

# Research on Campus Cultural and Creative Design Based on Narrative Situational Context

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**Abstract:** *The demand for cultural and creative products among university communities today is not only functional but also a pursuit of culture and interest. This paper takes campus characteristics and regional culture as the starting points and narrative design as the entry point to analyze the campus cultural and creative design with interactive situational experiences. Based on field research and questionnaire surveys, a detailed study on the characteristics of campus culture was conducted. Taking the buildings of City University of Macau as inspiration, a set of notebooks and bookmarks was designed, incorporating some interesting elements to make the entire set of cultural and creative product designs retain the school's characteristics while being unique.*

**Keywords:** *Narrative Design; Situational Experience; Cultural and Creative Products; Interactive*

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

With societal advancement, education has become a focal point of our attention. A university's brand image and campus culture play a crucial role in enhancing its social reputation. Developing the cultural and creative industry within universities has become a new means for universities to establish their image and disseminate educational philosophies. Integrating design creativity into products based on campus culture not only facilitates the dissemination of university campus culture but also aids in the creation of university brand culture. The purpose of designing campus cultural and creative products is to sketch a positive campus image through a detailed analysis of campus landscapes and characteristic cultures, making the products themselves interesting to users. This article starts with the City University of Macau, where the campus interior is dominated by greenery. The rich campus vegetation makes it a natural, humanistic, and urban cultured space, with its campus landscape also highly characteristic of Macau. The rooftop garden offers a view of the sunset over the adjacent waterway. Subsequently, research and analysis were conducted on the historical background and human environment of CityU, leading to the design of a set of campus cultural and creative products that incorporate CityU's characteristic cultural connotations.

### 1.2 Literature Review

Currently, the design of cultural and creative products in Chinese universities tends to be overly temporary and functional, resulting in a general lack of cultural connotations and emotional experiences. Among more than 2,000 universities in China, few have a comprehensive campus cultural and creative product system. In recent years, various universities have continuously launched creative products embodying the spirit of higher education, including admission letters, campus cards, commemorative badges, bracelets, backpacks, mouse pads, etc. By promoting these on platforms such as campus public accounts and Weibo, the campus culture is disseminated through product carriers, becoming a new trend in cultural product development.

Chinese scholar Wang Haiya's "Research on Narrative Design of Cultural and Creative Products Based on Experience Levels" summarizes the three levels of user experience of cultural and creative products by analyzing the structural hierarchy of cultural and creative products [1]. The hierarchical structure proposed through narrative design is helpful for the design and development of cultural and creative products. Yang Liangliang and others utilized the advantages of campus cultural resources to depict campus images with iconic features of the school, creating campus cultural and creative products that can resonate emotionally and increase the cultural recognition and influence of universities [2]. Liu

Jiaqi and others<sup>[3]</sup>, through analyzing cultural and creative products of universities at home and abroad, collected representative cultural elements of schools and proposed product development strategies, providing ideas and references for the design of university cultural and creative products. Yang Jing and others<sup>[4]</sup>, in exploring the systematic application strategy of narrative design in campus cultural and creative products, introduced a new approach to the development of campus cultural and creative products based on user feelings and potential needs through questionnaires and interviews.

The successful merchandise design and promotion models of cultural and creative products in foreign universities are very worth learning from. Western countries pay considerable attention to the development of campus cultural and creative products, actively combining culture and economy. For example, "The Coop," existing since the 19th century, is a campus store for Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology community, whose products cover all aspects of life and study, and every type of product comes in various styles to meet different students' aesthetic needs, reflecting the infinite creativity of design.

### **1.3 Research Methods**

This study employed literature review, case study analysis, field investigation, questionnaire survey, and other research methods. By conducting case studies on several representative universities at home and abroad, the current development status of cultural and creative products in universities was analyzed to guide the development and design of campus cultural and creative products at City University of Macau.

(1) Literature review method: A comprehensive reading and retrieval of cultural and creative products are conducted before research and design, collecting data from books, journals, online media, etc., and analyzing from multiple perspectives such as design.

(2) Case study analysis method: Specific case studies of campus cultural and creative products that have achieved excellent results domestically and internationally are conducted to discuss the strategies and principles of cultural and creative product development and their dissemination operation mode.

(3) Field investigation method: On-site investigations are conducted at CityU, analyzing the types of existing cultural and creative products to understand CityU's current cultural and creative products.[4]

(4) Questionnaire survey method: Questionnaires are distributed to students, graduates, and teachers of CityU. The data obtained from the survey are statistically analyzed and used as a basis for design.

## **2. Overview of Narrative Design**

### **2.1 Narrative Design Theory**

Narrative design, which means telling a story, transcends language and text to communicate emotions. It is a method of establishing information exchange and communication between people and products through narration, presentation, and storytelling, thereby obtaining a cultural experience. Within these narratives, users can use their own thinking to change different scenarios during the product usage process, leading to autonomous divergence and ultimately forming a complete story<sup>[5]</sup>.

The narrative theory mainly includes three elements: thematic elements, story plots, and development steps. First, analyze the story plot, then combine the concept of campus culture to derive the emotional experience of the user; next, extract useful campus cultural elements from the characteristics of campus culture, reorganize them to construct a story plot; lastly, transform the campus cultural elements into another form of expression and design it.

### **2.2 Situational Experience in Narrative Design**

(1) Physical experience: Cognitively learn about related campus elements, achieve sensory stimulation through the image, color, and texture of the cultural and creative product, and set feelings like curiosity, liking, exploration on an emotional level.

(2) Situational experience: After conducting field research and combining the campus prototype, set up a usage process for the cultural and creative product. Achieve different emotional experiences through the product's triggered mechanisms and set interactive plots.

(3) Conceptual experience: Finally, reflect on the entire subject and process, reaching a level of contemplation through cultural settings, and even the positive expectations that the cultural and creative product brings to the user.

### **3. Campus Cultural and Creative Design Practice**

#### ***3.1 Survey Report***

This campus cultural and creative product design primarily utilized a questionnaire survey method. Questionnaires were distributed to students, alumni, and some teachers of the City University of Macau, collecting public opinions on the school with a total of 215 effective questionnaires. The survey results revealed that the main reasons for the public's infrequent purchase of campus cultural and creative products are due to insufficient promotion by the school, as most people are not well-informed about whether the school has cultural and creative products or where to purchase them. Additionally, issues such as low practicality, lack of campus cultural characteristics, and product homogeneity were identified. It was also found that the public prefers types of campus cultural and creative products related to daily and study items as well as souvenirs. Therefore, subsequent cultural and creative product designs will mainly focus on these aspects. In the question "The purpose of purchasing campus cultural and creative products by the public," people prefer products with commemorative significance, collection value, and attractive appearance.

Regarding the selection of elements, the elements considered representative of the school include campus buildings, Portuguese tile walls, campus pond koi, green plants, and characteristic stone roads. In terms of color, green, yellow, orange, and blue are generally regarded as representative of the City University of Macau. Therefore, in subsequent designs, the main colors of the products will primarily be green, yellow, and orange, with other colors serving as supplements.

In summary, we learned that the public prefers campus cultural and creative products with attractive appearances that reflect campus culture. In terms of product types, people tend to prefer daily items and souvenirs. Moreover, when collecting suggestions for cultural and creative products from CityU, many emotional needs were found among the students. Therefore, emotional transformation was carried out during the design process, ultimately producing a campus cultural and creative product that is both interactive and practical.

#### ***3.2 Design Proposal***

Plan 1: Combine narrative design to create a campus cultural and creative product that features both interactive scenarios and commemorative practicality—a CityU limited edition notebook (as shown in Figure 1). The design of the notebook's covers incorporates CityU's architectural elements and decorations. The upper half of the front cover features a corner of the CityU Chinese-Portuguese garden, the landscape around the CityU main gate, and the popular staircase next to the Wong Kwong Hon Building, combined with the English abbreviation for CityU and the word "Macau" to the right. A large letter "U" encompasses all these decorative patterns, integrating the scenic characteristics of CityU. The back cover design showcases an aerial view of CityU, represented in simple geometric shapes, with the well-known cobblestone slope next to it, highlighting CityU's unique features.

Inside the notebook, a stamp collection activity is designed, listing CityU's buildings and designing stamps for each building. Students can visit the corresponding buildings as indicated on the map and stamp the building's page. This design aims to familiarize students with the geographical location of each building, promote emotional resonance and cognitive recognition, increase interaction between students and the campus, experience the joy of collection, and feel involved. After collecting all CityU map stamps, students can exchange them for a CityU-exclusive lucky bookmark.

Plan 2: Inspired by the notebook stamp collection activity mentioned earlier, this plan involves launching a co-branded bookmark peace charm with Macau's "A-Ma Temple" (as shown in Figure 2). Traditionally, when visiting temples to pray, students' biggest wish is to pass all exams successfully. This is the inspiration for the design. The front of the bookmark is divided into two parts: the right half features a plan view of the CityU Chinese-Portuguese garden, representing the iconic architecture of CityU; the left half displays the English letters for "Macau," clearly expressing the theme of the bookmark. The back of the bookmark features a simplified frontal view of the A-Ma Temple, represented in simple geometric shapes that capture the temple's distinctive features. Surrounding the design are CityU's koi fish,

symbolizing good luck, successful exam results, and other positive wishes, bringing hope and fortune to people.

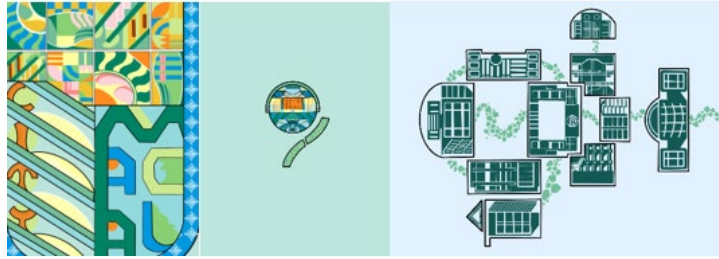


Figure 1: Proposal 1 (Cover Color)



Figure 2: Plan 2 Design Diagram

The two design schemes mainly use green, yellow, and orange colors, based on the highest proportions from the questionnaire, with blue and pink as secondary colors. The extensive use of green symbolizes plants and nature, representing the hope and beauty of life, which also resonates with the University of Macau. The choice of yellow represents a distinct personality, giving a feeling of ease, happiness, and hope. Orange can psychologically induce warmth and courage, stimulating the secretion of dopamine in the body, making people feel cheerful and relaxed, reflecting positive energy. Moreover, the entire design employs a flat design style with the interplay of geometric shapes, making the overall pattern look harmonious and attractive.

### 3.3 Effect Display

Final design display, as shown in Figure 3 Plan 1 for the notebook, measures approximately 128mm x 182mm x 10mm, roughly the size of a B6 notebook. For the covers, hard greyboard paper is used, which is a type of recycled waste paper cardboard, making it an environmentally friendly packaging material. It's cost-effective, saving on expenses. The greyboard, 2mm thick, is known for its fine, smooth, moderately textured surface. Its sturdy, thick quality resists deformation, offering comprehensive and specific protection for the product. Due to its wide usage, it is commonly seen and thus chosen for the notebook's covers and spine. The pages inside the notebook are made of 100g Dowling paper, which combines grass, bamboo pulp, and chemical pulp. This paper has minimal elasticity, good extensibility, and enhanced durability due to the various raw materials added during production. It absorbs ink uniformly, has a good smoothness, a tight, opaque texture, and high whiteness, along with strong water resistance. Dowling paper presents a visual appeal superior to ordinary paper, displaying a light yellow hue which can reduce eye strain even after prolonged use. Its affordability and ease of production, coupled with excellent writing quality, clear handwriting without ink bleed-through, and more distinct light and shadow effects, make it the chosen material for the inner pages.

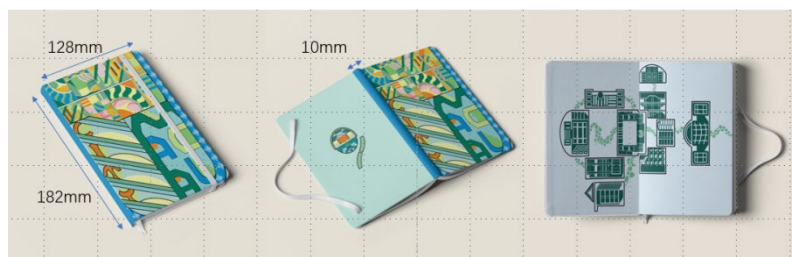


Figure 3: Plan 1 Final Design Display

Plan 2's bookmark design is displayed in Figure 4, measuring 155mm by 45mm, which perfectly matches the notebook from Plan 1. The material selected for the bookmark is 300g white cardstock. Firstly, white cardstock is characterized by its smoothness and color. Compared to other colors of cardstock, white cardstock, with its higher reflectivity, can provide better clarity and color accuracy in images. Additionally, its smoothness, tear resistance, and level surface allow it to be used for a wider range of purposes. White cardstock is also used for drawing, postcards, bookmarks, and crafting, making it easier for people to create delicate artistic works. It is also popular for printing and writing; it ensures clarity of text and images when used for printing and offers durability and readability when used for writing. Due to its excellent properties, white cardstock has a wide application in various fields and is an environmentally friendly product. It can be recycled after use, causing no negative impact on the environment. Therefore, choosing white cardstock for the bookmark ensures a flat, neat appearance without streaks, suitable for prolonged use by students without warping or deformation.



Figure 4: Plan 2 Final Design Display

#### 4. Conclusion

As an extension and carrier of school culture, campus cultural and creative products aim to satisfy users' spiritual needs and convey higher cultural values. Narrative design in university cultural and creative products is a new attempt to blend cultural values and emotions. Its purpose is to shift the focus of design from one aspect to another, exploring from the perspective of users' emotional needs, thereby endowing products with deeper spiritual connotations. This article discusses the elements, design steps, and methods of narrative design, starting from narrative scenarios, providing new reference value for the application in campus cultural and creative products.

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