

A REVIEW OF CURRENT CULTURAL JEWELLERY TREND

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The emergence of the cultural-based creative industry is particularly becoming an important strategy for preserving the national culture and heritage communicated by significant works of art.

Theoretical framework: The study established that cultural significance, design innovation, market growth, financial success, young consumer preferences, and symbolism are all major trends observed in the jewellery market.

Method: From the perspective of Dunhuang art, this paper aimed to review the current cultural trends in the Chinese jewellery market. It involved conducting a secondary data analysis of qualitative sources related to Dunhuang art. Investigated how contemporary jewellery designers are inspired by traditional rock art design and other cultural works of art to come up with new designs.

Results and Conclusions: These findings suggest that jewellery companies and designers should focus on incorporating cultural elements into their designs to capitalize on the growing demand for art-inspired jewellery. These findings are related to previous research by Lucas.

Research implications: This study also provides insights into how jewellery designers can leverage cultural elements to attract consumers and increase the market base for both fashion brands and artists.

Originality/value: This highlights the importance of marketing and targeting efforts towards younger consumers and creating products that cater to their preferences and values.

Keywords: dunhuang, apsaras art, jewellery design, research, cultural.

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UMA REVISÃO DA ATUAL TENDÊNCIA CULTURAL DE JÓIAS

RESUMO

Objetivo: O surgimento da indústria criativa de base cultural está se tornando uma estratégia importante para preservar a cultura e o patrimônio nacional comunicados por obras de arte significativas.

Estrutura teórica: O estudo estabeleceu que o significado cultural, a inovação do design, o crescimento do mercado, o sucesso financeiro, as preferências do consumidor jovem e o simbolismo são todas as principais tendências observadas no mercado de joias.

Método: Do ponto de vista da arte de Dunhuang, este artigo teve como objetivo revisar as tendências culturais atuais no mercado de joias chinês. Envolveu a realização de uma análise de dados secundários de fontes qualitativas relacionadas à arte de Dunhuang. Investigou como os designers de joias contemporâneas são inspirados pelo design tradicional da arte rupestre e outras obras de arte culturais para criar novos designs.

Resultados e Conclusões: Essas descobertas sugerem que as empresas e designers de joias devem se concentrar em incorporar elementos culturais em seus designs para capitalizar a crescente demanda por joias inspiradas na arte. Esses achados estão relacionados a pesquisas anteriores de Lucas.

Implicações da pesquisa: Este estudo também fornece informações sobre como os designers de joias podem alavancar elementos culturais para atrair consumidores e aumentar a base de mercado para marcas e artistas de moda.

Originalidade/valor: Isso destaca a importância do marketing e direcionamento de esforços para os consumidores mais jovens e da criação de produtos que atendam às suas preferências e valores.

Palavras-chave: dunhuang, apsaras art, design de joias, pesquisa, cultural.

1 INTRODUCTION

Consumers are increasingly striving to differentiate themselves from others by consuming novel luxurious items, jewellery being one of them. One of the fundamental challenges facing jewellery designers is how to develop jewellery that is novel, unique, and appealing to consumers (Manavis et al., 2020). Various options for creating and developing such jewellery exist. For instance, the jewelry industry in China is seeking inspiration from traditional culture and heritage to design and create jewellery (Liu & Pu, 2021).

In that regard, Dunhuang Art can serve, if not already acting, as an essential inspiration for modern jewellery design. Dunhuang Apsaras Art reflects a critical Chinese traditional and cultural heritage and is considered an incredible treasure trove of art representing quality and magnificent Chinese heritage (Heo, Cai & Choi, 2021; Zhang, & Li Nan, 2018). The emergence of the cultural-based creative industry is particularly becoming an important strategy for preserving the national culture and heritage (Amin &



Kurniawan, 2020; Lhermitte, Perrin, & Blanc, 2015; Kuta, 2022). This study aimed to review the current cultural trends in the Chinese jewellery market by conducting a secondary data analysis of qualitative sources (Schmitt et al., 2022).

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 JEWELLERY MAKING AND DESIGNING

Jewellery has been used to meet the needs and desires of people since ancient times (Adnan, 2018). Archaeologists have discovered numerous artefacts from various ancient sites, such as the Golden Artifacts found in Varna Necropolis, which date back to 4580-4459 BCE (Adnan, 2018). The decision to design and wear jewellery has traditionally been driven by various factors, such as superstition, beliefs, religion, and sentimentality (Adnan, 2018; Russell & Russell-Cook, 2018). In modern society, jewellery acts as a piece for expressing emotion and communicating ideas (Russell & Russell-Cook, 2018). It can also highlight a sense of identity and engage in social messaging (Russell & Russell-Cook, 2018).

In the last decades of the 20th century, sentiment, and perception towards jewellery in China changed dramatically (Lucas et al., 2015; Gerth, 2020). Chinese consumers now want jewellery designed to capture the Chinese soul, which refers to the native culture and heritage (Lucas et al., 2015). Taking that into account, jewellery designers are increasingly attempting to incorporate Chinese arts and culture by adopting Chinese design elements, such as dragons, bamboo, Chinese characters, and the phoenix (Liu & Pu, 2021). This jewellery design serves as a modern way of interpreting cultures that might have been suppressed over time; they derive inspiration from a variety of cultural elements, such as arts, fairy tales, and poems (Lucas et al., 2015; Zhi, 2022).

2.2 DUNHUANG APSARAS ART AND JEWELLERY DESIGNS

Dunhuang Apsaras art is a form of Chinese art that originates from the Dunhuang caves located in the Gansu province of northwest China (Cao & Li, 2021). The art represents the religion, trading, other activities, and the general way of life of the people who lived during that ancient time (Corfield, 2016). The Asparas figures, which are believed to be of Indian origin, are depicted in various roles and influence people in many ways (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Dunhuang Flying Apsaras Art (CGTN, 2019)



Source: Prepared by the Author (2023)

By including elements from the Dunhuang Apsaras art in jewellery design, artists could also preserve cultural heritage and make it easier for people to understand creativity in the ancient world (Zhao, 2019; Wang et al., 2017). According to Moon (2021), jewellery design inspired by this art has become a form of art that represents Buddhism, with different gestures and items symbolizing different meanings. Using ancient art in jewellery design also helps commemorate important social events and reflect cultural beliefs (Zhang & Li, 2018; Nilson & Thorell, 2018). The Dunhuang Apsara art is a big part of Chinese culture and using it in jewellery design helps protect the country's heritage and educate people about ancient culture (Katsuaki, 2014; Dai, 2019).

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWROK

3.1 RESEARCH ON ART-INSPIRED JEWELLERY DESIGN

Research on art-inspired jewellery design has been conducted from an interdisciplinary arts perspective. Russell and Russell-Cook (2018) investigated how contemporary jewellery designers are inspired by traditional rock art design and other cultural works of art to come up with new designs. Joy and Belk (2022) argued that the partnership between fashion brands and modern artists benefits both the jewellery and the artist. Yuan (2017) noted the two primary ways in which ancient jewellery art can inspire modern jewellery design, including the direct use of ancient artefacts and the application of skills used during the ancient period to create modern art.

Omran (2020) highlighted how traditional Islamic geometric decoration has been used in modern ceramic jewellery design. Ramadan and YuWu (2021) indicated that



contemporary jewellery has been used to preserve ancient Egypt's legacy. Bayburtlu et al. (2018) demonstrated how students can incorporate Turkish painting to design modern jewellery. Siddiqui (2019) studied the relationship between neck-jewellery and ancient Gandhara art and Li and Zhang (2017) focused on how traditional Chinese embroidery technology could be applied to modern jewellery creation. Finally, Liu and Pu (2021) discussed how modern jewellery designers can incorporate Shang Dynasty Bronze patterns.

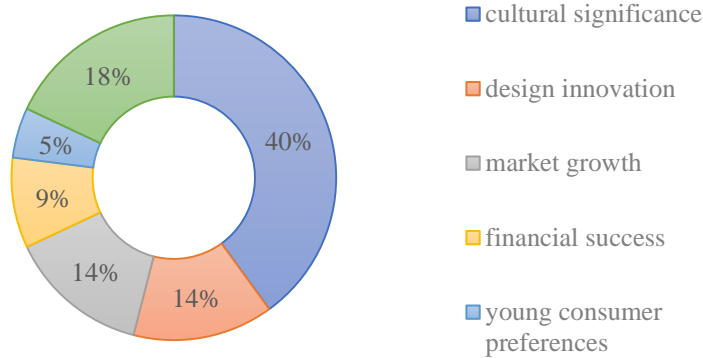
4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The secondary data analysis revealed the Chinese jewellery market is driven by cultural significance, design innovation, market growth, financial success, young consumer preferences, and symbolism (See table 1). These findings are related to previous research by Lucas et al. (2015), Menkshi & Braholli (2019), Zhi (2022), Lei, Liang, & Zhang (2022), Basiri & Mousavilar (2017), and Joy & Belk (2022). Lucas et al. (2015) and Menkshi & Braholli (2019) emphasize the importance of cultural elements in the creation and appeal of jewellery products, while Zhi (2022) explains how designers are incorporating Chinese arts and culture into their designs. Lei, Liang and Zhang (2022) highlight how artistic elements of Dunhuang art can be digitalized and presented either as 3D models and animation design, and Basiri & Mousavilar (2017) illustrate how artists are assimilating ancient art forms into their jewellery designs. Joy & Belk (2022) argue that art and fashion partnerships expand the market base for both fashion brands and market-oriented artists (Barbosa et al., 2022).

The following chart provides a visual representation of the themes, which is based on the results of Table 1. In the following section, we will discuss each and every aspect of the theme.



Figure 2. Chinese jewellery market trend



Source: Prepared by the Author (2023)

4.1 CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Specifically, cultural significance was one of the themes identified. The data demonstrates how cultural elements play a significant role in determining the trends in the Chinese jewellery market. From the ancient symbolism of jade to the more modern designs inspired by Chinese culture, these trends are deeply rooted in the country's customs and traditions. The secondary sources were keen to point out how incorporating ancient art and cultural element in modern Jewelry makes them unique and highly desirable, leading to financial success.

4.2 DESIGN INNOVATION

Design innovation was another theme identified. The data highlights how design innovation is a key factor in the success of Chinese jewellery designers. By incorporating unique and culturally significant elements in their designs, Chinese designers can stand out from the competition and appeal to a wider range of consumers.

4.3 MARKET GROWTH

Market growth was another important theme. The data shows that the Chinese jewellery market is experiencing significant growth, due to the rising popularity of these culturally significant and innovative designs. Domestic jewellery designers were cited to be leveraging China's long history of arts and culture to appeal to consumers and sell their products at a high value. For example, designer Cindy Chao uses the image of the dragon, a symbol of power and good luck, in her designs. Gold also has spiritual and symbolic meaning in Chinese culture, associated with freedom and abundance.



4.4 FINANCIAL SUCCESS

The data also suggested that Chinese jewelry designers are successful due to the high demand for their unique and culturally significant designs. Dunhuang Piper Jewelry for instance was expected to fetch HK\$40m-50m (US\$5.1m-6.38m). It was finally sold for \$5.78. Data also indicated that most Chinese jewelry designers were selling the product for millions in auctions.

4.5 YOUNG CONSUMER PREFERENCES

The data also show how younger consumers in China are increasingly interested in purchasing jewelry that is culturally significant and innovative in design. The interest in culturally significant jewelry by the young people is what makes gold and Jade to increasingly become a popular Jewelry material in the country.

4.6 SYMBOLISM

Symbolism in material choice was another key trend highlighted in the data. It was established that the use of materials of cultural significance, such as jade and is gold, was common and actually growing in China. These materials are often seen as lucky or spiritually significant by Chinese consumers, thus increasing the likelihood of purchase. In general, there appeared to be a common consensus that jewelry is more than just a fashion accessory, but rather it carries significant underlying symbolic meaning.

Table 1. Secondary qualitative data

| Authors | Themes | Key findings |
|------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Daniel (2021) | Cultural Significance; Symbolism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meaning and function of Jewellery are dependent on culture. • History, culture, and customs influence Jewellery trends around the world • China has 3 distinctive designs, namely: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sinous dragons: representing power and good luck 2. Swimming goldfish representing abundance 3. Mythical phoenix representing money and opportunities • Silver, gold, and Jade are common materials in China. • Jade is a spiritual talisman and lucky stone |
| Doaga, A. (2021) | Cultural Significance; Symbolism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic jewellery designers such as Cindy Chao, Qeelin, and Chow Thai Fook leverage symbols rooted deeply in Chinese culture to attract consumers. |



| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold in Chinese culture has a symbolic spiritual meaning related to freedom and abundance |
| Wang (2022) | Market growth; Symbolism; Young consumers preferences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% of gold purchase observe in Beijing malls in 2022 was attributed to Gen Z and Millennial. This was a 10% increase from the previous year • The rise in gold popularity signifies a reappearance of ancient methods |
| HKTDC Research (2022) | Cultural significance; Market growth; Design innovation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative jewellery design that uses cultural reference could accelerate the growth of the men's jewellery market segment; the segment is currently experiencing low demand. |
| Doaga (2021b) | Cultural significance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shift from the 1990s trends, where consumers use Jade and gold jewellery as means of investment, is being observed. • In the 90s focus was on price, not design • Now people focus on designs that are based on cultural association • Younger people will particularly pay a high price for culturally-based designs. • The China jewellery market is based on key cultural elements related to the use of pure gold, enamel, and traditional techniques such as jade carving, copper wire enamel, and engraving |
| Anonymous (2013) | Cultural significance; Market growth; financial success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Chinese culture was expected to be the main factor affecting the jewellery market. • In-depth understanding of Chinese culture and incorporation into the design and marketing will lead to growth and financial success of the industry |
| Verified Market Research (2022) | Symbolism; Cultural significance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coral jewellery is expected to bring good luck. • Turquoise is viewed as a living stone. • Some jewellery trends are tabooed in the current; case in point, men wearing jewellery is a cultural taboo. |
| SCMP Style Reporter (2019) | Cultural significance; Design innovation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established that Chinese designers are succeeding due to the following three reasons. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They are highly skilled and have been trained at some of the top jewellery houses in the world and thus highly innovative 2. their designs are heavily influenced by nature and Chinese culture, which makes them unique and desirable. 3. They often use high-quality materials and gemstones, which makes their pieces even more valuable. |
| Jiang (2020) | Cultural significance; Design innovation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the main reasons the fashion house grew is by leveraging the emotional attachment the Chinese have towards their culture. • The company design was initially inspired by Dunhuang arts and culture. |



| | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| The Value (2019) | Cultural significance; Financial success | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art and culture play a significant role in inspiring jewellery design.• Jewellery designs that are based on ancient culture and art are currently achieving massive success.• The Dunhuang pipa necklace, a 100.02-carat yellow diamond was, for instance, expected to fetch HK\$40m-50m (US\$5.1m-6.38m). |
|------------------|---|--|

Source: Prepared By The Author (2023).

5 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research study explored the cultural trends observed in the Chinese jewellery market, specifically discussing the role of art-inspired jewellery and its influence on the creative and cultural industries. The study established that cultural significance, design innovation, market growth, younger consumer preferences, and symbolism are all major trends observed in the jewellery market. The study findings suggest that jewellery companies and designers should focus on incorporating cultural elements into their designs and creating innovative products that appeal to consumers who value personal connection and meaning. Additionally, the trend towards market growth, financial success, and younger consumer preferences point to the potential for growth and financial success in the jewellery market. This highlights the importance of marketing and targeting efforts towards younger consumers and creating products that cater to their preferences and values. Furthermore, the trend towards symbolism and material choice underscores the importance of cultural elements in the jewellery market. Jewellery companies and designers should focus on incorporating symbolism and meaningful materials into their designs, as well as materials that are culturally significant to their target audience. The findings of this study have implications for both the jewellery market and the creative industry. On the one hand, this study suggests that incorporating elements from traditional culture and heritage, such as those from the Dunhuang Apsaras Art, can be an effective way to create novel and unique jewellery designs. This can be beneficial for jewellery designers, as they can create new designs that are more likely to be accepted by consumers. On the other hand, this study highlights the importance of preserving and maintaining traditional culture and heritage. By creating jewellery designs inspired by Chinese culture, designers can help to educate people about the ancient culture and protect the country's heritage. This study also provides insights into how jewellery designers can leverage cultural elements to attract consumers and increase the market base for both fashion brands and artists.



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