The Influence of Traditional Cultural Resources (TCRs) on the Communication of Clothing Brands

Kuo-Kuang Fan and Ying Zhou *

Graduate School of Design, National Yunlin University of Science and Technology, 123 University Road, Section 3, Douliou 64002, Yunlin, Taiwan; fankk@gemail.yuntech.edu.tw

* Correspondence: zy836465965@foxmail.com

check for updates

Abstract: Recently, traditional cultural resources (TCRs) have become a core part of enterprise clothing branding strategies. Such clothes, expressed in traditional culture, are widely accepted and recognized by audiences. Unfortunately, industry has leveraged these brands poorly and created ones that lack sign-cognition of TCRs. This has resulted in products reflecting shallow traditional cultural patterns (sign-form) rather than deeper adapted cultural expressions. The negative association resulting from this shallow and generic patterning in branding can be harmful for TCRs and damage the image of a brand in the minds of the people, thereby threatening the survival and long-term development of the brand. In order to solve this problem, this study divides the solution into three steps: (1) defining and understanding sign-meaning and sign-function in TCRs from the context of existing literature; (2) assessing, evaluating and breaking down sign-meanings, via in-depth interviews, into several sign-production sub-categories: (a) cultural attribution orientation; (b) knowledge perception orientation; and (c) stakeholders orientation; (3) Utilizing a typical brand development case study to demonstrate how these sign-meaning sub-categories can be help a brand better communicate with its audience. Firstly, it is noted that cultural attribution orientation: (a) expands the notion of brand culture; (b) promotes the movement of the design language of a brand from a dependent development into an independent development; and (c) connects the brand with potential audiences through a cultural gene transmission. Secondly, it is noted that knowledge perception orientation not only expands the foundation of expert groups but also provides TCRs-related to platforms of learning for audiences (e.g., to convey the brand's social reputation of responsibility through educational communication). Thirdly, stakeholder orientations provide a foundation for brand integration with commercial resources and thus transform the brand to combine with social, commercial and industrial forms of collaboration. Beyond these three sub-categorizations, the study shows that sign-functions of TCRs can have an influence on cultural transformation, academic cohesion and social connection for clothing brands. This study provides a new perspective on TCRs with respect to sign-meaning and sign-function. TCRs can help clothing brands expand to reach audiences of traditional communication media, such as fashion shows. They can also help establish a more stable community mode of communication for non-commercial purposes.

Keywords: traditional cultural resources (TCRs); brand culture; brand communication; sign-function; case analysis

---

1. Introduction

The transition to a global modern industrial economy has created an environment in which rapid specification, production and distribution of fashion products (e.g., via fast fashion) is creating a world market that is gradually converging. More and more audiences from different geographical locations and cultural backgrounds are beginning to share the same preferences [1,2]. As a result, a standardized

global brand culture is emerging [3]. China's late shift towards brand awareness has led to a diminished influence in global brands (especially in clothing brands). As such, the country lags European and American (e.g., from France, the United States, Britain and Italy) fashion brands [4]. Chinese clothing brands tend to be short-lived and tend to have a poor brand perception compared to well-known luxury brands. They are also associated with being cheap, low-quality products [5]. The reason for this is that the development of Chinese clothing brands still continues to partially retain the perceived low quality associated with the "made in China" brand identity. However, many international high-value brands utilize Chinese original clothing manufacturers (OCMs). These OCM products are branded under the labels of these highly recognized and luxury non-local brands for export to Japan, Europe, the United States and other countries. This further weakens the Chinese clothing brand market [6].

Recent decades have seen a consumer revolution in China. Increasingly, Chinese audiences are paying more attention to brands and the culture conveyed by these brands. The mind-set, value and status communicated by those wearing the brand serves a function beyond the utilitarian purpose of the clothing [7–9]. These signs can create powerful associative links in an audience's memory and influence their decision-making and cognition [10]. These links require the brand to innovate and adapt to the needs of the consumer, perhaps through industrial and manufacturing improvements, to provide positive brand value. A solid relationship is important between the brand and its audiences [11,12]. Utilizing cultural characteristics or traditional cultural resources (TCRs) can maximize brand awareness, reputation and loyalty. In recent years, China's clothing industry has gradually transitioned from low-end to high-end clothing. However, branding and the associated language or signs underlying the clothing continue to lack their own distinct expression. Coupled with the entry of foreign clothing brands into the Chinese market, this deficiency has led to challenges for China's local brands [13]. In 2013, wearing a local Chinese brand, China's "first lady", Peng Liyuan, brought the debate on traditional Chinese clothing and national clothing brands to the forefront during an international visit. Her choice of clothing drew the attention of media and inspired pride in Chinese fashion [14]. Traditional Chinese elements have become a factor by which enterprises can compete in the global market—brands are adding Chinese elements and traditional Chinese skills to their product development and marketing [15].

Previous studies have noted that brands can be imbued with cultural elements when conveyed through advertising, endorsement, price, sales channels and other areas. These elements can increase the intangible assets of a brand. For example, Carroll et al. (2009) tried to analyze the role of celebrity endorsements in brand communication [16–18]. An external strategy can be used to establish and spread brand meaning. However, this investment of resources by enterprises is typically constrained. In a competitive marketplace, where many brands utilize the same communication channels, the process by which this brand communication happens can lead to the division of audience attention and poor reception of the brand message [19]. It is in these situations that the use of national and cultural language can play a role in shaping products and in helping brands to distinguish themselves. This approach can also reduce expenditure on traditional media and increase brand equity. At present, most literature judges the behavior and cognition of audiences through traditional cultural products. For instance, a recent paper by Tu et al. (2019) focused on the cultural creation of the Forbidden City and, likewise, another recent study by Qin et al. (2019) looked at traditional cultural transformation through the lens of innovative products [20,21]. This perspective of exploring how traditional cultural products act on audiences, through brands, has its limitations. The influence of shallow and generic branding has resulted in domestic brands that make use of superficial signs and masquerade as national brands. Such brands lack sign-cognition of TCRs and result in products that contain generic patterning rather than genuine deeper cultural expression [22]. This fails to pass on and protect the positive value of TCRs. It also threatens the survival of the brand and its market development. Therefore, this topic deserves further discussion.

In the face of these problems, it is necessary to develop a deeper understanding of TCRs and their wider application and relationship to products, brands and audiences. This study discusses and breaks

down TCRs in terms of sign-meaning and sign-function through both a literature study and through in-depth interviews. The study proposes a new perspective of utilizing TCRs as leverage for better and more effective marketing and branding.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Traditional Cultural Resources

2.1.1. The Meaning of Traditional Cultural Resources

TCRs encapsulate the resources of traditional culture (or cultural heritage) under a single umbrella term. In Chinese, "traditional culture" is a compound word that combines the concepts of "tradition" and "culture". Cihai (海), a semi-encyclopedic Chinese dictionary, provides an interpretation of tradition as the "thoughts", "morality", "customs", "art", "systems of behavior" and "style" handed down through history [23]. Tradition has an intangible influence and control over people's social behavior. Its communication to later generations provides a model to interact with the environment through a historical narrative that provides continuity [24,25]. Culture, in contrast to tradition, has been interpreted through various lens. For instance, ShuoWen JieZi (文解字), one of the earliest dictionaries of the Chinese writing system, has defined its meaning as: "Education", "reform" and "development" [26]. David Throsby (2003) defines it somewhat differently, as something related to "knowledge", "morality" and "art" and its influence on human life—human cultural activities are manifested as the creation and production process and transmission of sign-meaning [27]. This concept of culture can consist of material and spiritual elements to produce a cultural consciousness, typically, specific to the identities of groups or communities [28]. In contrast to culture and tradition, "resource", in TCR, is an economic term. According to definitions introduced by Marx and Engels, resources not only refer to natural resources, but also those resources associated with human, labor and technology that serve as a source of wealth [29]. Further definitions also exist, for instance, Economic Explained defines resources as inputs used in a production process [30]. Therefore, TCR refers to the elements and signs connected to the culture and living practice (for people and technology) passed down as a model into the present. These elements facilitate the design and implementation of innovative behaviors that bring new economic value and social significance. However, this understanding is not comprehensive enough. In the era of symbol consumption, TCRs is only a branch of numerous signs. Moreover, with the changes of time and space, TCRs bears a sign-meaning far beyond the signifier and signified of itself, and changes from a langue structure to a complex system with social attributes, if only from the perspective of graphics, colors, spiritual signs, etc. to look at the product which based on TCRs conversion is not able to fully reflect its sign value. Therefore, it is more helpful to understand the connotation of traditional cultural resources by putting them back as a sign context. This study uses clothing as an exemplar of TCR and as a sign of traditional culture and crafts.

2.1.2. Sign Differentiation of Traditional Cultural Resources

TCRs are anchored to particular culture beliefs in particular timeframes. As such, their cultural value is variable and dependent on perceptions of historical value, practical value and modern significance [31]. A TCR can be regarded as a sign where the sign itself has a language system and a non-language system. A sign can be divided into meaning and a communication channel based on the method developed by Eco (1976). Here a significance system is used to physically produce expressions for practical purposes. This communication process involves not only of "langue" and "parole", but also sign-functions that relate to competence and performance. In the context of culture, even if some signs first appear explicitly, in present society, they have long held an assumed set of sign-functions that were previously posited by social convention. Such signs continually change and are adapted through a process of production [32]. Collectively these particularities can be broken down into two parts: The meaning of a sign and the function of a sign. The meaning of a sign is static

and connects an image to an associated TCR [33,34]. Extensive literature has been published on this topic. The function of a sign is a dynamic entity that describes the interpretation of the sign during an interaction. This sign-production is reflected extensively in sociology, for instance, in conversations on sign-consumption involving Jean Baudrillard and mythology developed by Roland Barthes [35,36]. They analyzed the apolitical ideology behind sign-production in the context of the audience and its mass culture. Today, all around us, there is an astonishing consumption and abundance of ever-growing goods, services and material wealth. Under the definition of Debord (1967), this is an unreal spectacle society, an era in which the signs are more than the signified, the copies are more than the originals, and the image-objects are more than the reality. This ideology possesses real hypnotic behavior and stimulating power, which makes humans, as a subject, completely deviate from their own criticality and creativity and become slaves of the spectacle [37]. As Baudrillard pointed, "we ourselves slowly become sentient beings" [35]. Therefore, we tend to be immersed in the nostalgic atmosphere expressed by the signs of TCRs and immersed in the sentient experience of meaning, while ignoring the value power of TCRs in modern society. In the field of design, the production of signs is the job of designers. These designers create products through the understanding of signs. Conversations and developments around TCRs typically remain focused on the representation of sign-meaning with very little emphasis on sign-function. This study hopes to expand the cognition of traditional cultural resources through the use of sign-meaning and sign-function.

2.2. Brand Culture

Culture is the soul of a brand and the key to brand differentiation. Brand culture focuses on creating added value through various communication channels—a key element here is brand loyalty whereby the value of the brand is deeply embedded in the cultural environment [38]. This brand value can be regarded as an encapsulation of cultural characteristics such as: elements surrounding a business's operation and its brand management, the values and aesthetics accumulated around the brand, and the reactions elicited by the brand in terms of interest, emotions, cultural significance and style [39]. Historically, companies were not aware of the impact of brands on audiences. As such, early brand culture tended to be shallow. Recently, this view of brand culture has shifted to one that can help audiences feel a sense of belonging to the brand. Further, it focuses on the idea of building community and co-creating groups centered around the brand [40,41]. Although it is widely agreed that culture provides potentially productive areas for brand development, researchers have suggested that most research is yet to address this historical culture's importance in brand development [38]. However, there have been discussions in the literature, like those of Li et al., (2019), that emphasize the discussion of cultural heritage on brand revitalization for traditional enterprises from the perspective of market management [42]. Further, some research does show that historical and cultural resources can provide new perspectives of understanding and can represent national culture in order to affect audience behavior [43]. Further, Jaishankar (1998) pointed out that historical culture implicitly influences the beliefs and practices of a society, thus affecting individual decision-making significantly [44]. Oswald (2010) compared China's unique cultural heritage with the concepts of luxury in the Western world. These concepts were used as a basis for analyzing the Chinese brand market—Oswald discovered that cultural heritage had significant potential in the Chinese audience mindset. He noted that with the incorporation of this cultural heritage into a brand, it was easier for all audience levels to understand during interpretation [45]. These brand meanings can be encapsulated in the brand itself and do not need an explanation from outside parties [46]. Schroeder (2009) and others believe that history and culture can not only cultivate an audience's ability towards brand literacy, but can also facilitate and promote the co-creation of a brand's own culture and cultural resources. Thus, the brand can be redefined by audience participation in the communication process [47,48].

2.3. Brand Communication

Brand communication provides a channel for bringing the concept and image of a product or service to the market so that its uniqueness can be recognized by more audiences [49]. Brand communication can directly affect audience brand decision-making. To establish and maintain a positive image (or attitude) in a consumer brand, marketers utilize brand communication [50]. Moreover, building a positive brand image (or attitude) can create trust and confidence. Market competition, however, means that brand communication approaches need to be constantly revised [51–53]. The earliest models of brand communication were perception models. An example of a classic model is the Shannon and Weaver model. Using these perception models, increasingly complex social models were developed. Such models were embodied by a theory of a two-step flow of communication. This theory emphasized the importance of interpersonal relationships in communication [54]. In recent years, the theme of brand experience has become a significant contributor within industry discussions centered around brand. Researchers have developed a new model, based on the concept of brand community, whereby the emotional interests of audiences are used to develop brand-related emotional resonance. For example, when it comes to communication for clothing brands, marketing may emphasize status, taste, value, and thinking [49,55]. With development in modern media, communication channels for fashion brands can be divided into three categories. The first category is advertising and fashion promotion, and can include fashion shows and special events [56]. The second category is new online media and can include SMS communication, virtual communities or social media communication, and even communication within organized groups and forums. The third category consists of offline activities that could include direct communication between marketing personnel and audiences. The overall trend is to focus on the collective channels (or methods) used for brand communication [57]. Looking at the literature, we find that the communication channel for clothing brands is mainly based on external media as a starting point (fashion show, online and offline, etc.) [58]. The three communication strategies mentioned above can help establish a connection with the audience—this mode of communication happens at the marketing and management level. For example, according to Islam et al., (2013) the atmosphere of a commercial store, along with other marketing methods for spreading product ideas, combine to spread a brand image. Following this view, Feng (2019) uses the Internet to guide consumers towards developing a brand psychology [59,60]. However, discussions of such communication rarely incorporate deeper cultural ideas. Focusing on external media has the added problem of drawing attention away from the information transmission function of a product itself.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Method Selection and Case Selection

This study selected NE·TIGER (NT) as a brand for case analysis. The reason for this choice was that, firstly, NT can reflect the complete experience of TCRs on brand power remodeling. Secondly, NT was not committed to the innovation and application of TCRs when it was first developed. It has obvious comparability and we can find the sign-function of TCRs by following the development path of the brand. Thirdly, NT is a local brand, not a Chinese brand operated by a foreign worker team. Its development is deeply rooted in the local economic, political, and cultural environment. In addition, from a methodological perspective, a case study has three advantages: first, it is conducive to creating a new cognitive system. Researchers can analyze a large number of acquired texts and discover the commonality and personality of the case materials and existing literature. Second, in a case study, it is easier to obtain the supporting data, and it can be tested repeatedly in the construction of new forms of cognition. Third, a case analysis has realistic validity to some extent, and its discovery system is directly derived from empirical evidence, so it is objective and scientific [61]. For data analysis, case studies have two forms: note-taking and narrative-writing, which should involve listing meaningful events, establishing internal logical relationships, and carefully seeking evidence and an

explanation [62]. Therefore, this paper will be presented in the form of describing brand events based on the obtained data.

3.2. Data Collection

The data collection was divided into two parts. The first part is brand events, which are mainly promoted through fashion shows. We looked at the changes in the information conveyed by TCRs after their adoption in the brand events. This information includes NT's official website, related online articles, comments, interview videos, clothing photos of fashion week over the years, and social media. These data serve as the source of interview questions and as the basis of brand development events. The second part is in-depth interviews with an average duration of 40–70 minutes. The data were collected, through audio recordings, from 8 people, including 5 teachers in the field of design and 3 brand operation directors in the industry, who have a deep understanding of NT's historical development trend, fashion design and expression knowledge, and a high degree of academic cognition (Table 1). The interview was divided into two branches. The first branch was designed to obtain the experts' descriptions of the sign-meaning of the TCRs itself through the interview, and to generate the original sign-functions after the sign-production. The second branch mainly focused on the brand changes and events before and after the intervention of TCRs. The purpose here was triangulating the data (comparing information from different sources to make sure that they are mutually confirming) and avoiding the incorporation of less reliable external media sources. At the initial stage of the study, the number of interviewers was not limited. When we reached the 8th interviewee, it was found that more repetitive and redundant content had appeared in the conversation, indicating that data saturation had been reached [63].

Table 1. Interviewee information list.

Interview Date	Name	Gender	Profession	Specialty
2018/09/23	A-T	Female	Instructor	Fashion Illustration Advanced clothing customization
2018/09/24	B-F	Female	Professor	Clothing brand marketing Clothing psychology
2018/10/12	C-P	Male	Professor	Design thinking
2018/10/28	D-B	Male	Brand director	Brand vision management
2018/10/28	E-I	Female	Instructor	Clothing fabric Clothing accessories design
2018/12/04	F-B	Male	Brand director	Brand planning and promotion
2018/12/12	G-B	Female	Brand director	Brand commodity planning
2019/01/28	H-P	Female	Professor	Design aesthetics Clothing criticism

3.3. Data Analysis

Because this research interview has two parts, the data collected was analyzed in turn as discussed below.

3.3.1. Part One

Firstly, the data collected from the first interview was transcribed and the open coding procedure was implemented. This open coding procedure extracts key phrase relevant to TCRs. A reliability analysis was then carried out on the coding produced to ensure that individual encoders produced a well correlated selection of the relevant codes for this study. In order to avoid the influence of the author's subjective factors, this study adopted a conservatively estimated index of concordance (intercoder-reliability). Here, the formula is $n \cdot S / (T_1 + T_2)$, where n represents the number of people

participating in coding, S represents common open coding involving two people, and T1 and T2 represent the total number of codes of associated with each person [64,65]. A coefficient greater than 0.6 was taken as the confidence value [66]. If the value is lower than 0.6, it was considered that internal consistency is insufficient. This means that it needs to be discussed again among researchers and a common decoding method must be selected until a consistency of more than 0.6 can be achieved. In this study, a total of three encoders (Table 2) participated in the coding process for the same interview data. Three attempts were made to code the data. In the first attempt, the results of coding were collectively analyzed to assess their reliability (first common reliability). The results in Table 3 demonstrate a low reliability from this first attempt. This prompted the construction of a set of more uniform rules for coding and led to a second common reliability analysis from another coding attempt by each encoder. These rules were then improved upon to arrive at a third coding to make sure that the demonstrated reliability exceeded 0.6 (third common reliability). The third reliability analysis from these encoders was then used as a standard to assess the overall reliability.

Table 2. Encoder backgrounds.

Encoder	Profession	Background
E-1	National Yunlin university of science and technology Doctoral student	Design
E-2	National Yunlin university of science and technology Masters student	Design media
E-3	National Yunlin university of science and technology Doctoral student	Design

Table 3. Encoder Common Reliability.

First Common Reliability	Second Common Reliability	Third Common Reliability
0.281	0.673	0.710

Secondly, after classifying common open codes and comparing the data constantly, some core common points emerged [67]. Finally, the original sign-functions contained in the sign-meaning of TCRs were obtained: cultural attribution orientation, knowledge perception orientation and relevant stakeholder orientations (Table 4).

3.3.2. Part Two

The data obtained from the brand event and the second interview were divided into two stages: before and after the involvement of TCRs in the brand. The steps were basically the same as for the data in the first part. An open coding procedure was implemented to remove duplicates and perform reliability analysis (Table 5). Then, it was decomposed using an order of time to compare and classify information based on similarities and differences [68]. Secondly, we confirmed that there are at least two data sources for triangulation of the selected data, so as to avoid deviation caused by the author's subjective extraction, and to confirm the data's validity [69]. This was necessary due to the large amount of data in this part and the need to avoid duplication of data. Therefore, we mainly embedded the data in Sections 4 and 5 using a narrative method.

Table 4. Data classification after common open coding.

Classification	No.	Common Open Coding	Source
Cultural attribution orientation	1	You will only see the most authentic culture by focusing deeply on local goods	F-B/02/04
	2	Oriental aesthetics	H-P/01/12
	3	The traditional culture ecology gives birth to the expression of the artistic conception form in local art	B-F/01/18
	4	Eastern aesthetics often call a thing a "Tao-Qi" (道器) to represent our own philosophy	H-P/03/21
	5	It carries people's appeals to a particular culture	D-B/01/18
	6	It is more accurate for Chinese people to utilize a Chinese style. The prevailing Chinese style is just a style, not a deeper culture marker	H-P/04/08-09
	7	Local cultural landscape	C-P/03/02
	8	National identity	A-T/01/19
Knowledge perception orientation	9	It contains very deep cognitive thoughts about the external world	C-P/02/17
	10	It is enlightening to think about modern design products, especially human-oriented design	G-B/01/11
	11	From the objects, we can understand the truth of being a human being, and that the relationship between objects and people is shaped by each other	H-P/05/24-25
	12	Traditional appliances come from the practice of life, so you can see the change of a lifestyle	C-P/03/27
	13	The materials are used in an orderly way. Both the quality and the hard degree of the material need to receive attention	A-T/04/15
	14	Viewing the museum relic is a way of recalling this relic	F-B/01/25
	15	Although it is an intangible cultural heritage, through transformation it can conform to the current aesthetic	G-B/03/24
	16	Students tend to study traditional fabrics when designing	E-I/02/14
Stakeholder orientation	17	Because traditional products are too laborious, they gradually change the way people view traditional things	G-B/04/16
	18	When you see exquisite art work, you think of the craftsmanship of each process	E-I/02/13
	19	It is often given to foreign friends in the form of a national gift	F-B/04/23
	20	Local creation	C-P/3/10
	21	Generally, it is regional, just like Zhenhu in Suzhou, which is an embroidery cultural area	B-F/04/12

Table 5. Encoder Common Reliability.

First Common Reliability Result	Second Common Reliability Result	Third Common Reliability Result
0.542	0.651	0.705

4. Case Description and Analysis

Over the course of 40 years of development, NT started with the design and production of fur products and became the leading brand in the Chinese fur industry. As the brand developed, NT launched a series of wedding dresses, gowns, Chinese dresses, ready-to-wear products, and more. Its unique business philosophy has made it into the most symbolic and representative independent local luxury brand in the Chinese clothing industry. However, the brand's wide culture recognition

was not achieved overnight. Its failures in the international markets caused significant economic losses and greatly affected the brand's international stance. As a result of these failures, NT was deprived of the opportunity of being the first global luxury Chinese brand—something that has been the strategic goal of the company. However, through the adoption of TCRs, the company achieved brand popularity, recovered from its failures, and achieved international fame. The NT brand has been fundamentally reshaped and defined by its unique national image.

4.1. Pre-Adoption: 1982–2005

Originally known as the 'Northeast Tiger', the brand was started in 1982 by Mr. Zhang and, later, this was followed by the brand NE-Tiger in 1992. In its early days, the company started as a single shop that provided tailoring services. Its geographical location meant that the shop got frequent trading opportunities with the Soviet Union. This led to a rapid development process for the shop. Through this process, NT's business development model evolved and expanded to meet the demands of larger scale businesses. Mr. Zhang visited Russian, European, and American markets several times to first understand and then expand his business globally. Through this process, he acquired a design language through which he created unique customer offerings that gradually pushed NT out of the identity of being an Original Clothing Manufacturer (OCM). The disintegration of the Soviet Union forced the 'Northeast Tiger' to switch its target international markets from the Soviet Union to Europe and the United States. These shifts made Mr. Zhang realize the importance of having a business philosophy and brand concept. So, in 1992, he officially registered the international brand NT, in the hope of creating a culture of elegance for the Chinese brand name 'Northeast Tiger'. Subsequently, NT quickly entered the industry of luxury goods with its fur products and became the primary and most recognized fur brand in China. The company established exclusive global design marketing centers in France, Italy, the United States, and Hong Kong, making up for the lack of Chinese luxury brands. In 1998, a NT fur flagship store became the largest specialty fur store in Asia. In 1999, NT promoted itself in high fashion through a fur fashion show and was given an award for its high-quality products. However, brand development was stalled with the '9/11' terrorist attacks. These attacks led to recession for the US economy and devastated NTs market penetration efforts in the United States.

After these two failures in international markets, NT began to adjust its business model. On the one hand, it continues to develop in the Chinese market and introduced Western marketing concepts and styles into the lives of the Chinese community. On the other hand, it changed its target customer group from large customers to small customers. This change was followed by a reduction in large orders in favor of an increase in limited custom offerings. This laid the foundation for the later development of advanced customization. With this strategy, NT steadily moved forward in the Chinese domestic market.

In 2001, NT created a new industrial promotion channel by introducing its own fashion show. It also became more innovatively innovative by expanding communication to modern media platforms. In 2002, an international fur fashion trend spread as a result of NT's special brand status and efforts. The year 2003 marked the genesis of Chinese evening dress fashions with NT's "Mingyuan (名媛)" Series. In 2004, by collaborating with international luxury brands, NT hosted the advanced evening dress fashion show and the first brand show in China's International Fashion Week. From this time onwards, NT became an innovator and a leader with a highly recognized reputation in both industry and the wider audience market. This status was further strengthened when NT was awarded a consumer integrity award by the China Consumers Association.

The year 2005 was an important turning point for NT. It launched a Western-style wedding dress titled "Love", which turned out to be an unprecedented success and set off a wedding dress revolution in China. Chinese culture adopted the use of wedding dresses as an eternal symbol of love as a result (Figure 1). NT's use of fashion shows as a tool to change perceptions of wedding dresses succeeded. This success was only the beginning for NT. Just as NT successfully became China's first luxury brand, the company realized its limitations in its knowledge about foreign markets. Despite the domestic

success, it still could not effectively enter the international market. The international environment was quite different from the local environment and required a different design language. The question arose as to how a Chinese luxury brand could enter foreign markets without adopting the innovations of foreign fashion. With its experiences and observation, NT concluded that the core and spirit of a brand lies in its unique culture and this is where NT developed its strategy of a traditional cultural shift.
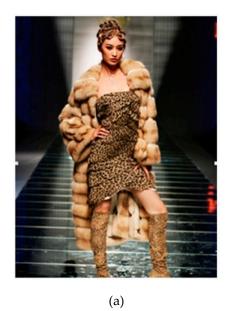

(a)　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(b)

Figure 1. Early works of NE·TIGER (NT). (**a**) Clothing conferences with the themes of "Leopard" and (**b**) "love". Available online: https://m.hercity.com/s/201103/12157.html (15 October 2019).

4.2. Post-Adoption 2006–2018

After the 2005 show, NT began to explore how to interpret Chinese luxury in the context of the international market. Looking at European luxury brands, the western luxury goods industry had grown and developed its brand through traditional family-inherited businesses and cultivated reputations. However, in China, divisions into regions and departments favored the collective over the individual. This caused individual creative enterprises to be submerged into a larger organizational structure (e.g., the Jiangnan Manufacturing Bureau). China had a pre-existing luxury culture, and the artistic value of Chinese luxury craftsmanship equaled that of Western luxury goods. Unfortunately, the country's background made brand awareness and brand creation far less effective than that of the West. With China's full industrialization, NT took the opportunity to operate as a high-end and independent brand. This was, however, was challenging because of a lack of Chinese signs with which to connect the brand to its own culture. In response, NT adopted a strategy to stimulate a cultural renaissance.

NT proposed the "China Luxury Manifesto: Revival and Emergence" and launched China's first high-end customized series of wedding dresses, named "Feng (phoenix)" in 2006. It introduced Yun-brocades (雲) and the four famous embroidery (from Suzhou, Hunan, Guangzhou, Sichuan) techniques along with other crafts into clothing. In 2007, a costume designed to represent the Chinese national spirit was launched. In 2008, the concept of "*HuaFu* (華服)" was further proposed—"*HuaFu*" is a traditional Chinese dress, representing the spirit of Chinese people. The cultural system of brand clothing is extracted from traditional Confucian thought. This includes concepts of "benevolence (仁), righteousness (義), propriety (禮), wisdom (智) and fidelity (信)". These are interpreted through the concept of "*Jinxiu Guose* (錦繡國色)". "*Jinxiu*" is a traditional Chinese handicraft, which refers to the Yun-brocade and the embroideries. "*Guose*" is the national color that absorbs the characteristics of each dynasty (Figure 2), namely: (1) The black color of the Qin (秦) Dynasty, which is anciently dignified and magnifies; (2) the blue color of the Southern and Northern Dynasties, which is open-minded

and generous; (3) the green color of the Song Dynasty, which is fresh and elegant; (4,5) as well as the yellow color and Chinese red color of imperial power. Collectively, these formed the spirit of the brand. The same year, NT launched another advanced Chinese clothing series. In addition to the Yun-brocade and embroidery, NT also revived a nearly lost four-thousand-year-old Chinese silk tapestry. In 2009, NT cultivated a special silk from the Ming and Qing dynasties that had been famously used for the manufacturing of the emperor's royal clothes. It launched the "*HuaFu*" men's series for the first time. This created new brand history. In 2010, the silk created and cultivated by NT was permanently collected for display by the Capital Museum in Beijing. It launched a fashion show on the theme of "Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches". This was the first time that NT utilized TCRs (e.g., via "*HuaFu*") that incorporated the traditional spirit of China for creation of clothing. Through the exploration of culture, NT has gradually found ways to incorporate traditional Chinese clothing into the lexicon of modern design language.

Figure 2. Five representative colors of "*HuaFu*". NT appeared at the 2nd Beijing International Film Festival in 2009. Available online: http://www.voguechinese.com/xiuchang/2012/0507/37256.html (20 November 2019).

Between 2011 and 2017, NT successively launched shows with themes such as "Tang (唐) Dynasty", "Hua Song (華宋)", "Da Yuan (大元)", "Ming propriety (明禮)" (Figure 3), "Qing (清) cheongsam (Chinese traditional clothing)" (Figure 4) and "Protagonist of the Republic of China (民國人物)" (Figure 5). Though culture revival, NT has formed a brand culture that integrated ancient with modern and Chinese with Western. It has created a brand representing quality and elegance with a unique leveraging of Chinese TCRs. In addition to developing new products, NT has also acted as a national designated brand to assist with diplomatic activities and charitable activities. It is the only garment brand to assist in the filming of a national promotional video. Further, it is also the only brand given the honor of being the sole costume representative to the "China-ASEAN Cultural Exchange Year"—an event sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in China. NT has also been heavily involved in research related to the discovering and understanding the origins of national costumes and their historical heritage. Then, they co-organized and discussed the future development of "*HuaFu*". In response to "the belt and road initiative" policy in 2018, NT launched a high-end custom-made Chinese "*HuaFu*" fashion show themed by regions along the Silk Road. In response to the Belt and Road initiative policy in 2018, NT launched a high-end custom-made Chinese "HuaFu" fashion show themed by regions along the Silk Road. NT chose Dunhuang (敦煌) as the theme city in 2018. Dunhuang (敦煌) is a city with significant TCRs (i.e., Dunhuang murals are highly regarded).

The NT fashion show utilized embroidery techniques for "*Huafu*" inspired by these murals and their colors and so demonstrated Silk Road-inspired costume styles. The show uniquely leveraged TCRs and created anchoring for the brand within the historical narrative of Dunhuang. The result of this process was that the brand took on the identity of magnificence, depth, beauty, and elegance associated with the city of Dunhuang. This approach has forged a strong culturally embedded independent Chinese brand identity for NT.

Figure 3. Clothing conference with the theme of "Ming(明) propriety(禮)". Available online: http://www.haibao.com/article/1729046.htm (24 November 2019).

Figure 4. Clothing conference with the theme of "Qing(清) cheongsam". Available online: https://twitter.com/XinhuaChinese/status/658547292014641156 (25 November 2019).

Figure 5. NT 2017 haute couture collection during China International Fashion Week. Available online: http://www.fashionyiren.com/tag/hua-fu-fa-bu-hui/ (02 December 2019).

5. Results and Discussion

By looking at the case study description presented in the previous section, we can clearly note that NT's brand culture is affected by traditional cultural resources. In the early stages, NT relied on learning from the experience of other brands, so the sign information conveyed by its clothing language would have commonality. Within the international market, NT did not have a strong brand or product advantage as a result of this decision. Therefore, this made it vulnerable to unpredictable external factors such as special events, financial crises, political strategies, etc. This indicated that NT lacked an international standpoint, and it can be said that it lacked uniqueness compared to similar clothing. In terms of the domestic market, NT has led a movement to bring out the old and innovate using it to create something new. This has changed traditional audience cognition in clothing and NT has leveraged this change to improve the culture and popularity of the company's brand. However, success in the domestic market did not translate to a competitive advantage against international luxury brands. Partly, this was because NT focused primarily on the material (fur) sign rather than its unique brand cultural expression as a means of conveying luxury in the early stages. After 2005, NT began to look for inspirations in local culture and started integrating these resources to create modern clothing products. These products incorporated traditional culture signs and conveyed unique sign-meaning and orientation. By analyzing the clothing information in brand events (Clothing is a product of sign-production, and brand events are a form of conveying after sign-production), TCRs not only affected NT's cultural brand but also showed other sign-functions. These functions helped to increase brand recognition and significance in the public consciousness and in doing so helped to build a luxury brand that is strongly anchored in Chinese society.

In summary, we noted three sign-meanings associated with TCRs. We also note that there are three sign-functions displayed in the NT brand events communication information and its transition effects (Table 6).

Table 6. Sign-meaning and sign-function of traditional cultural resources and the transition effect of the sign-function in brand events communication.

Sign-Meaning	Transition Effect	Sign-Function
Cultural attribution orientation	From dependent to independent development	Brand culture shift
Knowledge perception orientation	Research and exchange platform of Chinese clothing culture	Academic cohesion
Stakeholder orientation	Single brand to social network	Social connection

5.1. Brand Culture Shift Function

TCRs have leveraged properly and integrated into a brand can help to associate the brand with the wider culture. This creates a brand culture.

Any brand that wants to have a place in the market must adapt to the changes in that market. At the same time, it must resist the impact of those changes so as to maintain the long-term continuity of the brand. This creates brand differentiation and provides resilience against imitation from competitors.

Looking at the two stages of NTs brand development, two sign-production elements can be identified: A dependent element and an independent element. Before its culture shift, NT focused on dependent production through the continuous learning and absorbing of the western brand experience. It focused on recombination and imitation. This approach prevented NT from building a strong Chinese brand for the following reasons: (1) The brand's cultural genes were not from China; (2) Its sign-production was based on the experience of existing brands—this meant that it had to compete directly with these more established brands with accumulated brand recognition; (3) this dependent approach to brand building is more susceptible to the influence of the original brand objects from which it was replicated—the result is a weak brand that creates around it an industrial infrastructure that increasingly enables the decline of the brand.

After NT's traditional shift, they increasingly began to focus on innovating a uniquely Chinese luxury brand by incorporating TCRs. The approach leveraged an existing Chinese tradition in exquisite craftsmanship to produce clothing with a deep significance in Chinese society. The use of "*HuaFu*" in the modern context provided the necessary symbolism and integrated materials, style, and color from past dynasties to produce a truly Chinese brand culture. In addition to this, the brand fused Western costume ideas into these classical elements to innovate an international and modern aesthetic. NT's attempt to develop "Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches" and hold shows related to the various dynasties shows a transition to an independent means of production. Each clothing line, developed from the various dynasties, provided new innovation and facilitated greater brand awareness in the international market.

This transition from dependent to independent clearly shows how integration of TCRs into NT's brand had a transformative affect. The move allowed the brand to reshape its value proposition to one more appealing to the cultural uniqueness of China [70]. This was done through the establishment of national cultural relations that conveyed, to the audience, a reliable brand culture with a Chinese image.

5.2. Academic Cohesion Function

Underlying TCRs is implicit knowledge. This knowledge helps brands to communicate through knowledge experts and provides a platform for audiences to learn about the brand.

The TCRs are the language that runs through a nation and which embodies cultural knowledge. These TCRs are embodied at the level of both spiritual meaning and at the object level. For instance, a TCR may require special knowledge of materials, processes, forms, and other aspects of the production process. Further, there may be some social interaction for maintenance, preservation, and usage. For a modern brand, innovation is necessary to adopt to the changing significance of a TCR in the context of society. This requires continuous communication with the market and adaptation to the

stakeholder environment. For clothing, this may mean a dialogue and collaboration with the society at large. For instance, NT invited the masters of Chinese learning to discuss academic topics together, donated traditional innovations to museums, and sparked a dialogue for learning among their potential consumer base. By participating in the process of restoring old traditions in fashion, they built a brand culture rooted in knowledge and learning. This was extended by their focus on fusing the old with the new through "*HuaFu*". In some sense, NT managed to integrate three branches together: government, university, and an institute into "*HuaFu*". They formed communities around the brand and built opportunities for audiences to connect with the culture. They conveyed a brand culture of responsibility and intellectual development to build a brand relationship through educational communication.

5.3. Social Connection Function

TCRs can connect stakeholders and help brands to integrate commercial resources. In the market of modern consumption, a brand is its own socio-cultural entity.

For NT, the relationship between TCRs and brand is inherently linked. As the center of the value network, a brand binds its stakeholders (consumers, employees, shareholders) to the company. Some of these stakeholders take the form of civil and culture social organizations, local communities, etc. [71]. Because TCRs are community-based, community members can create dependent economic value around them. This could be through the restoration of traditional industrial processes or through the creation of related employment opportunities and the capturing of intellectual resources (avoiding brain-drain) and labor [72,73]. This process of creating a dependent community around a brand adds a value dimension to a company's brand and transforms it into social capital. As a result, this process is good for that company's brand longevity.

6. Conclusions

In response to the research issues mentioned in the introduction of this study, we provided a view of the concept of TCR from another perspective, and utilized a case study to introduce three sign-functions of TCRs in clothing brand communication. This case-study discussed the corresponding effects of communication for each sign-function to demonstrate how a connection to audiences can be modified to improve brand value. One effect of this is the use of Chinese clothing related cultural research and platform building for knowledge exchange. Such platforms and research aim to engage brands in educational communication. The result is a transition from a generic brand to one linked to a strong identity of social cooperation. Further, this shift can, with proper leveraging of TCRs, establish a new community concept for the clothing brand.

Although clothing is used to spread brand information through fashion shows, we can note that the language of clothing conveyed to the audience has changed. Traditional cultural resources have expanded the scope of the brand's target audience, through information dissemination, and made things more conducive to audience participation. While there is a group of people who may never become brand consumers, they may support consumer behavior [19]. For example, there may be a significant section of the population who may never buy Louis Vuitton, yet they may like and praise the brand. If brand communication can move the audience, then the audience will produce behaviors that are beneficial to the brand. This may not directly drive sales but can lead to a variety of indirect behaviors that may transform potential consumers into direct consumers. Regardless of whether is the focus for brand communication is on the investment in media or on the product itself, careful attention should be paid to the perception of quality associated with the product. Cultural expression and brand language can be a tool for developing competitive advantage in the market and maintaining a long-term relationship with the audience. To some extent, integrating all relevant stakeholders into the sign-production atmosphere of TCRs is an equal and non-interventional approach. It can change the behavior and view of actors (relevant stakeholders) such that they not only pay attention to sentient experience but also become involved with each other through TCRs. In the remainder of this section, we will discuss the theoretical and practical significance of this study.

6.1. Theoretical Significance

A previous study of traditional culture showed that such culture has a renewable value. This culture can be regarded as a resource—this paper presents the relevant definitions of this resource. TCRs are a sign-system with the ability to provide a sign-exchange. Typically, they are rooted in history. A distinction is made between sign-meaning and sign-function. There are three main sub-categories or orientations related to the sign-meaning of TCR. The cultural significance of TCRs is a main consideration for the added value of a brand. Through a representative case study, we have determined the other sign-functions of TCRs used in brand development. We note that in most related research on clothing brand communication, the product itself is rarely used as a medium for connecting with audiences. In this study, we found that the sign-function of TCR can help brands establish relationships with the public, not only the target audiences, in a multi-path process to communication. Furthermore, a more stable social network relationship that is not used for commercial purposes is shown.

6.2. Practical Implication

TCRs have great significance and value for supporting a case of industrial process upgrades and are widely used in product development. This study points out another perspective of TCRs involving brand and audience relations, which provides a reference mode of communication for managers of brand enterprises. Governments can also use the model we found to help promote traditional cultural resources and expand cooperation channels to achieve a win-win situation between brand and culture.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

This study has some limitations. The research only has applicability to a narrow case-study of a clothing brand. Whether the results are suitable for generalizing to other brands and other situations remains an open question. In practice, specific management related decision-making considerations will affect the realization of a TCR's functions in a brand. Future research may explore the factors that affect TCR sign-function participation. As this is an exploratory study, we can only contrast with and verify the effect of TCR sign-functions on the mode of brand communication from the perspective of audiences.

References

1. Li, Z.L.; Shen, H.; Dong, W.M. How to Promote New Products—An Empirical Study on the Relationship among Marketing Strategies. *Mod. Ecol. Sci.* **2015**, *03*, 99–106.
2. Levitt, T. The Globalization of Markets. *Harv. Bus. Rev.* **1983**, *61*, 2–11.
3. Zou, S.M.; Cavusgil, S.T. Global Strategy: A Review and an Integrated Conceptual Framework. *Eur. J. Mark.* **1996**, *30*, 52–69. [CrossRef]
4. Deng, Q. Status and Development of Domestic Clothing Brands. Available online: https://www.ixueshu.com/document/e4859208ffe87b813131004f433870b9318947a18e7f9386.html (accessed on 2 January 2020).
5. Zhai, H.H. Research on the Status and Countermeasures of Chinese Clothing Brands. *Market. Weekly.* **2008**, *10*, 53–58.
6. Shen, L.; Du, Q.P.; Yu, J.Y.; Li, H. *Research on the Value of Chinese Clothing Brands: Continental Plate Panorama*; Tsinghua University Press: Beijing, China, 2010.

7.   Hancock, J. Fashion Brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara. *J. Pop. Cult.* **2006**, *39*, 905–907. [CrossRef]
8.   O'Cass, A.; Choy, E. Studying Chinese Generation Y Consumers' Involvement Infashion Clothing and Perceived Brand Status. *J. Prod. Brand Manag.* **2008**, *17*, 341–352. [CrossRef]
9.   Wang, Y. How to Build Clothing Marketing and brand Planning. *Chinese Nat. Expo.* **2017**, 54–55.
10.   Keller, K.L. Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity. *J. Market.* **1993**, *57*, 1–22. [CrossRef]
11.   Chen, X.L. Research on Brand Culture and Design Orientation of Local Independent Fashion Designers. Available online: https://kns.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFQ&dbname=CJFDLAST2019&filename=LLSC201901004&v=MjIzMDlPZG5GeXpsVXI3T0tTSFliYkc0SDlqTXJvOUZZSVI4ZVgxTHV4WVM3RGgxVDNxVHJXTTFGckNVUjdxZlo= (accessed on 2 January 2020). (In Chinese).
12.   Aaker, J.; Fournier, S.; Brasel, S.A. When Good Brand Do Bad. *J. Consum. Res.* **2004**, *31*, 1–16. [CrossRef]
13.   Li, C.D.; Shu, X.P.; Lu, H.L. *Cultural Standpoint of Design: A Study of the Discourse Right of Chinese Design*; Jiangsu Phoenix Fine Arts Publishing House: Nanjing, China, 2015.
14.   Luo, J. Research on the Sign Image of Costume Visited by Peng Liyuan——Based on the Perspective of Communication. Master's Thesis, Xiangtan University, Xiangtan, China, 2014.
15.   Bei, H.Y. A Study on the Impact of Chinese Brand Local Symbolic Value on Purchase Possibility. Master's Thesis, Shihezi University, Shihezi, China, 2018.
16.   Aaker, J.L. Dimensions of Brand Personality. *J. Mark. Res.* **1997**, *24*, 347–356. [CrossRef]
17.   Aaker, D.A. *Brand Equity and Advertising*; Biel, A., Ed.; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.: Hillsdale, NJ, USA, 1993; pp. 83–96.
18.   Carroll, A. Brand Communications in Fashion Categories Using Celebrity Endorsement. *J. Brand Manag.* **2009**, *17*, 146–158. [CrossRef]
19.   Yu, Y.M.; Zhu, J.D.; Xiao, J.S. *Brand Communication*, 2nd ed.; Shanghai Jiaotong University Press: Shanghai, China, 2016.
20.   Tu, J.C.; Liu, L.X.; Cui, Y. A Study on Consumers' Preferences for the Palace Museum's Cultural and Creative Products from the Perspective of Cultural Sustainability. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 3502. [CrossRef]
21.   Qin, Z.; Song, Y.; Tian, Y. The Impact of Product Design with Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) on Consumer Behavior Through Cultural Perceptions: Evidence from the Young Chinese Generation. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 426. [CrossRef]
22.   Zhou, F.Y.; Zhou, L.; Wang, Y.; Li, R. Analysis of Chinese Traditional Cultural Tradition Clothing Brands. Fashion. *Guide* **2018**, *7*, 33–40.
23.   *Editorial Board of Cihai, Cihai (An Unabridged, Comprehensive Dictionary)*, 6th ed.; Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House: Shanghai, China, 2009; p. 321.
24.   Yi, J.Q. *Fifteen Lectures on Cultural Philosophy*; Peking University Press: Beijing, China, 2004; p. 10.
25.   The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage-Questions and Answers. Available online: https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/01855-EN.pdf (accessed on 14 June 2019).
26.   Yin, Y.T. A Study on the Change of Chinese Contemporary Brand Culture Transmission—Based on the Perspective of Advertising Communication (1978–2015). Ph.D. Thesis, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China, 2017.
27.   David, T. *Economics and Cultural*, 1st ed.; Art and Collection Co., Ltd.: Taipei, Taiwan, 2003; pp. 33–39; ISBN 9789572832.
28.   The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Available online: https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention (accessed on 14 February 2020).
29.   Central Compilation and Translation Bureau. *Selected Works of Marx and Engels*, 2nd ed.; People's Publishing House: Beijing, China, 1995; Volume IV, p. 373.
30.   Chen, X.Z. Application of Bamboo Resources in Environmental Art Design. Master's Thesis, Southwest University, Chongqin, China, 2013.
31.   Shi, Y.P. From Cultural Resources to Cultural Capital: The Value Reconstruction and Re-creation of Traditional Culture. *J. Vis. Cult.* **2007**, *06*, 50–54.
32.   Eco, U. *A Theory of Semiotics*; Indiana University Press: Bloomington, Indiana, 1978; ISBN 9780253202178.
33.   Xu, Y.Y. Traditional Handicraft in Traditional Chinese Culture. *J. Jiangsu Soc. Sci.* **2011**, *05*, 223–228.

34. Lambert, L.; Chris, S. Making as Growth: Narratives in Materials and Process. *Des. Issues* **2017**, *33*, 104–109. [CrossRef]

35. Baudrillard, J. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, 1st ed.; Zhang, Y.B., Zhou, X., Ren, T.S., Eds.; Nanjing University Press: Nanjing, China, 2001; pp. 1–3.

36. Barthes, R. *Mythologies*; Guiguang Co., Ltd.: Taipei, Taiwan, 1998; ISBN 9789575519896.

37. Debord, G. *Society of the Spectacle*, 4th ed.; Zhang, X.M., Translator; Nanjing University Press: Nanjing, China, 2018; pp. 13–15.

38. Schroeder, J.; Borgerson, J.; Wu, Z.Y. A Brand Culture Approach to Brand Literacy: Consumer Co-Creation and Emerging Chinese Luxury Brands. Available online: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2511638 (accessed on 2 January 2020).

39. Li, G.D. *Brand Competitiveness*; People's Publishing House: Beijing, China, 2004.

40. Healy, J.C.; McDonagh, P. Consumer Roles in Brand Culture and Value Co-Creation in Virtual Communities. *J. Bus. Res.* **2013**, *66*, 1528–1540. [CrossRef]

41. Verdu-Jover, A.J.; Alos-Simo, L.; Gomez-Gras, J.M. Adaptive Culture and Product/Service Innovation Outcomes. *Eur. Manag. J.* **2017**, *36*, 1–11. [CrossRef]

42. Li, C.X.; Cui, Z.Y.; Chen, H.; Zhou, N. Brand Revitalization of Heritage Enterprises for Cultural Sustainability in the Digital Era: A Case Study in China. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 1769. [CrossRef]

43. Kumar, V.; Jaishankar, G.; Echambadi, R. Crossnational Diffusion Research: What Do We Know and How Certain Are We? *J. Prod. Innov. Manag.* **1998**, *15*, 255–268. [CrossRef]

44. Jaishankar, G. Converging Trends within the European Union: Insights from an Analysis of Diffusion Patterns. *J. Int. Mark.* **1998**, *6*, 32–48.

45. Oswald, L.R. Developing Brand Literacy among Affluent Chinese Consumers: A Semiotic Perspective. *Adv. Consum. Res.* **2010**, *37*, 413–419.

46. Kates, S.M. Researching Brands Ethnographically: An Interpretive Community Approach. In *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods in Marketing*; Russell, W.B., Ed.; Edward Elgar: Cheltenham, UK, 2006; pp. 94–103.

47. Schroeder, J.E. The Cultural Codes of Branding. *Mark. Theory* **2009**, *9*, 123–126. [CrossRef]

48. Bengtsson, A.; Fuat Fırat, A. Brand Literacy: Consumers' Sense-making of Brand Management. *Adv. Consum. Res.* **2006**, *33*, 375–380.

49. Chinomona, R. Brand Communication, Brand Image and Brand Trust as antecedents of Brand Loyalty in Gauteng Province of South Africa. *J. Econ. Manag. Stud.* **2016**, *7*, 124–139. [CrossRef]

50. Zehir, C.; Şahin, A.; Kitapci, H.; Özşahin, M. The Effects of Brand Communication and Service Quality in Building Brand Loyalty through Brand Trust; The Empirical Research on Global Brands. *Procedia Soc. Behav. Sci.* **2011**, *24*, 1218–1231. [CrossRef]

51. Li, T.T.; Li, Y.J. Communication Model of Agricultural Resources Brand under Different Trust Orientation. *Chin. J. Manag.* **2015**, *12*, 1519–1528.

52. Ye, N.Y.; Wang, Y. Research on Theoretical Model of Brand Communication Mode. *Chin. J. Ergon.* **2010**, *16*, 79–82.

53. Xu, N. Brand Communication Literature and Theory Development Research for Nearly 10 Years. Master's Thesis, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, China, 2015.

54. O'Cass, A.; Siahtiri, V. Are Young Adult Chinese Status and Fashion Clothing Brand Conscious? *J. Fash. Mark. Manag.* **2014**, *18*, 284–300. [CrossRef]

55. Goldsmith, R.E.; Flynn, L.R.; Clark, R.A. Materialistic, Brand Engaged and Status Consuming Consumers and Clothing Behaviors. *J. Fash. Mark. Manag.* **2012**, *16*, 102–119. [CrossRef]

56. Diamond, J.; Diamond, E. *Fashion Advertising and Promotion*; Fairchild Publications: New York, NY, USA, 1999.

57. Liu, H. Analysis of Clothing Brand Communication Methods. *Tianjin Text. Sci. Technol.* **2016**, 73–74.

58. Methanuntakul, K. High-Street Fashion Brand Communication amongst Female Adolescents. Ph.D. Thesis, Brunel University, London, UK, 2010.

59. Islam, M.M.; Khan, M.A. Branding of Clothing Fashion products: Fashion Brand Image Development by Marketing Communication Approach. *Res. J. Eng. Sci.* **2013**, *2*, 28–33.

60. Feng, Y.J. Analysis of Brand Media's New Media Marketing Strategy in the Internet Environment. *Fortune Today* **2019**, 47–48.

61. Eisenhardt, K.M. Building Theories from Case Study Research. *J. Acad. Manag. Rev.* **1989**, *14*, 532–550. [CrossRef]

62.   Yin, R.K. The Case Study Crisis: Some Answers. *Adm. Sci. Q.* **1981**, *26*, 58–65. [CrossRef]

63.   Corbin, J.; Strauss, A. *Basics of Qualitative Research*; Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2014.

64.   Martin, P.; Bateson, P. *Measuring Behaviour: An Introductory Guide*, 2nd ed.; Cambridge University Press: New York, NY, USA, 1993.

65.   Winter, D.G. *Manual for Scoring Motive Imagery in Running Text*, 3rd ed.; Unpublished Manuscript; Department of Psychology, University of Michigan: Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1991.

66.   Bagozzi, R. Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error. *J. Mark. Res.* **1981**, *18*, 375. [CrossRef]

67.   Guan, X.S.; Ruan, L.Y.; Wang, M.T.; Wang, L.T.; Li, P.L.; Gao, X.F.; Huang, L.C.; Huang, R.S.; Chen, S.C.; Chen, Y.Z.; et al. *Design Research Methods*; Quanhua Tech. In.: Taipei, Taiwan, 2007.

68.   Peter, M.N. *Doing Survey Reaearch: A Guide to Quantitative Methods*, 4th ed.; Routledge: New York, NY, USA, 2018; pp. 161–185.

69.   Yin, R.K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*; Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, 2013.

70.   Mercurio, K.R.; Forehand, M.R. An Interpretive Frame Model of Identity-Dependent Learning: The Moderating Role of Content-State Association. *J. Consum. Res.* **2011**, *38*, 555–577. [CrossRef]

71.   Abad-Segura, E.; Cortes-Garcia, F.J.; Belmonte-Urena, L.J. The Sustainable Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility: A Global Analysis and Future Trends. *Sustainability* **2019**, *11*, 5382. [CrossRef]

72.   Sheenagh, P. Cultural Research and Intangible Heritage. *J. Cult. Unb* **2009**, *220*, 227–247.

73.   Culture for Sustainable Development. Available online: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/the-future-we-want-the-role-of-culture/the-unesco-cultural-conventions/ (accessed on 25 February 2020).