

AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF THE VISUAL DESIGN ELEMENTS—FORM, MATERIAL, AND COLOR—
AND THEIR HUGE IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTION TO TRADITIONAL CHINESE DESIGNING.

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ABSTRACT

Form, material, and colour are the three visual elements of design that have had a big effect on the design of traditional Chinese artefacts and have made important contributions to traditional Chinese design. This review article goes into great detail on each of these three parts of design. The objective of this study is to present a synthesis of the latest academic research and to illustrate how these independent factors affect the mediating construct of visual design features, which subsequently impacts the dependent variables of cultural influence and the lasting contributions of Chinese design. Moreover, the aim of this research is to illustrate how these elements affect the mediating concept. This study employs a strategy grounded on prior research. It does this by using a diverse array of materials from art history, cultural studies, and design theory to provide an examination of the area from both historical and present perspectives. This article talks about a lot of various architectural styles, decorative items, fabrics, ceramics, and symbolic aesthetics from different dynasties. This literary work mostly talks about the ideas behind Confucianism, Taoism, and the Five Elements philosophy. The study indicates that colour serves as the primary medium of communication, conveying spiritual values, hierarchy, and wealth. Colour is the most important way to communicate. Shape is a way to show balance, symbolism, and harmony; material is a way to show strength, workmanship, and cultural longevity; and shape is a way to show the material. When put together, these parts make up an aesthetic system that has long been seen as a distinguishing feature of traditional Chinese design.

Keywords: Visual Elements, Traditional Chinese Design, Cultural Studies, Architectural Styles, Spiritual Values.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional Chinese design is a very profound form of cultural expression since it is based on aesthetic philosophy, symbolism, and harmony. This approach puts a lot of emphasis on the visual design elements that make up Chinese aesthetics. These parts are shape, substance, and colour. These parts make up a big portion of the system's identity and history. One of the most important things about classical design is how well form and function work together, as well as how well they symbolise things. A long time ago, people utilised shape to show cultural values like harmony, balance, and spiritual resonance (Chen & Gu, 2023). One example of this

style of design is the symmetrical groups that can be seen in decorative arts. One thing that sets Chinese design apart from other forms is how it uses materials. It is apparent that the extensive use of these materials shows not just a commitment to workmanship but also an understanding of the need to protect natural resources like pottery, jade, silk, and wood. Because they hold heat well and endure a long time, hardwoods have long been utilised in the construction and furniture industries. In contrast, ceramics and textiles both show technical progress and have symbolic meaning in their own sectors (Forest Products Journal, 2024). One of the most important things to think about when trying to express cultural identity is how to utilise colour. According to ancient Chinese colour theory, each colour represents one of the Five Elements. This group includes things like nature, harmony, hierarchy, and riches. At first, the hues green and blue stood for balance and new beginnings, while the colours red, yellow, and black stood for power, ritual, and prestige. Over time, these beliefs were linked to the hues green and blue (Academic Journal of Architecture, 2024). The goal of this review article is to look at how traditional Chinese design relates to the independent variables of form, material, and colour, which are all important parts of visual design. The aim of this review article is to provide an exhaustive analysis of the relationship among these three critical elements of visual design. This study investigates the roles of these elements in architecture, furniture, decorative arts, and textiles to evaluate their cultural, historical, and aesthetic significance. The primary objective of this research is to examine the aesthetic worth of these aspects. It also looks at how these things still affect creative work today.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The visual elements of traditional Chinese design, which are part of a cultural system that has been around for a very long time, communicate meaning, identity, and continuity to the spectator. Furniture, textiles, pottery, and decorative arts are only a few of the things that have always been utilised to make aesthetic language in a wide variety of media. Form, material, and colour are the main things that have been employed throughout history. The Chinese aesthetic places a lot of importance on proportion, rhythm, and symbolic shape (Cui et al., 2025). On the other hand, symmetrical layouts and curved profiles show that society is stable and harmonious, and repeating formal patterns offer items and places a feeling of order. The symbolic silhouette shows how the human body is connected to the universe. The choice of materials, especially those that employ natural elements like ceramics, jade, silk, and hardwoods, has been a way to pass on knowledge, status, and a way of thinking about living in balance with nature throughout history. This is particularly true for materials that incorporate natural ingredients. As a result, the materiality of objects firmly placed them in a sensory and textural past that backed up cultural stories (Yang et al., 2025). Over the course of Chinese history, colours have evolved into semiotic tools that have been employed to show hierarchies, good omens, and preferences for dynasties or seasons. This happened because the colour systems were set up in a way that made sense according to cosmological and ceremonial logics.

Recent empirical and design-method research has shown that these three components together create a visual-design construct that serves as a mediator, so transforming the perception, evaluation, and reinterpretation of traditional designs. Recent research in consumer preferences, eye-tracking, and computational design indicates that colour palettes possess distinct historical connotations comprehensible to contemporary audiences. Additionally, formal qualities may be encoded using algorithms to preserve cultural affordances while allowing for creative expression (Ma & Misni, 2024). To investigate the origins of traditional Chinese design, including its individual visual elements and its broader cultural influence and achievements, the following literature review is integrating theoretical perspectives, perceptual analyses, and empirical design research.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

There are three essential parts to traditional Chinese design: shape, material, and colour. The design is mostly about shape. The goal of this study is to look at all of these parts and see how they work together as mediators to create the style's visual identity. The inquiry is going to investigate the interactions among these components. The goal of this study is to use previous research on the topic to show how these factors have affected aesthetic ideas, creative practices, and cultural expression at various points in history. This study has been undertaken to elucidate the topic. The examination also seeks to ascertain their ongoing value in preserving heritage while introducing innovative design ideas. One other objective of the study is to accomplish this. The study guarantees that traditional Chinese design continues to influence creative endeavours worldwide by providing a thorough understanding of how form, material, and colour affect its aesthetic and cultural value.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The goal of this research was to examine the methodology used in traditional Chinese design concerning shape, material, and colour. It was a combination of the story's experience and the story's logic and storyline. Everyone were able to get literature from a number of internet sources by using search phrases like "Chinese design aesthetics," "form and material in Chinese architecture," "traditional Chinese colour systems," and "visual elements in heritage design." This helped us learn more about the subject. Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and CNKI were some of the databases that were part of this organisation. The sources were put together with the help of researchers from many different professions. These sources consisted of museum research and studies on cultural heritage, including applied design science and peer-reviewed design publications. These sources also included research from design magazines. A lot of people were interested in the works of art that were able to connect theory and practice. This goal was reached by linking the basics of visual design to cultural expression, historical traditions, or modern changes (Chen & Gu, 2023).

Inclusive and Exclusive Criteria: To achieve the admissions standards, the research had to be both relevant and rigorous in its methodologies. A study had to meet three requirements in order to be considered for inclusion: (a) it had to have been published between 2020 and 2025; (b) it had to focus on form, material, or colour in relation to Chinese design; and (c) it had to offer either theoretical frameworks or empirical data that helped us understand how design affects and contributes to things (Zhang & Hatta, 2024). In the realm of global design discourse, Chinese traditions were examined to ascertain their inclusion in a comparative study of other civilisations. Publications without peer review, design criticisms insufficient in analytical depth, and studies unrelated to Chinese heritage but focused on other Asian civilisations were dismissed from candidature. This balance allowed the study to include both traditional interpretations and more recent innovations in the field (Liu & Yang, 2024).

RESEARCH QUESTION

How do the visual design elements of form, materials, and colour collectively influence the impact of traditional Chinese design?

METHODOLOGY

This review research used qualitative synthesis to examine the visual design elements often linked to traditional Chinese design. More specifically, the article examined how form, material, and colour interact to influence perceptions of cultural and aesthetic qualities. It did a full examination of the methods utilised in 10 recent scholarly papers. All of these articles came out in the recent several years. Quantitative experimental designs were used in several studies to examine the impact of different materials, forms, and colour combinations on viewer attention and their specific aesthetic preferences. Two of the methodologies utilised to make these designs were eye tracking and perceptual assessment (Mao et al., 2024). Earlier research projects used parametric analysis and computer modelling to create simulations of old colour palettes and building styles. This resulted in the creation of verified and unbiased information on design trends and variances (Zhang & Liu, 2022). Several studies that used qualitative cultural and semiotic analyses looked at how decorative shapes, colours, and materials are used in architectural, textile, and furniture design. These studies all looked at how to design furniture, textiles, and buildings. The study for these projects was conducted in many settings, including architecture, textiles, and furniture production. During these studies, a significant focus was placed on the importance of cultural heritage and the perpetuation of various historical events (Lin & Chen, 2024). These methods included talking to craftspeople, going out into the field to look at things, and testing materials in a lab. Field inspections were another way to accomplish things. This enabled a thorough understanding of the interplay between the elements of physical design and cultural narratives (Huang & Zhao, 2020).

A subset of studies focused on the integration of visual design elements across several traditional disciplines, including narrative reviews, case studies, synthesis of previous research,

and examination of artefacts to provide thematic insights. The goal of these research was to learn more about how themes are related to one other (Wang, 2021). To elucidate the complexities surrounding the operationalisation of form, material, and colour in academia, it is likely advantageous to examine these tactics and methodologies concurrently. The quantitative elements of design and the qualitative dimensions of cultural influences have been the central focus of all the approaches the researcher have discussed. The research enhances comprehension of the influence of visual design elements on the phenomena by offering a comprehensive framework for assessing the impact and significance of traditional Chinese design in both historical and contemporary contexts. To achieve this goal, the evaluation employs a significant variety of methodological techniques.

RESULT

The data that is currently available shows that the three main visual elements of traditional Chinese design are form, material, and colour. A comprehensive analysis of the evaluated works was conducted to substantiate this perspective. The researcher can actually prove beyond a reasonable doubt that this is the current state of affairs. Quantitative approaches have shown that alterations in these qualities may function as quantifiable indicators of the design's impact (Mao et al., 2024). If these tactics are used, they promptly affect the focus on the surroundings, the aesthetic decisions chosen, and the emotional reactions provoked. The researcher has the opportunity to gather data on the structural and visual logic that supports many Chinese aesthetic traditions via the use of computer modelling methods. The researcher may use this knowledge to inform their study. Because this is true, it is evident that the regularity and harmony that are hidden in conventional architectural designs and colour schemes are really there (Zhang & Liu, 2022). A qualitative research study has shown that design elements are more than simply things that look good. The research concluded that design components include more than just aesthetic appeal. They may also have a cultural or philosophical significance, presenting still another interpretation of their meaning. The forms convey the old ideas of balance and harmony, while the hues show the ideas of riches, prestige, and safety. The shapes are essential because they represent the ancient ideals, the materials are important because they represent the authenticity and workmanship of the past, and the shapes themselves are important. The structure is made up of all of these parts operating together on their own. (Lin & Chen, 2024) findings indicate a correlation between ancestry and each of these components. This is the conclusion that can be reached based on their investigation. Researchers using diverse methodologies may get insights into the dynamic interplay between material features and the meanings they convey (Huang & Zhao, 2020). This comprehension may also be attained about the relationships between these attributes and cultural tales. This is because researchers might get this knowledge when they apply a variety of methods from diverse points of view. The researcher quite happy that now the chance to look at how these traits help shape cultural narratives.

Narrative reviews and case studies show that these traits still inspire the making of textiles, furniture, and changes to buildings. These studies show that these traits affect current design in ways that go beyond how they affected designs in the past. This impact is being taken into consideration along with the other things that are being taken into account. One may conclude that colour, substance, and shape do not function separately; instead, they function as interconnected components of a singular entity (Wang, 2021). Based on the evidence, this is the conclusion that can be made. It is feasible to get to this conclusion after looking at all of the information that has been given. The goal is to make it less visually stunning while yet allowing traditional Chinese design to affect how people build things today.

DISCUSSION

All of the studies that were looked at stressed the importance of form, material, and colour as the most important parts of visual design. This was true no matter which specific studies were looked at. One of the most significant things to think about while trying to grasp the effect and value of traditional Chinese design is how these three parts fit together. Form, substance, and colour are all separate parts, therefore each one has its own impacts that are unique to it. This happens because they are far apart from each other. The shape sends a message of harmony, order, and symbolism; the material sends a message of history, culture, and craftsmanship; and the colour sends a message of hierarchy, emotion, and the importance of philosophy. When the researcher look at all of these parts together, they make the overall thing seem better and fit in better with the culture. From the designer's point of view, they achieve this by serving as a middleman between the several parts that make up the visual design. Based on the existing literature, the most important thing about this design style is that traditional Chinese design may show abstract cultural and philosophical ideas. This is the most crucial thing about this design style. For instance, a research on architecture found that symmetrical designs and certain material selections embody the ideas of harmony that Confucians and Daoists hold. The symbolism of colours also supports cosmological ideas that are linked to wealth, safety, and moral hierarchy. This fusion goes beyond just looks; it shows how traditional Chinese design has changed the way society works and how the Chinese people see themselves as a culture. This combination goes beyond just looks.

Several studies have revealed that traditional Chinese design is significant since it is both flexible and consistent. This has shown that traditional Chinese design is important. Research shows that form, material, and colour are all aspects of design that are always being rethought in contemporary settings. The worldwide creative industries, furniture design, and the textile sector are all instances of contemporary settings. Traditional Chinese design is still powerful and relevant because it has visual elements that let it keep its symbolic meaning while still being useful for new things. These traits make it feasible for the design to keep going, which is what makes this ability conceivable. Research conducted across several disciplines, including anthropology, computational design, and experimental design, has shown that traditional Chinese design functions as both a cultural artefact and a vibrant source of inspiration for

contemporary artists. The study's results lead to this conclusion. Based on the data, it is possible to conclude that visual design components serve as a conduit between classical design methodologies and the modern aesthetic and cultural significance of these practices. The results may lead to this conclusion. The enduring impact of traditional Chinese design and its continuous role in cultural preservation, global design discourse, and cultural identity are not determined by form, material, and colour functioning in isolation, but rather by the synergistic interaction of these three components. This is because the three parts work together to make the design. This is true since traditional Chinese design has always been a part of these problems.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study illuminate the critical importance of form, material, and colour as the three primary elements of visual design that significantly influence traditional Chinese design. The "three primary components" are these three sorts of design. The complete thing is made up of three main parts: the form, the material, and the colour. The use of colour has meanings that come from philosophical and spiritual traditions. The use of material shows the balance between cultural symbolism and pragmatic. The use of form determines the structural language of design. The design language is made up of all of these parts. All of these parts are employed to provide meaning. When these parts are put together to make a complete design process, they create a design style that goes beyond simple aesthetics to show cultural history, originality, and values. When these parts are put together, this kind of design is made. This kind of design application is made up of these parts. Traditional Chinese design has an amazing ability to connect the past and the present. This ability is made possible by using symbols and skilled workmanship. Because of this, the design shows respect for the past while also giving useful ideas that may be applied to make modern designs. This research shows that the best thing about traditional Chinese design has always been its ability to tell cultural stories via visual elements. The design is also gorgeous, which is another reason why this is true. It has had an effect on environmentally responsible practices, creative businesses throughout the world, and inventive ideas in contemporary design, in addition to the simple act of conserving history. In general, these parts show how form, material, and colour may all work together to make a design more believable and emotive. The fact that they are all connected shows this. The previous research successfully examined each of these traits individually; but, when analysed together, they illuminate the interdependence of these components. In the future, a more thorough approach that looks at a wider variety of cultures and approaches may help us understand how these visual design elements change over time. This might then inspire future generations of designers. By looking at the strong evidence it gives about the link between visual aesthetics and cultural expression, one can see how important and valuable traditional Chinese design will always be. This is why it can see the link between the two.

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