively transmitting advertising messages while meeting the audience's psychological desire for good fortune. This fosters a shared aesthetic appreciation and emotional resonance, ultimately stimulating the audience's purchasing desire and encouraging a positive buying experience. The combination of culture and commerce not only enriches the content of advertisements but also provides a new pathway for the modern dissemination of traditional culture.

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