Scientific and Social Research, 2026, Volume 8, Issue 10
https://bbwpublisher.com/journal/SSR
Online ISSN: 2981-9946
Print ISSN: 2661-4332

Regional Cultural Translation and Visual Identity Construction in Geographical Indication Agricultural Product Packaging Design: A Case Study of Huanghua Winter Jujube

Feng Lv, Xinyi Li*

School of Design and Art, Shenyang Aerospace University, Shenyang 110136, Liaoning, China

***Corresponding author:** Xinyi Li, 3076256197@qq.com

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Abstract: Geographical indication agricultural products carry regional culture and historical memory. However, current packaging designs often use regional symbols superficially, resulting in homogeneous visual expressions. This study takes Huanghua Winter Jujube as a case study to explore regional cultural translation in agricultural product packaging design. Through literature analysis, cultural resource extraction, and design practice, a framework of resource identification, meaning interpretation, visual translation, and identity construction is proposed. Four types of regional resources, including product characteristics, ecological environment, historical culture, and geographical identity, are transformed into visual elements such as graphics, colors, and typography. The results show that regional cultural translation can enhance the cultural expression and visual identity of geographical indication agricultural products, providing references for packaging design innovation.

Keywords: Regional culture; Cultural translation; Packaging design; Visual identity construction; Huanghua Winter Jujube

Online publication: November 25, 2026

1. Introduction

Geographical indication agricultural products are closely associated with specific regional environments, production methods, and cultural traditions. Their value is reflected not only in product quality but also in cultural identity formed through regional history, ecological conditions, and collective memory. As an important interface between products and consumers, packaging design performs basic functions of protection, identification, and information transmission while influencing consumers' perception of product origin, cultural attributes, and brand value. Norman proposed that products satisfy not only functional

requirements but also emotional experiences and cultural meanings, suggesting that design should focus on the meaning construction behind products [1].

Current agricultural product packaging frequently represents regional culture through traditional patterns, local architecture, natural landscapes, and product images. Although these approaches can quickly establish regional associations, insufficient interpretation of cultural meanings may result in symbolic accumulation and difficulty in forming differentiated visual identities. Recent studies have emphasized the importance of integrating regional cultural narratives into geographical indication product packaging design [2]. Previous studies indicate that regional culture needs to undergo extraction, translation, and reconstruction before becoming an effective visual language for contemporary communication [3].

2. Theoretical foundation and design framework of regional cultural translation

Cultural translation is not a direct reproduction of traditional cultural symbols but a process of analyzing, interpreting, and reconstructing cultural meanings through design language. Krippendorff argued that the essence of design lies in meaning construction rather than merely creating physical forms [4]. Therefore, regional cultural resources should be analyzed from perspectives of ecological environment, historical memory, production practices, and social values before being transformed into understandable visual symbols. This approach helps reveal the cultural meanings behind regional elements and provides a basis for subsequent visual transformation and packaging design.

Based on cultural translation theory, this study establishes a four-stage design framework: (1) cultural resource identification, which analyzes product characteristics, ecological environment, historical culture, and geographical information; (2) cultural meaning interpretation, which explores symbolic values behind regional resources; (3) visual language translation, which transforms cultural meanings into typography, graphics, colors, and layout structures; and (4) packaging identity construction, which integrates visual elements into a unified brand identity system.

3. Regional cultural resource translation of Huanghua Winter Jujube

3.1. Translation of product characteristics

Huanghua Winter Jujube, as a geographical indication product, possesses distinctive morphological, color, and quality characteristics that provide important resources for packaging design. Regional cultural elements can provide valuable resources for agricultural product packaging innovation and visual expression [5]. Traditional packaging often uses realistic fruit images to enhance recognition; however, such approaches mainly emphasize product attributes and cannot fully convey regional cultural value. This study extracts the rounded and abundant form of winter jujube and transforms it through simplification and symbolization into visual elements representing vitality, harvest, and natural characteristics.

3.2. Translation of ecological environment

Located near the Bohai Sea, the production area of Huanghua Winter Jujube possesses unique ecological characteristics formed by the interaction between the coastal environment and agricultural production. Instead of directly presenting marine landscapes, the design extracts wave forms and flowing lines to express the relationship between products and geographical environments through abstraction.

3.3. Translation of historical culture

Ancient jujube tree culture represents local agricultural history and collective memory. Through simplified line illustrations, the design reconstructs ancient tree forms and transforms historical elements into recognizable visual symbols, expressing cultural meanings of inheritance, continuity, and vitality.

3.4. Construction of geographical identity

Geographical identity distinguishes geographical indication products from ordinary agricultural commodities. The design adopts a bilingual information system: the Chinese name “Huanghua Winter Jujube” strengthens regional authenticity, while English information enhances international communication. Integrating origin information into the visual system transforms geographical information from functional text into an essential component of brand identity (**Figure 1**).

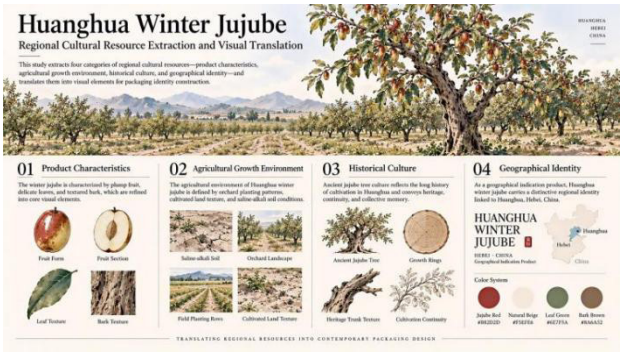

Figure 1. Visual element extraction and translation process of Huanghua Winter Jujube packaging design

4. Packaging visual identity construction practice

4.1. Design process based on regional cultural translation

Based on the regional cultural translation framework, this study conducts packaging design practice for Huanghua Winter Jujube. Different from directly applying regional symbols, the design process focuses on transforming regional cultural resources into systematic visual language. According to the design methodology of resource extraction, meaning interpretation, visual translation, and identity construction, the study establishes a connection between regional culture and packaging expression [6]. The visual translation process is shown in **Figure 1**.

The first stage focuses on the extraction and interpretation of regional cultural resources. Based on the characteristics of Huanghua Winter Jujube, four types of resources are identified: product characteristics, agricultural environment, historical culture, and geographical identity. Product characteristics, including fruit morphology, branch structure, leaf texture, and natural color, provide visual references for product recognition and subsequent graphic reconstruction. The agricultural environment is represented through orchard landscapes, cultivated land textures, and planting scenes, highlighting the relationship between the product and its growing conditions. Meanwhile, ancient jujube tree culture reflects the continuity of local cultivation and conveys meanings of inheritance and collective memory, strengthening the cultural narrative of regional packaging design.

During the visual translation stage, extracted cultural resources are transformed through abstraction

and reconstruction rather than direct reproduction. This process enables cultural elements to be converted into contemporary packaging language [7]. Fruit forms and plant structures are simplified into recognizable graphic symbols, while agricultural landscapes are transformed into visual narratives reflecting regional characteristics. Typography and information organization further integrate geographical information, product attributes, and cultural narratives into a coherent visual system.

4.2. Packaging visual identity construction and application

The final packaging design integrates the translated visual elements into a unified identity system. A systematic visual identity helps strengthen the recognition and cultural communication of agricultural product brands [8]. The main visual composition highlights the Huanghua Winter Jujube name and product imagery, while supporting elements such as orchard landscapes, plant textures, and regional symbols provide contextual information. The color system adopts jujube red, natural beige, and leaf green, corresponding to product characteristics, natural quality, and agricultural environment, respectively. Through the combination of typography, illustration, color, and layout structure, the packaging establishes a recognizable visual identity while maintaining regional cultural characteristics.

The design practice demonstrates that packaging design can extend beyond product identification to serve as a medium for regional cultural communication. By integrating product attributes, agricultural environment, historical memory, and geographical identity, Huanghua Winter Jujube packaging transforms local resources into contemporary visual expressions. This approach supports the visual identity construction of geographical indication agricultural products and expands packaging from commercial presentation to cultural communication. The final packaging design is presented in **Figure 2**.



Figure 2. Final packaging identity construction of Huanghua Winter Jujube

5. Discussion

Traditional geographical indication product packaging often relies on regional symbols for recognition, but excessive symbolic application may result in superficial cultural expression. The cultural translation approach proposed in this study emphasizes understanding cultural meanings before visual reconstruction, transforming regional elements from decorative symbols into meaningful design languages. Hall suggested that cultural meanings are communicated through symbolic systems [9]. Therefore, regional culture requires

visual encoding to transform local experiences into publicly recognizable visual expressions. Geographical indication products also need to balance local identity and international communication. Bilingual information design and simplified visual elements can improve cross-cultural communication effectiveness [10]. In this context, the value of regional cultural translation lies in establishing a systematic relationship between regional resources and visual communication. Regional culture should not be regarded as a collection of isolated symbols, but as an integrated system containing natural environment, production practices, historical memory, and local identity. In the case of Huanghua Winter Jujube, the design process begins with regional resource extraction, followed by cultural interpretation and visual transformation, avoiding the direct accumulation of traditional images and enabling cultural information to be conveyed through contemporary design language.

The design practice demonstrates that geographical indication agricultural products require a balance between local authenticity and modern communication. The product characteristics of winter jujube, including fruit form, color, and natural texture, provide the foundation for product recognition, while orchard landscapes, cultivated land, and regional ecological conditions strengthen the connection between the product and its geographical origin. Meanwhile, ancient jujube tree culture conveys historical continuity, inheritance, and collective memory. Through the integration of typography, graphic symbols, color systems, and information structures, these regional resources are transformed into a unified packaging identity rather than isolated decorative elements. Excessive emphasis on traditional symbols may limit visual innovation, whereas excessive simplification may weaken regional characteristics. Therefore, cultural translation provides an effective pathway for maintaining cultural uniqueness while adapting to contemporary aesthetic standards and broader communication contexts. The Huanghua Winter Jujube packaging design demonstrates how agricultural products can move beyond functional identification and become carriers of regional narratives, expanding the role of packaging design from visual decoration toward cultural communication and identity construction.

6. Conclusion

Taking Huanghua Winter Jujube as a case study, this research explores the application of regional cultural translation in geographical indication agricultural product packaging design. A framework of cultural resource identification, meaning interpretation, visual translation, and identity construction is proposed. Four categories of resources, including product characteristics, ecological environment, historical culture, and geographical identity, are transformed into typography, graphics, color systems, and information structures. The design practice demonstrates that regional culture should not be treated merely as decorative elements but should be systematically analyzed and reconstructed to form valuable visual identities. This study provides practical references for cultural expression, brand development, and packaging innovation of geographical indication agricultural products.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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