

**INTEGRATING MOGAO MURALS INTO SOUVENIR DESIGN TO
PRESERVE THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF DUNHUANG, CHINA**

By

ZHU QIUXIA

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
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Philosophy**

September 2024

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in
fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2024

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Cultural product design has gained increasing attention as cultural tourism grows, with souvenirs emerging as vital tools for preserving cultural identity. However, the role of design in this preservation remains underexplored. This research addresses this gap by proposing an interdisciplinary framework, exploring how elements of the Mogao Murals can be integrated into souvenir design to support Dunhuang's heritage preservation and cultural sustainability.

This research uses a qualitative case study to examine how three design firms collaborate with the Cultural Heritage Protection Department to create meaningful and viable souvenirs. Data from observations, document reviews, and semi-structured interviews with nine designers and two cultural experts provide insights into designers' roles, and thematic analysis is used to analyze the data.

Findings show that designers' focus on ethics, consumer preferences, and adaptive challenges is crucial. Innovation, collaboration, and continuous learning are necessary for sustainable souvenirs. Aesthetic attributes, authenticity, and the cultural significance of Mogao Murals are key in the design process. Souvenirs are cultural preservation tools to balance commercial viability with cultural integrity, supported by internal cooperation and expert consultation.

In conclusion, this research introduces the Framework of Souvenir Design for Cultural Heritage Preservation (FSDCHP), addressing a gap in the literature by examining how souvenir design supports cultural preservation. Positioned at the intersection of design and cultural preservation, it offers insights for design firms, institutions, and policymakers on integrating cultural elements into souvenirs while balancing commercial viability with respect for heritage. It also empowers communities by demonstrating how thoughtfully designed souvenirs can preserve cultural heritage, stimulate economic growth, and raise cultural awareness.

Keyword: Culture Feature, Heritage Preservation, Mogao Murals, Product Design, Souvenir.

SDG: GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENGINTEGRASIAN LUKISAN DINDING MOGAO KE DALAM REKA
BENTUK CENDERAMATA UNTUK MEMELIHARA WARISAN BUDAYA
DUNHUANG, CHINA**

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Reka bentuk produk kebudayaan semakin mendapat perhatian seiring dengan pertumbuhan pelancongan kebudayaan, di mana cenderamata muncul sebagai alat penting untuk memelihara identiti budaya. Walau bagaimanapun, peranan reka bentuk dalam pemeliharaan ini masih kurang diterokai. Penyelidikan ini menangani jurang tersebut dengan mencadangkan rangka kerja antara disiplin, meneroka bagaimana elemen-elemen Lukisan Dinding Mogao boleh diintegrasikan ke dalam reka bentuk cenderamata bagi menyokong pemeliharaan warisan Dunhuang dan kelestarian budaya.

Penyelidikan ini menggunakan kajian kes kualitatif untuk mengkaji bagaimana tiga firma reka bentuk bekerjasama dengan Jabatan Perlindungan Warisan Kebudayaan untuk mencipta cenderamata yang bermakna dan berdaya maju. Data diperoleh melalui pemerhatian, kajian dokumen, dan temu bual separa berstruktur dengan sembilan pereka dan dua pakar kebudayaan, yang

memberikan wawasan tentang peranan pereka. Analisis tematik digunakan untuk menganalisis data.

Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa fokus pereka terhadap etika, keutamaan pengguna, dan cabaran adaptif adalah sangat penting. Inovasi, kerjasama, dan pembelajaran berterusan diperlukan untuk memastikan cenderamata kekal lestari. Ciri-ciri estetik, keaslian, dan kepentingan budaya Lukisan Dinding Mogao merupakan faktor utama dalam proses reka bentuk. Cenderamata berfungsi sebagai alat pemeliharaan budaya yang menyeimbangkan antara kebolehpasaran komersial dengan integriti budaya, disokong oleh kerjasama dalaman dan konsultasi pakar.

Sebagai kesimpulan, penyelidikan ini memperkenalkan Rangka Kerja Reka Bentuk Cenderamata untuk Pemeliharaan Warisan Budaya (FSDCHP), yang menangani jurang dalam literatur dengan mengkaji bagaimana reka bentuk cenderamata menyokong pemeliharaan budaya. Terletak di persimpangan antara reka bentuk dan pemeliharaan budaya, kajian ini menawarkan pandangan kepada firma reka bentuk, institusi, dan pembuat dasar tentang cara mengintegrasikan elemen budaya ke dalam cenderamata sambil menyeimbangkan kebolehpasaran komersial dengan menghormati warisan. Ia juga memperkasakan komuniti dengan menunjukkan bagaimana cenderamata yang direka dengan teliti boleh memelihara warisan budaya, merangsang pertumbuhan ekonomi, dan meningkatkan kesedaran budaya.

Kata kunci: Cenderamata, Ciri Budaya, Lukisan Dinding Mogao, Pemeliharaan Warisan, Reka Bentuk Produk.

SDG: MATLAMAT 9: Industri, Inovasi dan Infrastruktur, MATLAMAT 12: Penggunaan dan Pengeluaran Yang Bertanggungjawab

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFSDCHP	Conceptual Framework of Souvenir Design for Cultural Heritage Preservation
CPDM	Cultural Product Design Model
FCPH	Framework of Cultural Preservation and Heritage
FSDCHP	Framework of Souvenir Design for Cultural Heritage Preservation
SDGs	The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

As cultural tourism expands, globalization and localization become a contradictory pair of existences (e.g. R. Lin et al., 2014; Salazar, 2005), offering a complex yet intriguing backdrop against which various tourism activities unfold. Tourism is critical to the growth of destinations worldwide, and in many circumstances, culture is the most excellent resource for tourism growth. Donovan Rypkema confirms the link between heritage conservation and local economic development. He argues that the particular attraction of cultural tourism benefits local communities, developing them relatively rapidly and constantly enriching them in a multi-faceted way (Rypkema, 2008). The history of past events is frequently employed to perform a variety of critical present roles, one of which is to mold the local identity of society's cultures to sustain specific national institutions (Ashworth, 2013). People throughout the world have adopted this strategic use of the past.

Shopping is a common and critical tourism activity (Kim & Littrell, 2001; Snepenger et al., 2003; Lehto et al., 2014; Y.-H. Lin & Lin, 2006; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2007; Tsang et al., 2011; Timothy, 2014; Jin et al., 2017), and souvenirs are one such activity that stands out both in their ubiquity and impact. This seemingly mundane act is a critical touchpoint in the tourism experience,

gaining scholarly attention for its multifaceted roles and implications. Souvenirs are more than mere mementos; they are carriers of cultural significance, which are seen to help promote cultural tourism while helping to enhance the nation's image (Woodward, 2014), reinforcement of identity (Jerlei, 2021; Indahyani et al., 2018; Trabskaia et al., 2019) and regional development (Sandra et al., 2018; Owusu-Mintah, 2020). Souvenirs can reveal complex relationships beyond their everyday utility and aesthetic appeal. These items accumulate layers of meaning through the "performance" of tourism, serving as tangible representations of the traveler's experience. While revisiting engagements with a tourist site are often mediated through images and representations, souvenirs extend this relationship, encapsulating aspects of the post-visit experience. They translate the essence of the visited place into a format that can be taken home, relived, and shared.

If analyzed from an exclusive design perspective biased toward objects' aesthetic dimensions, souvenirs are mass-produced, cheap, fake, nostalgic, and trivial. Woodward (2014) argues that relationships beyond everyday use and aesthetic qualities can be revealed by examining the more complicated and powerful significance that souvenirs accumulate through tourism performance. Before the experience, the core of the tourism transaction was the representation of the site through images. Still, part of the post-visit experience can be achieved through the expression of the place in the format of souvenirs (Woodward, 2014).

1.1.1 Dunhuang Mogao Caves

The Mogao Caves, commonly known as the Thousand Buddha Caves, are a representative group within the Dunhuang caves. The Caves are built on the eastern cliff face of the Mingsha Mountains, twenty-five kilometers southeast of Dunhuang City in Gansu Province). After carving out the caves, the ancients applied mud and whitewash to the walls to create a smooth surface for painting and constructed clay sculptures with wooden frameworks. Murals were more straightforward in depicting details in large quantities than stone carvings, thus allowing a more extensive, rich, and detailed depiction of Buddhist scriptures and the era's customs. This unique feature and advantage of the Mogao Caves sets them apart from other Caves. The Mogao Caves have undergone eleven dynastic eras and fourteen periods spanning a millennium. The cave complex stretches over 1,600 meters, divided into northern and southern areas, with 492 numbered caves containing murals and sculptures, covering more than 45,000 square meters of wall paintings. The caves are part of Buddhist cultural heritage and combine architecture, sculptures, and murals. The Mogao Caves represent a microcosm of the development and evolution of Chinese cave art and hold a revered historical status in cave art.

For example, Figure 1.1 is the Deer King Jataka painting from Mogao Cave 257, it illustrates a vivid narrative, where the Deer King sacrifices his life to save others, symbolizing compassion and selflessness. The detailed depiction of animals, landscapes, and the central figure of the Deer King reflects the intricate artistic and symbolic richness of Dunhuang's Buddhist heritage,

showcasing the influence of religious storytelling in the Mogao Caves' murals. This painting exemplifies the cultural and spiritual depth that defines Dunhuang's art.



Figure 1.1: Deer King Jataka painting, Mogao Cave 257, China
(Source from <https://www.e-dunhuang.com/cave/10.0001/0001.0001.0257>)

These cultural relics not only reflect the high level of ancient Chinese art and the historical development of painting and sculpture but also provide, to varying degrees, tangible information on various aspects of ancient Chinese society, particularly in Hexi and Dunhuang. These aspects include religious beliefs, ideological concepts, political struggles, ethnic relations, international interactions, social life, customs, production techniques, architecture, clothing, weaponry, and canonical artifacts. They are of immense artistic, historical, and archaeological value and constitute the world's largest, most continuously built, and richest collection of Buddhist Caves. Take, for example, Cave 112 in the Mogao Grottoes. The interior walls of the cave usually display vivid narrative scenes, while the statues in the central niche represent sacred Buddhist deities.

The geometric patterns on the ceiling further demonstrate the level of craftsmanship at the time, combining religious devotion with artistic expression (Figure 1.2). In 1961, the Mogao Caves were designated as a critical national cultural heritage protection unit. In December 1987, UNESCO's 11th General Conference approved the inclusion of the Dunhuang Mogao Caves in the "World Cultural Heritage List" (Y. Li, n.d.).



Figure 1.2: Mogao Cave 112, Dunhuang, China
(Source from <https://www.e-dunhuang.com/cave/10.0001/0001.0001.0112>)

1.1.2 Practical Background

With the recent development of local autonomy and the acknowledgment of culture and tourism industries as the driving force of the fourth industrial revolution, the relevance of research on rejuvenating local culture and tourism industries has been highlighted even more (Hwang, 2020). Since countries

seek to encourage return visits, the tourism industry may need to reevaluate souvenir production to meet the needs of more sophisticated and culturally informed visitors. On the one hand, this may lead to additional opportunities for souvenir design and development sectors to develop product ranges to accommodate more demanding consumers and further promote the cultural significance of the heritage. Meanwhile, it presents challenges for product design and development. Certain cultures may lose their original meaning to residents, and “cultural involution” may also happen. Hence, rediscovering and reclaiming locals confidence in the heritage increased tourists interest (McKean, 2012). A well-designed and managed tourism product may contribute to preserving natural and cultural heritage resources, empowering host communities, offering trading possibilities, and promoting intercultural peace and understanding.

1.1.2.1 The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (General Assembly, 2015), particularly Goals 8, 11, and 12, highlight sustainable economic growth, cultural heritage preservation, and sustainable consumption. Goal 8 is to promote sustainable development and inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and 8.9 suggests the need for policies to promote sustainable tourism, job creation, and local cultures and products by 2030. The design of culturally rich souvenirs to stimulate the economy of Dunhuang, China, contributes to the broader goal of sustainable economic development. In addition, Goal 11 calls for inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements, with 11.4 suggesting that particular attention should

be paid to protecting the world's cultural and natural heritage. By preserving Dunhuang's Mogao Cave murals through their integration into souvenir design, we can protect these valuable cultural treasures and enhance Dunhuang's cultural resilience and sustainability as a historical site.

Finally, Goal 12 calls for sustainable consumption and production patterns as outlined in Goal 12. b, and the development of sustainable tourism monitoring tools emphasizes the importance of research and development methods that not only promote local cultures and products but also do so in a way that is sustainable and beneficial to all stakeholders. Focusing on the design of souvenirs utilizing the cultural heritage of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang contributes to the understanding of sustainable cultural product development. It echoes the global call for responsible and sustainable tourism practices.

In essence, this study bridges the gap between cultural heritage preservation and sustainable development, echoing the global objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It aims to provide a framework on how cultural heritage can be utilized to achieve sustainable economic growth, cultural heritage resilience, and responsible consumption of cultural products in the context of global tourism.

1.1.2.2 Chinese Government's Policy-Orientation

In 2021, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China issued a notice on "Several Measures to Further Promote the Development of Cultural and

Creative Products in Cultural Relics Institutions,” claiming that relying on the cultural resources in the collections of cultural relics institutions to strengthen the development of cultural and creative products is conducive to promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese outstanding traditional culture, cultivating and promoting socialist core values, and building a solid socialist cultural state (Ministry of culture and tourism of china, 2021).

In another notice on promoting the creative enhancement of tourism commodities, China’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism proposed that tourism commodities are an essential part of tourism, are an effective way to extend the tourism industry chain, expand tourism consumption, and promote the quality and efficiency of tourism. In recent years, the level of development of China’s tourism commodities has continued to improve. The drive’s comprehensive role has become increasingly apparent, playing an essential role in enriching the supply of the tourism market and boosting domestic demand to expand consumption in other aspects.

However, the development practice also needs more policy, market weakness, product homogeneity, lack of talent, and other issues. To promote the integrated development of culture and tourism and enhance the level of tourism commodity development, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China proposed the following tourism commodity creative enhancement should firstly be culture-oriented, to explore the cultural connotation and enhance the value of commodities; secondly, market-oriented, to cultivate market players and

enrich product categories; thirdly, adhere to a brand leading, broaden marketing channels and guide market demand; fourthly, adhere to demonstration-driven; Lastly, comply with the model of demonstration, sum up the experience model, strengthen policy support; Finally, should focus on the foundation first, consolidate theoretical research, enhance the construction of talent (Ministry of culture and tourism of China, 2021).

1.1.2.3 Cultural Confidence Promotion

The Department of Planning of China's "14th Five-Year" tourism development plan proposed to enhance cultural confidence in the sense of Chinese culture in tourism (Department of Planning, National Development and Reform Commission, 2022), which is a high degree of identification and firm confidence in a country and a nation in its cultural values, cultural concepts, cultural traditions, and the path of cultural development. It is the fundamental support of China's national spirit and philosophy of governance and development path (J. Wang, 2021). The increasing popularity of the "Chinese fashion trend" is an outward expression of China's strategy to promote cultural confidence and strengthen the country, driving demand from young consumers for brands and products that incorporate traditional Chinese culture and style (Hu, 2021).

The Chinese government proposes that strengthening cultural self-confidence is both a historic achievement and experience of the 40 years of reform and opening and will also provide crucial historical support for the comprehensive

deepening of reform and opening up in the new era (P. Feng, 2018). As tourist goods, souvenirs represent local culture because they integrate different cultural elements. Therefore, souvenir quality improvement can meet consumers' needs for cultural confidence.

1.1.2.4 Consumption Upgrading

With the steady increase in per capita disposable income, basic consumption has shifted to developmental and enjoyment-oriented consumption, and consumers' cultural needs have become increasingly intense. In addition, the proportion of experiential demands behind commodity consumption has increased significantly, and the culture and value identity embedded in products have become essential factors influencing consumer decisions (Tsinghua University Institute of Economic Research & Tmall, 2019). Crossover derivatives from brands and museums reached 72% market share in China's cultural and creative products in 2019 (Tan, 2019). The significance of authenticity in the souvenir-buying process claims that tourists prefer to buy souvenirs that represent the location rather than more generic objects (Wilkins, 2011).

1.1.2.5 Self-Transformation of the Museums

In 2017, the China Dunhuang Academy generated over RMB 17 million in sales with its unique cultural and creative products (Z. Feng, 2018). Dunhuang Tourism received 6,584,400 visitors in 2020 and 13,373,300 in 2019 (J. Zhang, 2022). Data from the official website of Dunhuang Tourism shows that the

proportion of post-80s and 90s visitors is increasing yearly. Dunhuang culture continues to attract more young people to visit year after year. However, traditional museums' single collection and display functions are increasingly unable to meet the cultural needs of the public, and museums are accelerating the development and sale of cultural and creative products to meet sustainability requirements (Tsinghua University Institute of Economic Research & Tmall, 2019). The Dunhuang Research Institute has launched several creative products that have helped more young people understand Dunhuang culture. Zhao Shengliang¹ said that creative products can promote Dunhuang and contribute to the preservation, research, and promotion of the Dunhuang Caves (Y. Wang, 2020).

Although the consumption of cultural products has become a trend, and both the United Nations and the Chinese government have proposed the use of local cultural resources for economic and cultural development, however, the specification of how product development designers, who are important players in this process, can more effectively utilize and protect cultural resources has yet to be formulated. This research examines the relationship between souvenirs and cultural heritage from a design perspective and proposes a framework to improve souvenir design. More design research will shed new light on local tourism development and cultural heritage sustainability.

¹ Acted as the Communist Party Secretary of Dunhuang Academy.

1.1.3 Theoretical Background

Souvenirs have been around for thousands of years and will remain a significant part of the tourism experience as long as people travel (Swanson & Timothy, 2012). Souvenirs have a diversified discussion of literature, and it is plausible to assume that all of the central humanities and social science fields have covered the subject at some point (Richards, 2013). A feature of souvenir production is the revival of historical crafts, particularly around notable heritage excavations. Souvenirs are collections of items and experiences that remind tourists of previous visits to areas of interest. Ultimately, Souvenirs help travelers create their lives, thoughts, and perceptions of their destinations (Michael HITCHCOCK, 2001).

1.1.3.1 Definition and Classification of Souvenirs

The topic of tourist souvenirs has been studied from a variety of perspectives. Because one of the most crucial decisions for vendors and retailers is product assortment, various empirical studies have advocated classifying souvenirs sold at tourist destinations (Kahn, 1999). Gordon (1986) outlined five categories for souvenirs: pictorial images, seashells or rocks from the non-urban environment, mementos gathered from nature, symbolic functional objects, markers that represent a particular location or moment in history, and local items created from native materials to particular site (Milman, 2015).

Decrop & Masset (2014) further assessed the symbols and meanings of tourist souvenirs and their purposes in modern consumption. They identified four classes of symbolic souvenirs: stereotypes of destinations, tourist trinkets, picked-up objects, and paper mementos. Regarding meaning and identity construction, the typology is influenced by four main functions that souvenirs might serve (Milman, 2015).

1.1.3.2 Tourists' Experience and Purchasing

Souvenir purchasing is typical behavior of tourists, which has been another critical topic in tourism research (e.g., Haldrup, 2017; Kim & Littrell, 2001; Swanson & Timothy, 2012). From the standpoint of the tourist experience, several studies have investigated the souvenir market and the elements that may predict souvenir purchases. Kim & Littrell (2001) examined their own souvenir-purchasing intents, while Swanson & Timothy (2012) constructed models to show how tourist shopping becomes more complex over time.

In an empirical study, Swanson & Horridge (2006) found that tourism motivation affects souvenir purchasing decisions, the features of souvenirs, and the shop setting in which souvenirs are purchased. Du Cros (2013) investigated the demand for heritage-themed souvenirs related to Asian World Heritage sites and the supply. Asian tourists choose perishable food souvenirs that can be given as gifts instead of more long-lasting arts and crafts (Du Cros, 2013; Kim & Littrell, 2001; Smith & Olson, 2001; Swanson & Horridge, 2004).

Shtudiner et al. (2019) argue that souvenir buying is not just a leisure activity but is driven by emotional and psychological factors (Haldrup, 2017; Swanson & Timothy, 2012). Thus, souvenir purchases have a “magical effect” mediating between the travel experience and the leisure habit or routine of buying souvenirs (Haldrup, 2017). The demands of modern tourists for authentic cultural experiences, one-of-a-kind local items, and a developing need for local cultural identity affirmation can be understood as a response to tourist’s globalization processes (Urošević, 2012). On the other hand, cultural globalization hastens the cultural symbol exchange among individuals worldwide, resulting in changes in cultures and identities of local (Kanghong He, 2015). As a result, the appreciation of specific cultural features has been a significant notion in current cultural tourism reflection (Ivanovic, 2008).

1.1.3.3 Perspectives from Producers, Vendors, and Retailers

While most souvenir research has focused on consumers, some studies have approached the subject from the perspective of souvenir producers. many studies concern artisan producers (Kim & Littrell, 2001; Swain, 1993) and the range of souvenirs from mass-produced to antique and unique items (Swanson & Horridge, 2004). In addition, several studies looked at the souvenir vendors and retailers and their role in the overall tourist experience and the destination’s sustainable development (Cukier & Wall, 1994; Sambrook et al., 1992; Yamamura, 2003).

1.1.3.4 Authenticity

Due to souvenirs serving as physical reminders of a tourist's visit, many souvenir issues will be about authenticity. Several well-known studies in the social sciences have tackled the issue of authenticity (Baudrillard, 2016; Graburn & Jafari, 1991; MacCannell, 2013; Richards, 2013). According to some research, marketers frequently falsify or generate authenticity (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Milman, 2015; Rose & Wood, 2005). This reasoning can be used by souvenir designers, distributors, manufacturers, and suppliers. Authenticity can be intrinsic to an item, generated from a relationship between an object and a historical moment, organizational form, or nature, or provided to a product by marketers and customers, which Beverland concludes (Beverland, 2005; Milman, 2015).

Much of the literature on souvenirs is framed in terms of issues within the tourism sector relating to souvenir categorization, tourists' experiences and behaviors, and the perspectives of producers and suppliers. However, more is needed to know about the voice experiences of designers within the souvenir development sector, which is the focus of this study.

1.2 Problem Statement

Souvenirs are recognized as a medium for promoting cultural tourism and enhancing the image of cultural heritage sites. They play an essential role in cultural communication and provide tangible cultural experiences for tourists. However, there is a concern that with the mass production of souvenirs, they

may dissipate their original cultural content and fail to evolve with the cultural changes in society. To maintain the relevance and appreciation of cultural heritage, souvenirs must be designed to understand the contemporary cultural context and be welcomed by consumers from different cultural backgrounds. At the heart of this study is the intersection of souvenir design with the elements of Mogao Caves murals and cultural heritage preservation, where motivations and research gaps intersect, suggesting opportunities for innovative approaches in souvenir design, maintaining cultural integrity, and advancing heritage preservation.

There are gaps in understanding the local cultural value (motivational gap) and the need for research to establish effective integration of cultural elements into product design (research gap). The Point of Departure (POD) marks the intersection between these two gaps, where the need to balance cultural representation with practical design strategies becomes evident. Hence, there is a need to address these gaps, which can lead to a comprehensive framework, guiding the design of souvenirs that preserve and promote Dunhuang's cultural heritage. This framework aims to support cultural sustainability while ensuring the products meet both cultural and market needs. (see Figure 1.3)

PROBLEM STATEMENT

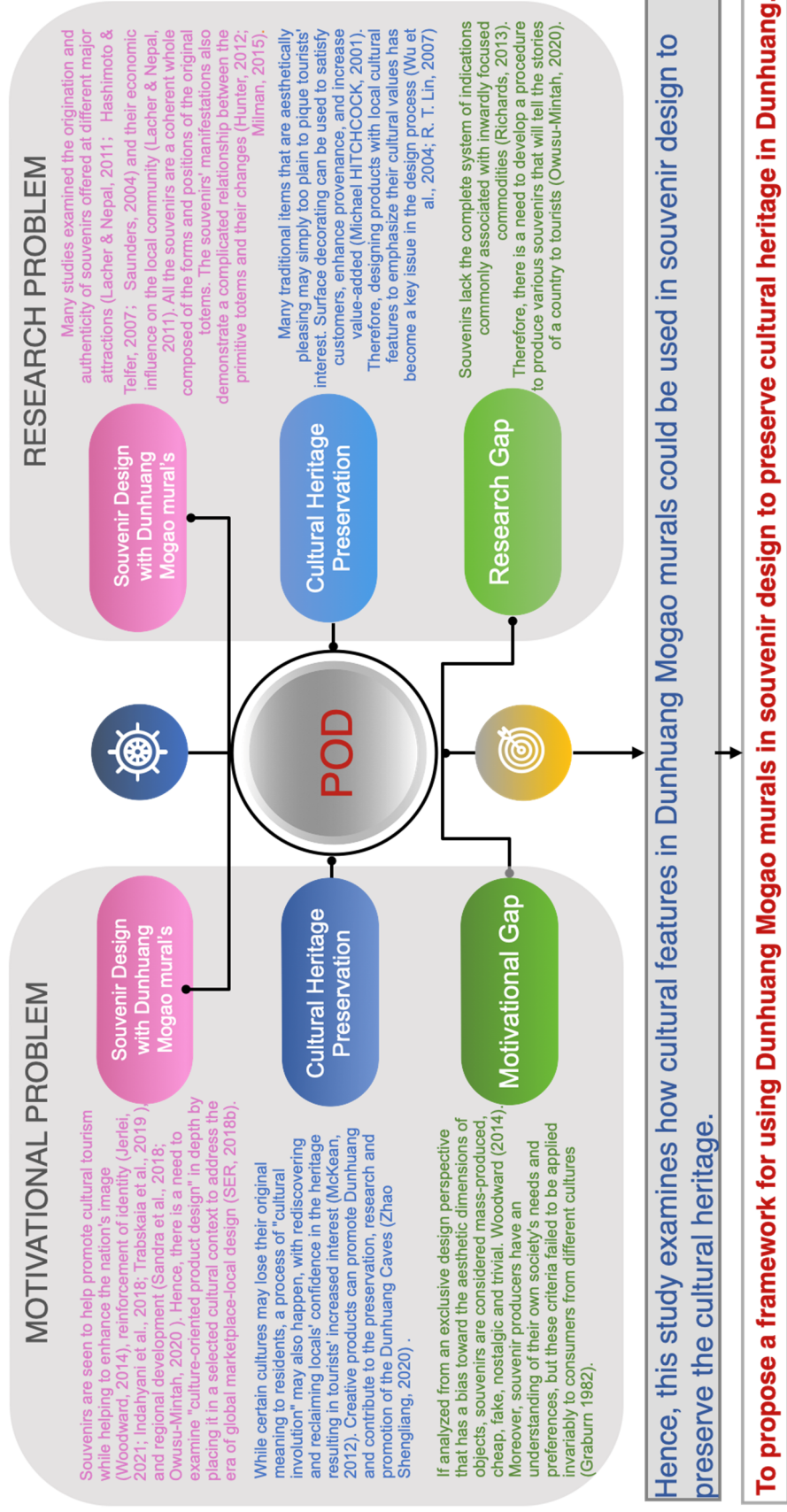


Figure 1.3: Problem Statement (Author, 2023)

1.2.1 Practical Gap

Chinese authorities have claimed that preserving cultural heritage is a strategy for national development. However, the Chinese tourist market is full of souvenirs using the Dunhuang Caves as a design resource, many of which need to be officially authorized by the Dunhuang Academy and need more authenticity and originality. On the other hand, souvenir producers understand their own society's needs and preferences, but these criteria only sometimes apply to consumers from different cultures (Graburn, 1982). Moreover, the souvenir design practice requires theoretical guidance from design research, drowned even deep in cultural tourism sustainability. Hence, there is a need to examine "culture-oriented product design" in depth by placing it in a selected cultural context to address the era of global marketplace-local design (SER, 2018). Specifically, souvenirs' cultural attributes, design elements, and values should be investigated to improve product quality and meet national development and consumer needs.

There is a consensus that the redesign and application of shapes and colors in Dunhuang Caves' cultural symbols can enhance the value of products. However, due to its remote geographical location, the development of the cultural industry in Dunhuang is limited by geographical restrictions (X. Wu & Tian, 2015). As early as 2002, Gong Yufei proposed that "no cultural theme, no brand awareness, no cultural dissemination penetration, design fragmented monotonous rough, low taste, poor quality" is the outstanding problem of tourism souvenirs (Gong, 2002). With the further development of tourism, the

development and value of tourism souvenirs have gradually attracted attention in recent years. Nevertheless, tourism souvenirs still need help. Although Dunhuang cave patterns are numerous and diverse, souvenirs still need to be fully developed and utilized at present (L. Jin, 2016). This may be attributed to the fact that the research on applying cultural and artistic elements in the design of cultural and creative products in China is still in the primary stage, lacks empirical research, and has yet to form a mature theoretical system. In developing Dunhuang cultural and creative industries, extracting elements characterized by Dunhuang culture and carrying out product innovation is challenging for cultural and creative industries (Deng, 2021).

Feng Hao pointed out the deficiencies in the development of tourism souvenirs in China at present: firstly, in the industrial chain, the development process of souvenir design and development is slow; secondly, the development method is based on the crafts produced on a large scale, and the quality of the products varies; thirdly, the simple appropriation of the prototype of the product design content has caused the lack of product innovation and uniqueness, and the development of the symbolic value of souvenirs has yet to be improved; fourthly, the market awareness and the Fourth, the lack of market awareness and consumer demand research has led to the competitiveness of souvenirs (H. Feng, 2018). In addition, the lack of practical function, obvious homogenization problem, insufficient cultural heritage and representation, weak brand awareness, and single product type are also the reasons for the lack of core competitiveness of cultural and creative products (L. Jin, 2016; M. Liu & Jiang, 2020). Insufficiently innovative design products in the market

cannot attract a consumer audience dominated by young groups, and the comprehensive development of cultural resources and focus on consumer outreach will enhance the total revenue of souvenirs in the tourism industry, thereby promoting tourism development (Gong, 2002).

However, the Chinese government has focused more on developing basic infrastructure for tourism development and less on destination management for souvenir production and sales. While Dunhuang souvenirs have been essential in generating tourism revenue, much of the support needs improvement and consistency, particularly for the souvenir development sector. The value of Dunhuang's souvenir design needs to be considered and addressed. The industry's limited knowledge and understanding of the issue and the need for more references and evidence on the subject from a design perspective are the main reasons for these problems.

1.2.2 Theoretical Gap

Recent studies show that souvenir products also strongly influence regional economic development and cultural inheritance. In several research, the function of the tourist souvenir trade in heritage preservation was investigated (Schiller, 2008). On the contrary, some scholars have argued that souvenirs, various tourist memorabilia, and replicas are often considered inauthentic; therefore, they do not deserve the attention of serious collectors, museum visitors, and scholars (Richards, 2013).

Many studies examined the origination and authenticity of souvenirs offered at different major attractions (Lacher & Nepal, 2011; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2007; Saunders, 2004), as well as their economic influence on the local community (Lacher & Nepal, 2011). All the souvenirs are a coherent whole composed of the forms and positions of the original totems. The souvenirs' manifestations also demonstrate a complicated relationship between the primitive totems and their changes (Hunter, 2012; Milman, 2015). Traditional artifacts are still being made into products, and new designs are being developed to meet the demands of new markets (Graburn, 1979; Richards, 2013).

Souvenirs may be as old as tourism. They materialize personal memories and social encounters. They can play an essential role in destination marketing through word-of-mouth marketing. Souvenir buyers are generally able to recognize standardized designs and genres. Souvenir makers adapt their work by working within these well-established genres, typically adopting a set of symbols that are thought to be meaningful to tourists. As a result, souvenirs need the complete system of indications commonly associated with inwardly focused commodities (Richards, 2013). As emotional and narrative objects, they challenge the creativity of designers. However, design research needs to pay more attention to this theme and needs a theoretical approach from a design perspective. A direct link to an interdisciplinary theory is necessary to advance knowledge. Therefore, there is a need to develop a procedure to produce various souvenirs that will tell the stories of a country to tourists (Owusu-Mintah, 2020).

The process of tailoring items to visitors' preferences is quite changeable, and items may not be permanently altered similarly. New designs may have little to do with the producer's culture, although there are occasionally traditionalist or historical patterns. To boost product recognition and overcome the customer's ignorance, traditional abstract styles could be substituted by more naturalistic styles. It is indeed possible that producers will move away from realism and towards abstraction, occasionally imitating modern Western aesthetics (Cohen, 1993a). Within the same culture, there may be opposing trends (Michael HITCHCOCK, 2001). Designers add value to their products by embedding local cultural features to create product identity in the global marketplace. In this regard, industrial design plays a crucial role in this process. Therefore, designing products with local cultural features to emphasize their cultural values has become a vital issue in the design process (Wu et al., 2004; R. T. Lin, 2007).

Furthermore, product recognition is a prevalent issue with the usage of handicrafts in tourist and international trade. Many traditional items that are aesthetically pleasing may need to be more varied to pique tourists' interest. Surface decorating can satisfy customers, enhance provenance, and increase value-added (Michael HITCHCOCK, 2001). Integrating culture into product design has become a trend in the global marketplace. A better understanding of cross-cultural communication is a prerequisite for global market participation and local design development. Thus, the intersection of culture and design becomes a crucial issue, and the relationship between local design and global markets deserves further in-depth exploration (R. T. Lin, 2007).

However, the visual elements of cultural heritage are vital to be criticized for cultural differences and cultural identity. When it is combined with the commodity attribute of souvenirs, it will contribute to the development of cultural tourism. Although some scholars have keenly captured the fact that the integration of cultural heritage resources into cultural and creative products is becoming a focus of attention for the state and the industry, the strong intersectionality of the fields, the marginalization of the disciplines, and the ambiguous definition of the theoretical scope have led to a lag in the theoretical research. Besides, within design scholarship, evidence of the contribution of souvenir design to regional development still needs to be discovered, and the drivers of souvenir design have yet to be explored in-depth by scholars. More literature on souvenir-based design needs to be published, resulting in the potential of design for tourism product development needing to be fully explored, making research on souvenir design increasingly necessary. The research is situated at the intersection of art, commerce, and cultural preservation, proposing an interdisciplinary perspective on souvenirs to offer a timely exploration of how souvenirs can serve as cultural ambassadors and guardians of heritage.

Based on the previous analysis, issues related to understanding the endowment of cultural values in souvenir design have been identified from both practical and theoretical perspectives. Literature addressing souvenir design points to the lack of appropriate frameworks or models to be used as a reference when developing souvenirs with cultural identification and connotations. These studies emphasize souvenir consumption, design

methodology, and its relationship with cultural heritage. These studies also mentioned the need for precise product design specifications, guidelines, models, or frameworks as a reference when designing souvenirs with conservation value.

1.2.3 Evident Gap

The evident gap highlights the tension between souvenir design's economic benefits and cultural heritage's potential degradation. While the production and sale of souvenirs can contribute to the development of local economies, these products may also accelerate the commodification of local cultures and lead to the stereotyping of these cultures by the public. This is particularly evident in cases where the characteristics of a destination are oversimplified or exaggerated for commercial purposes, resulting in a distortion of the culture (Manola & Balermipas 2020). Furthermore, Yotsumoto & Vafadari (2021) argue that tourism-oriented design can lead to the erosion of natural landscapes and indigenous cultures, suggesting that a more thoughtful approach is necessary to preserve the cultural authenticity of souvenirs. Despite these clear challenges, limited research addresses this issue from a design perspective, and this gap remains an important concern for scholars and practitioners in the field. (see Figure 1.4)

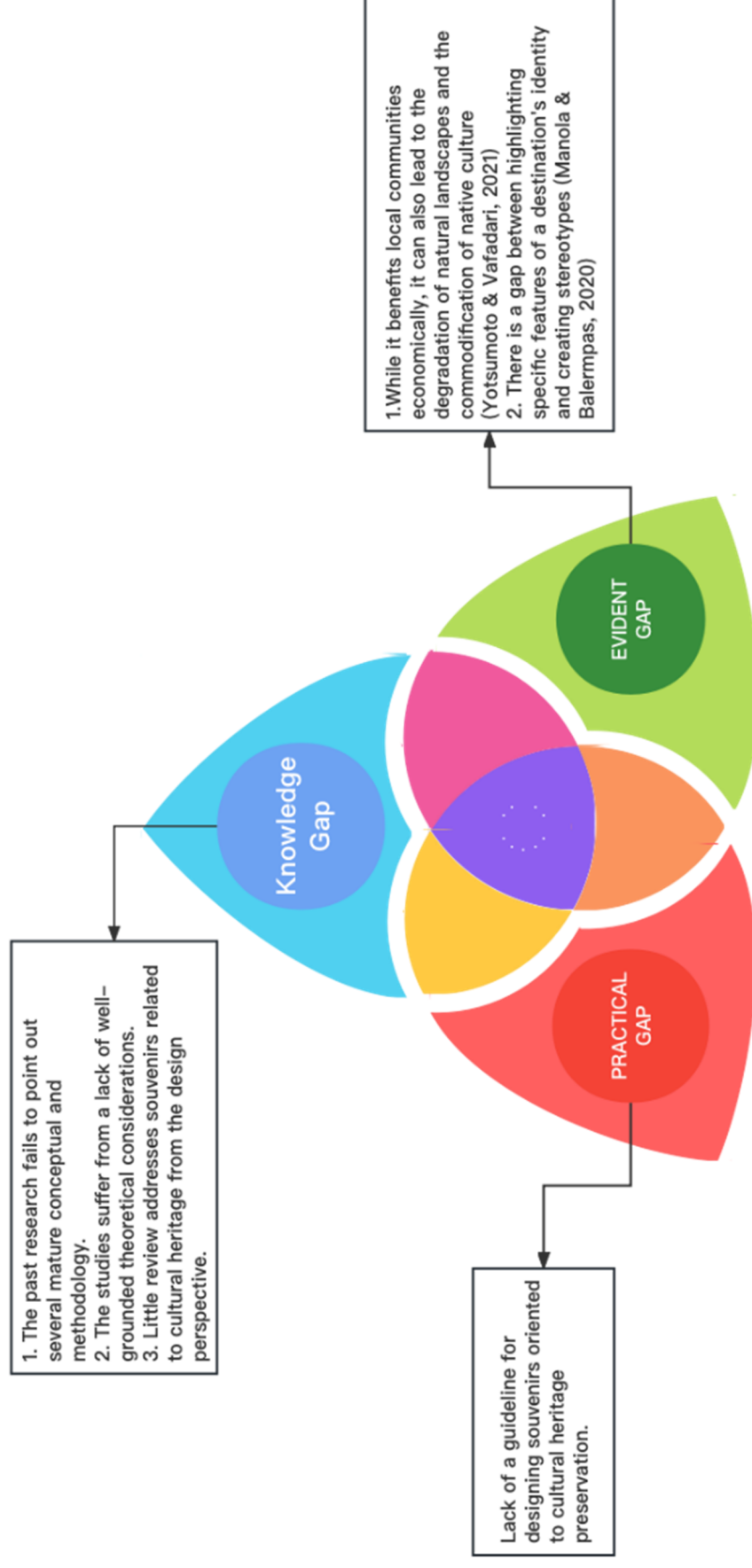


Figure 1.4: Research Gap
(Author, 2023)

The triangulation of the Practical Gap, Knowledge Gap, and Evident Gap, illustrated in Figure 1.4, is critical for understanding the broader impacts of souvenir design on cultural heritage. The Practical Gap arises from the lack of clear guidelines for designing culturally sensitive souvenirs and is closely linked to the Knowledge Gap, where previous research has failed to deeply explore the intersection of design, culture, and heritage. Without a solid theoretical foundation, efforts to address practical issues remain incomplete, further perpetuating the Evident Gap and risking the commodification and stereotyping of culture. This triangulation emphasizes the issue's significance, as addressing only one aspect of the gap will not provide a comprehensive solution. A synthesized approach is required to ensure that souvenirs are designed to support economic growth and safeguard the cultural integrity of the associated heritage.

The current state of souvenir design at Dunhuang has prompted researchers to attempt to find an appropriate framework to better develop high-quality, consumer-appealing products with cultural preservation and communication values. This is necessary because souvenirs benefit local communities' economic, social, and cultural development. This quest is also imperative, given that the development objectives of the Chinese government have shifted from economic development to broader cultural development to enhance the cultural identity of the country's people. For these reasons, there is a need to improve the status quo of souvenir design at Dunhuang by developing a framework or model for souvenir design that promotes cultural heritage preservation. Moreover, this can be an effective source of reference for

communicating the cultural identity and significance found in the Mogao Caves through products that reflect deep-seated traditional Chinese spiritual connotations in response to the inspiration and philosophical expressions of the ancients.

To sum up, the souvenir design in this study is a new way of narrating the local cultural heritage wealth. The narration expressed through the souvenirs of design can increase awareness of and preservation of Dunhuang Mogao's valuable cultural resources. A theoretical framework will be proposed to contribute a body of knowledge and guidance by examining the integration of Mogao Murals into souvenir design as a strategy for preserving the cultural heritage of Dunhuang, which is beneficial to the interaction of multiple fields, such as design, regional development, and cultural studies.

1.3 Research Questions

This study is related to understanding the potential of integrating Dunhuang Mogao murals into souvenir design, aiming to preserve the cultural heritage of Dunhuang in China. It examines the extraction of classic elements for design adaptation, their incorporation by designers, and the contribution of these integrations to cultural preservation. As shown in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Research Questions and Research Objectives

Main Research Question How can Dunhuang Mogao murals be used for souvenir design to preserve the cultural heritage of Dunhuang in China?			
Sub Research Questions	Research Objectives	Method	Output
RQ 1: What key elements and features from Dunhuang Mogao Murals can be extracted for integration into souvenir design?	To identify the key elements and features from Dunhuang Mogao Murals that can be extracted for integration into souvenir design.	Case Study In-depth interview Documentation Review	Knowledge of the features and key elements of the Dunhuang Mogao murals
RQ 2: How do designers integrate the extracted elements from Dunhuang Mogao murals into souvenir designs?	To investigate the design process that designers use to integrate extracted elements from the Dunhuang Mogao murals into souvenir designs.	Case Study In-depth interview Documentation Review Observation	The process of integrating cultural elements into souvenir design
RQ 3: How to develop a design framework that integrates Mogao Mural elements into souvenir design to contribute to preserving the cultural heritage of Dunhuang?	To propose a framework for designing souvenirs with Mogao Murals to foster cultural heritage preservation of Dunhuang.	Case Study In-depth interview	A framework of souvenir design for cultural heritage preservation (FSDCHP)

Based on the above research problem statement, this study aimed to investigate the process and details of souvenir design for Mogao murals that promote preserving Dunhuang's cultural heritage. The main research question is drawn as follows:

How can Dunhuang Mogao murals be used for souvenir design to preserve the cultural heritage of Dunhuang in China?

In this study, the following questions will be used as an instrument to explore the findings:

- RQ1: What key elements and features from Dunhuang Mogao Murals can be extracted for integration into souvenir design?
- RQ2: How do designers integrate the extracted elements from Dunhuang Mogao murals into souvenir designs?
- RQ3: How to develop a design framework that integrates Mogao Mural elements into souvenir design to contribute to preserving the cultural heritage of Dunhuang?

1.4 Main Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is as follows:

- RO1: To identify the key elements and features from Dunhuang Mogao Murals that can be extracted for integration into souvenir design.
- RO2: To investigate the design process that designers use to integrate extracted elements from the Dunhuang Mogao murals into souvenir designs.
- RO3: To propose a framework for designing souvenirs with Mogao Murals to foster cultural heritage preservation of Dunhuang.

To achieve the research objectives, a qualitative case study approach was used throughout the research process, including in-depth interviews, document reviews, and observations, and the thematic data analysis results formed the framework's basic elements. The first objective was to identify key aesthetic, cultural, and historical features of the Dunhuang Mogao Grottoes murals that could be used in souvenir design. We then investigated the souvenir design process by interviewing designers to understand how they integrate these elements into modern products while maintaining cultural integrity. Finally, the third objective was to incorporate the research findings to form a framework for cultural heritage souvenir design that can help preserve the cultural significance of the murals in contemporary design practices, thereby promoting the success of both cultural heritage and business.

1.5 Significance of the Study

A few scholars have already focused on the field of souvenir design in the past; however, the use of heritage cultural attributes as a resource for souvenir design, placing it on the generation of cultural heritage conservation values, is a new topic. The proposed framework enhances cultural heritage preservation in the souvenir design process. The sustainable development of destination cultures will also be promoted when the cultural heritage of the regions can provide resources and inspiration for the design of contemporary cultural products, thereby enhancing cultural impact and identity. This research has practical, theoretical, and research methodological implications. The results of this research, i.e., the thesis, will contribute to the design field as follows.

1.5.1 Practical Contribution: Guide Designers to Design Souvenirs with Cultural Value

This study proposes the theoretical proposition that the development of a joint model of cultural heritage and design can address some of the problems encountered with Dunhuang's cultural tourism products, such as the adverse effects of product scale production, the over-and under-development of tourism products, the lack of pathways for the regenerative development of heritage resources, compensating for the incomplete experience of tourists motivated by heritage conservation, adding value to souvenirs, and attracting multi-level visitor groups.

I. Guidelines for Designing Souvenirs with Cultural Elements

Based on the findings, the thesis offers a set of guidelines for designing souvenirs that integrate cultural elements. These guidelines help designers and producers navigate the challenges of crafting souvenirs supporting cultural preservation efforts while economically sustainable.

II. An Integrated Design Approach

The research introduces an integrated design approach incorporating cultural, aesthetic, economic, and ethical considerations. This approach highlights the importance of involving community stakeholders, including artists and cultural experts, in the design process to ensure authenticity and cultural accuracy.

To sum up, this study explores the process of integrating Dunhuang's famous heritage and identity elements into souvenir design elements, and attempts are made to bridge the challenges that may be encountered in design practice and to minimize the erosion or elimination of the cultural significance of heritage through inauthentic product development. The beneficiaries of this study will primarily include the designers, professionals, and cultural tourism stakeholders, while other audiences may consist of cultural heritage and communication scholars and experts.

1.5.2 Knowledge Contribution: Improving Knowledge of Souvenir Design and Development Related to Cultural Heritage Preservation

The knowledge contribution is multifaceted, addressing a gap in the existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of how souvenir design and development can serve as a tool for cultural heritage preservation. The research offers new insights into the complex interplay between cultural sustainability and commercial viability within the souvenir industry. The main contributions are as follows:

I. Comprehensive Understanding of Cultural Heritage Features

The thesis furnishes a compendium of knowledge from designers and cultural experts that elucidates the characteristics and artistic of the Dunhuang Mogao Murals, enriching the understanding of these cultural heritage treasures.

II. Insights into Application Methods in Souvenir Design

It offers a body of data that examines the various methods and patterns employed in incorporating Dunhuang Mogao Murals into souvenir design, highlighting innovative approaches and design integrations.

III. Framework for Cultural Integration into Design for Preserving Cultural Heritage

The research proposes a framework that interprets the embedding of the graphical elements of the Dunhuang Mogao Murals in souvenir merchandise, thereby guiding the practice of preserving cultural heritage through design.

In sum, the knowledge contribution of this thesis lies in its holistic view of the souvenir production process, its grounding in empirical research, and its practical application in the field of cultural heritage preservation. While this study focuses on Dunhuang souvenir design, the suggested design framework can be extended and tested for other neighborhoods or cultural products. Providing tourists with products rich in cultural values will promote the economic and cultural development of the destination, which simultaneously fulfills China's vision of promoting national cultural self-confidence and divesting local cultures from globalization.

1.5.3 Methods Contribution: Applying an Interdisciplinary Lens from Design Theory and Cultural Preservation Disciplines

A qualitative case study methodology will be used to collect and analyze data and interpret the research questions. Previous souvenir design studies have been predominantly practice-oriented or project-oriented. While they have told

people how to do this, they have yet to explore the methodology for souvenir design research, which is an essential technique for implementing product design and cultural research. The research methodology in this paper will provide a model for future theoretical-oriented research in the design field.

In summary, this research will enhance product value by embedding cultural heritage elements in souvenir design to meet the needs of tourists for unique cultural identity products and promote the cultural dissemination of destinations. The quality of souvenirs is expected to be improved through the proposal of a design specification in this study, which could benefit the development of the design field and strengthen the economic development of the heritage sites. At the same time, other souvenir stakeholders and researchers will be among those who will benefit.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on three main factors: cultural features of resources, souvenir design, and cultural heritage preservation. The scope of this study is to understand the impact of souvenir design integrated into Dunhuang Mogao murals on cultural heritage preservation. This mainly explores the process and knowledge related to the souvenir design of graphics embedded at the Mogao Cave in Dunhuang. The scope of the study is limited to qualitative analysis of culture-oriented souvenir design. The souvenirs selected for this study are discussed in the context of cultural heritage preservation, thus emphasizing the importance of applying cultural features of heritage. The factors to be

addressed in the selected souvenirs are the characteristics of cultural elements used in the souvenirs and the relationship between the souvenir design and cultural heritage.

Several factors determined the boundaries of this study. Geographically, the study is limited to Dunhuang, specifically the Mogao Caves and the local souvenir industry associated with them. Thematically, this study does not address forms of cultural products or heritage sites other than the Mogao Grottoes murals; the focus is solely on souvenirs that incorporate elements of these murals. The primary stakeholders are the designers and cultural experts involved in creating these souvenirs rather than analyzing the market from a consumer or purchaser perspective. Chronologically, this study considers contemporary souvenir designs produced in recent years, which coincide with China's focus on cultural heritage preservation.

This study examines the research question of how to effectively incorporate cultural elements into souvenirs while maintaining the authenticity and cultural significance of the heritage. It responds to identified gaps in the practical application of cultural identity in design and the theoretical understanding of such integration. By focusing on the murals of the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang, this study aims to achieve the following research objectives: To propose a framework for designing souvenirs with Mogao Murals to foster cultural heritage preservation of Dunhuang.

Certain exclusions further defined the scope of the study. This study did not quantitatively measure the economic impact of souvenir sales on cultural preservation efforts, nor did it analyze consumer satisfaction or behavioral responses to souvenirs. It also did not explore the technical aspects of production beyond those associated with the design process. By narrowing the focus of the study to the integration of the mural elements of the Dunhuang Mogao Caves into the design of souvenirs, this study provides an in-depth examination of a specific case at the intersection of cultural heritage and modern design. This specificity allows for a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent in this fusion, thus providing valuable insights into design practice and cultural heritage preservation. The chosen scope of the study is aligned with the research objectives, ensuring manageability and coherence. This allows for a comprehensive exploration of the subject matter and effectively addresses the research questions while recognizing its limitations.

1.7 Expected Outcome of Research

The final aim of this study is to propose a framework that encompasses the role of design in developing local cultural heritage in the context of cultural tourism. This framework can be applied to souvenir practices, cultural element aspects, and cultural heritage values. After examining the process of culturally oriented souvenir design, this study will explain the role of souvenir design practices in enhancing design specifications and maximizing the desired cultural heritage sustainability. Literature reviews and qualitative case studies

illustrate key themes and issues, and figures and tables are used to clarify the analytical data.

In summary, the expected outcomes of the study will be:

I. Optimize the Framework and Method of Heritage Elements Redesign

The establishment of design specifications for souvenir development through culture-oriented design exploration and suggestions for optimizing the design of souvenirs. Recommendations on the creative and effective use of cultural symbols of heritage in products, especially in the context of globalization and localization.

II. Contribution to Theoretical Understanding of Cultural Heritage Value in Souvenir Design

The main object of this study is souvenirs from Dunhuang, a famous cultural heritage site in China whose cultural symbols are well known to the public. However, the development and strategies of other cultural heritage sites may differ. Those heritage sites where cultural heritage elements have yet to be explored deeply may encounter problems in product promotion without being recognized. In addition, qualitative research to determine the cultural heritage value of designs to promote souvenirs can help provide insight into this phenomenon.

Therefore, further research on this issue, both qualitative and quantitative, could better understand and, more specifically, guide the development of souvenir design and cultural heritage. In addition, the study adds a different

design perspective to souvenir research. A similar study aims to increase the product's added value by enhancing the souvenir quality and bringing more significant benefits to the heritage site.

1.8 Definition of Terms

This section briefly introduces the concepts that underlie this study. Theoretical constructs are this study's key foundational ideas forming its conceptual elements. The cultural features of Dunhuang Mogao Cave murals, the souvenir design, and the cultural heritage preservation are identified as the constructs of this research topic. The related terms are defined as follows:

1.8.1 Culture Features of Dunhuang Mogao Cave

Mogao Caves:

“Situated at a strategic point along the Silk Route, at the crossroads of trade as well as religious, cultural, and intellectual influences, the 492 cells and cave sanctuaries in Mogao are famous for their statues and wall paintings, spanning 1,000 years of Buddhist art.” (Uneso, 2007)

Mural: A mural is something that is attached to a wall. In this thesis, the mural painting mainly refers to the motifs and Chinese paintings drawn in the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang. The murals in the Dunhuang Mogao Caves are over 1,000 years old. The frescoes are extensive, covering an area of 490,000 square feet (46,000 square meters). Buddhist themes are the most common, but there are also traditional mythological themes and portraits of patrons,

such as scenes of production and labor by ancient peoples, scenes of social life, architectural forms, as well as images of music and dance (S. Wang, 2010). These murals record the changing styles of Buddhist art in China over the last thousand years.

“The unique artistic style of Dunhuang art is not only the amalgamation of Han Chinese artistic tradition and styles assimilated from ancient Indian and Gandharan customs, but also an integration of the arts of the Turks, ancient Tibetans, and other Chinese ethnic minorities. Many of these masterpieces are creations of an unparalleled aesthetic talent.”
(Uneso, 2007)

1.8.2 Souvenir Design

A souvenir, derived from the French word for “a remembrance or memory,” may also be referred to as a memento, keepsake, or token of remembrance (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2010). Souvenir is generally defined as a pattern based on the creator's purpose, from various opportunities, eras, or places, and according to the customer's needs. Souvenirs should help narrate each location into production to evoke tourists to recall the story and history of a site (Chandhasa, 2017). Adopting a similar position, Q. Yang (2020) argues that souvenirs may better reflect a site or town's most basic cultural features, showing distinctive and irreplaceability. Anastasiadou & Vettese (2021) point out that it can also be mass-produced objects, generally outlined as inexpensive, worthless, and inauthentic (Cave & Buda, 2013; Hitchcock, 2013; D. A. Norman, 2004). Hence, authenticity markers verify whether tourist items reflect the local culture (Anastasiadou & Vettese, 2021; Littrell et al., 1993).

Moreover, other researchers who have proposed the definitions of souvenirs in practice and the literature mainly emphasize that souvenirs serve as physical reminders of a visit, allowing visitors to experience again and remember a memorable moment or location. Souvenirs can be handcrafted products, which are thought to be more artistically superior and authentic representations of local art (Anastasiadou & Vettese, 2021; Cave & Buda, 2013; Hitchcock, 2013). More specifically, tourist souvenirs are items acquired by travelers in a tourist destination rich in folklore customs and regional cultural characteristics and have lasting value. Their marketing and sales are a means to promote local culture and traits. Quality souvenirs can boost local economies and preserve and pass down numerous particular cultural artifacts. A distinctive souvenir can only be found on a specific site and is challenging to locate in other areas (Star Ria Sari et al., 2020).

Souvenir design refers to creating items that serve as souvenirs or mementos, often associated with a specific place or event, to evoke memories and a connection to that experience. These items are intended to be collected or purchased by travelers to commemorate their visit. The purpose of souvenir design is to enhance the authenticity, emotional connection, and sustainability of these objects, moving away from stereotypes and clichés to express the destination's identity more meaningfully (Hu, 2018).

1.8.3 Culture Heritage Preservation

Cultural heritage is the tangible and intangible heritage assets of a group or society that have been passed down through generations. Not all heritage from

all generations is “heritage”; instead, heritage is the product of social choices (Logan, 2007). The term often refers to protecting indigenous intellectual property rights (Arts Law Centre Of Australia, 2021). Includes tangible cultures, such as monuments, buildings, landscapes, books, archival materials, works of art, and artifacts; intangible cultures, such as heirlooms, languages, and knowledge; and natural heritage, including culturally significant landscapes and biological diversity (Sullivan, 2016).

The deliberate preservation of cultural heritage for the future is referred to as “conservation” (American English) or “preservation” (British English). These terms may have more specific or technical meanings and are promoted by historical ethnographic museums, cultures, and cultural centers. The same context is in other dialects. Protected heritage has become the backbone of global tourism and a significant contributor to the economic value of local communities (Logan, 2007). Protection of cultural heritage or objects refers to all measures to protect cultural property from destruction, damage, misappropriation, theft, or other loss. The term “monument protection” is also used for immovable cultural property. This relates in particular to the prevention of looting and excavation of archaeological sites, looting or vandalism of cultural heritage sites, and theft of artifacts from churches and museums around the world, as well as to basic measures relating to the protection of and universal access to, our shared cultural heritage. The legal protection of cultural heritage encompasses many international agreements and national laws, which must also be enforced (O’Keefe et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2017; Wegener & Otter, 2008).

In addition, cultural heritage should be protected to preserve susceptible cultural memory, growing cultural diversity, and the economic base of municipalities, regions, and countries (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2019). Since all cultural objects are in a constant state of chemical transformation, what is thought to be preserved is no longer what it once was and is changing (Lowenthal, 1985). Similarly, each generation's value of the past and the artifacts that link it to the past is changing. Thus, this paper defines cultural heritage preservation as reproducing and transferring cultural elements to souvenirs using modern design. Such preservation helps people recognize the necessity of the past and the things that tell its story (Tanselle, 1998).

1.9 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis has been written in five chapters. Each chapter is organized into different chapters and subsections. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the paper, focusing on the practical and theoretical background of the study, the problem statement, the formulation of the research question and the objectives of the study based on the preliminary literature review, the significance of the study, the scope and limitations of the study, and the desired research output.

Chapter 2 discusses in detail the existing literature relevant to this research question. It begins with discussing the cultural features, patterns, and characteristics of the redesign and application of Dunhuang Mogao murals, tracing souvenir design patterns and trends, and discussing the interrelationship between souvenir design and cultural heritage preservation.

The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework to guide this study in the right direction.

Chapter 3 details the methodology employed in this study, which describes the philosophical underpinnings and the theoretical claims that guided the choice of data collection methods and analytical techniques for this study. A descriptive qualitative multi-case approach was used to investigate this topic. Chapter 4 is a qualitative thematic analysis based on the data obtained from the three different data collection methods and the results of the ATLAS.ti 23 coding to the data indicates the knowledge and theories involved in this inquiry. It then presents a discussion of the findings, extracting the necessary information according to the objectives of this study and interlinking them in a meaningful way.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion, which briefly summarizes the entire study and points out its limitations and predictions for further research in the future.

1.10 The Limitation of the Study

This study may have some limitations that must be recognized. First, this study addresses the design of souvenirs from the cultural heritage of the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, China, and there may be limitations to the contemporary applicability to other cultural artifacts or traditional arts. Since the study was conducted in a specific cultural and geographical context, cultural bias may be present in interpreting souvenirs from heritage sites. In addition, the inherently subjective nature of the interpretation of art and design means that the

subjectivity of the designer's personal perception and creative thinking in extracting elements of the mural and incorporating them into the souvenir may influence the cultural and historical representation of the mural. The fact that the researcher of this study was from a different academic environment and was not local to Dunhuang or familiar with the souvenir design environment may be a strength or weakness of this study.

The scope of this study focuses on the design aspects of souvenirs. It does not focus on critical factors such as their economic viability, marketing strategies, and consumer behavior, which may limit the understanding of souvenirs' commercial and marketing aspects. The qualitative case study with a small research sample size may have limitations in the breadth and depth of data collected, which may result in the findings needing to be more generalizable to other populations and samples. In addition, the study's results may have been weakened because the participants knew that the study's approval was obtained through their administrators. They may have been prepared to fulfill the interview dates/times agreed upon with the researchers and would have been more cautious in answering the interview questions. On the other hand, to gain the participants' trust and support for this study, the researcher introduced his identity as an outsider, a Chinese scholar pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree at a foreign research university and a teacher of design at a university and expressed a keen interest in listening to their perspectives on this issue.

In addition, cultural interpretations change over time, suggesting that the findings reflect a particular moment in time and may not be able to generalize future changes in cultural perceptions and interpretations. Recognizing these limitations is critical to accurately defining the contribution and significance of this study while laying the groundwork for future research efforts to be designed to extend, refine, or address these identified shortcomings in the field of cultural heritage preservation. However, the study's results may be helpful for any population with similar characteristics (Merriam, 2014).

As a qualitative research explorer, the researcher majored in research methods courses and participated in conferences, workshops, and seminars to enhance her research abilities and skills. However, during the implementation of the research, many problems still needed to be solved, such as defining the criteria for case selection, obtaining permission from the door opener, communicating with the interviewees, and granting permission for admission to the fieldwork. As a research tool, the researcher independently completed all the research design, data collection, analysis, and report writing process, assisted by experts and the researcher's mentor. Despite the many limitations, this study provides a specification for exploring the use of Dunhuang Mogao Caves in souvenir design to promote the theory and practice of heritage conservation.

In conclusion, this chapter lays the groundwork for exploring integrating elements from the Dunhuang Mogao Cave murals into souvenir design, focusing on preserving cultural heritage within the context of China's

Sustainable Development Goals and cultural policies. The study identifies four key objectives: (i) To identify the key elements and features from Dunhuang Mogao Murals that can be extracted for integration into souvenir design; (ii) To investigate the design process that designers use to integrate extracted elements from the Dunhuang Mogao murals into souvenir designs; and (iii) To propose a framework for designing souvenirs with Mogao Murals to foster cultural heritage preservation of Dunhuang. Subsequent sections will delve into the relevant literature and theory, including a comprehensive review of the importance of souvenirs in cultural heritage and the various strategies for their design and commercialization. The following sections will also elaborate on methodologies encompassing interdisciplinary perspectives in design theory and cultural preservation.

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