Chic Branding and Cultural Inheritance: Multimodal Construction of Chinese Brand Identity on New Media of Creative Tourism

Qian Li[1, 2 *]

[1] Department of Foreign Language studies, Jinan University, China

[2] Department of Language Science and Technology, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Hom, Hong Kong, China

*Corresponding author: Qian Li

Abstract

This study examines how a cultural and creative tourism institution in China, namely the Palace Museum, represents and brands itself through the digital discourse (i.e. WeChat, Weibo and website). The multimodal resources presented in the web-mediated discourse were analyzed by drawing upon a social semiotics approach. The findings elaborate on how creative tourism's branding is communicated in accordance with the semiotic modes. The symbolic and multifaceted brand identity that embraces market-driven value while fulfilling a patriotic ideology was constructed through an interdiscursive combination of linguistic and visual resources. By examining branding strategies from a social semiotic perspective, this study contributes to existing research by extending the multimodal focus to digital discourse. The findings could be valuable to domestic practitioners who intend to communicate unique brand identity strategically.

Keywords

national branding, new media, multimodal discourse analysis, China fad, creative tourism

1. Introduction

1.1 The National Tide

From the mid-1990s into the early 2000s, China witnessed a revival of the national studies trend, which encouraged the collective endeavour to study and appreciate traditional Chinese history, culture, arts, and literature. Traditional Chinese culture functions as a profound philosophical and ideological foundation that strengthens the legitimacy of the Chinese government in its governance [1]. Characterized by a resurgence of traditional Chinese aesthetics and values, national tide emerged as a significant cultural movement in contemporary China, particularly in the realms of fashion and cultural expression. As noted by Padilla & Perez [2], social identities and culture shape social cognition, impacting decisions related to clothing, dietary

preferences, personal values, and social affiliations. The national tide represents a broader trend of cultural nationalism that seeks to redefine Chinese national identity, which evolves through interplay among multiple characteristics such as gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, and nationality [3].

As culture and identity can be shown on social media [4], they have been significant in serving as the arenas for shaping contemporary Chinese nationalism. These online spaces facilitate the negotiation of cultural identities, allowing users to explore their national heritage while engaging with global trends. Against this background, China set off a wave of reviving trendy national culture. Initially, this trend drew modest attention. However, it was not until the launch of intriguing artistic products by the Palace Museum that the trendy style truly commemorated the seminal rise. As a result of the Palace Museum's offerings, the popularity of these creative artworks soared, leading to an unprecedented demand that exceeded supply. During the early stages of the burst, the conceptual idea is still in its infancy. In a sense, it is the profusion of the artistic creation that gives rise to the birth of chilly fashion. Subsequently, people become increasingly aware of the distinct cultural identities, accompanied by an impetus to preserve historical heritage. During the past few years, a series of TV programs organized by the central government, such as *National Treasure* and *Masters in the Forbidden City,* have drawn widespread attention around the world. Meanwhile, public interest appears to be fascinated with the conventional civilization for those programs raise people's new understanding of Chinese culture.

2.   Literature Review

2.1   National Identity

Numerous studies indicate that Chinese nationalism comprises collective pride and confidence in China's cultural heritage, which has become a new means of legitimizing China's nation-building and modernization [5, 6]. The idea of "chosen glory" in Chinese nationalism is a continuous process that involves individual identification [1] The construction of a Han ethnocentric identity involved in the *Hanfu* revival among "Generation Z" embraces the reinterpretation of Chinese nationalism [7, 8]. The term Generation Z or millennial is increasingly used to label the young people born after 1995 who are digital natives with a population of 260 million in China. Many studies are concerned with the construction of social identity for the youth (e.g. [9-11]). Some other studies explore how marketing and branding ideologies permeate the institution's discursive practices from diverse perspectives, such as the internal dynamics of branding in higher education [12], leadership and branding [13], establishing successful brand construction [14, 15], and brand communication on websites [16]. However, there is insufficient study on the national brand identity reproduction in new media of creative tourism. Branding communication and brand identity should be concerned to make the tourist institutions more aware of the connection between what they represent values and characteristics, and how they are perceived by the public. Based on the gap, this research has formulated the following research questions:

RQ1: What national brand images are represented on new media such as WeChat and Weibo and the webpage?

RQ2: How is Chinese national identity performed and reproduced on creative tourism branding?

3.   Data and Analytical Framework

To establish a systemic examination, this study draws on the theories of intertextualities and Systemic Functional Linguistics [17] to investigate how multimodal resources interact in the digital communication to fulfill chic branding and cultural preservation effects. Multimodal resources such as texts and visual images will be discussed according to Kress and van Leeuwen's [18] Grammar of Visual Design regarding representational, interactive and compositional meanings. This study extended to incorporate various discursive practices associated with branding communication in the creative tourism sector. All the data will be collected from the official new media of the Palace Museum.

4.   Background

In the report at the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping advocated that Chinese people should collaborate to build a socialist modernized country and promote the overall strategy of great rejuvenation, making a strategic plan for further promoting cultural self-confidence and creating new glories of socialist culture. This initiative not only fully demonstrates the significance attached to cultural undertakings in the evolving global landscape, but also deeply reflects the positive role of building national identity in a multipolar world [19, 20]. Cultural identity is an essential component for the formation of national identity. In the context of enhancing tourists' confidence in Chinese culture, the trendy culture carries forward the national spirit and patriotism. Such a way of integration has been embraced enthusiastically by young people since it intertwines with popular culture, such as pop music, fiction and film. These iconic cultural elements collectively represent the nation in diverse manners [21]. In essence, while popular culture serves as a platform for expression and representation, it also functions as a mechanism of control, subtly influencing the beliefs and attitudes of the masses.

5. Identity Performance of Chinese Creative Tourism Brand

5.1 Reshaping Attributes of Literary Youth

The museums attempt to increase their competitiveness by designing effective image that spread their underlying ideologies. A positive brand identity is portrayed through effective linguistic and visual elements to attract young people. The selection and combination of elements are primarily driven by their dual communicative purpose: presenting a multifaceted identity of the brand and promoting it. Conceptual visual images are frequently used to reflect the brand identity by emphasizing symbolic meanings in Chinese culture.

As a leading pioneer in the marching of national fashion, the creative brand design by the palace museum has brought the exquisite and chilly products to the consumers, pushing forward the understanding and perception of the essential Chinese culture and enhancing the cultural identity. The Chinese Z generation label themselves as *wen yi qing nian*. *Wen,* which literally means "scholarship in letters or literature", refers to "qualities associated with the scholastic learning of men" [9]. *Yi,* which literally means art, refers to qualities associated with a love for art and a somewhat bohemian lifestyle. The Palace Museum uses emotional branding that exploits symbolic meanings appealing to consumers' emotional states, needs and aspirations, so the brand inspires their personal life stories, memories, and passion. As shown in Figure 1, the official Weibo of the palace museum, which posts modern jade carving art, captures the younger generation's interest. As is known to all, jade carving is a quintessential Chinese traditional craft, which embodies profound historical significance and cultural symbolism that incorporates a variety of skills striving for a synthesis of *xing*(form)*, shen*(spirit)*,* and *yi*(meaning). According to the *Book of Rites* (《礼记》), jade symbolizes the virtues of *a gentleman* (君子). In Chinese culture, the term denotes individuals of noble character, akin to the purity and perfection of jade. Historically, jade was thought to have properties that "ward off evil(辟邪)" and "bring blessings (纳福)", attributed to its robustness and smooth lustre, which were believed to ensure "auspiciousness and good fortune (吉祥如意)". The themes depicted through jade vary widely, including dragons and phoenixes, symbolising prestigious socioeconomic status. The art of jade carving has preserved the spirit and traditional values of the nation, forming an essential segment of cultural heritage and ensuring continuity through generations. In the globalized world, jade symbolizes Chinese cultural identity, helping Chinese discover and affirm their cultural roots and serving as a means of personal expression.

Figure 1: Jade Carving Art Posted on Weibo of the Palace Museum
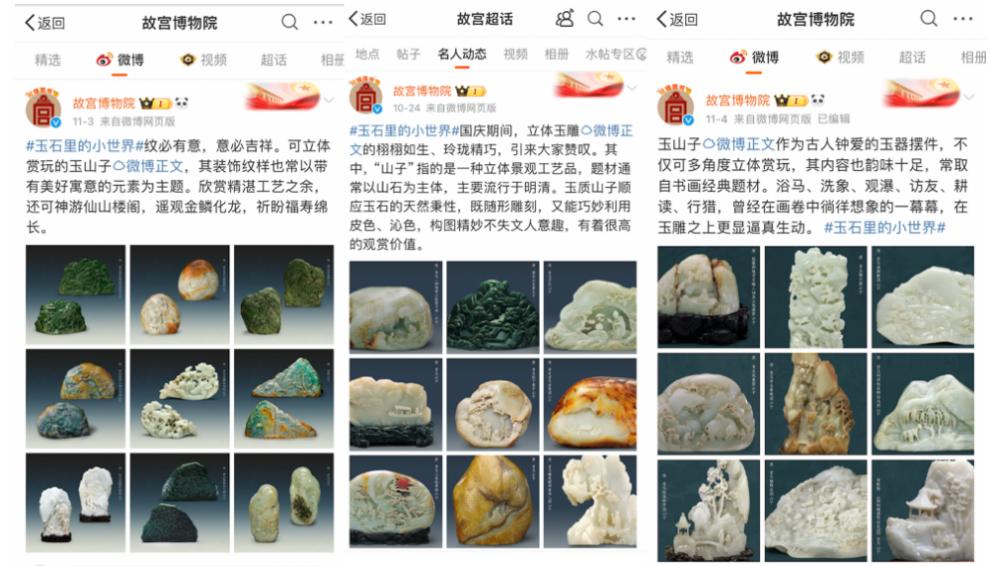
The most prominent feature of the Weibo post is the constant reference to the symbolic meaning of the jade accessories. For example, the statement "While admiring the exquisite craftsmanship, you can wander through the fairyland pavilions, watch the golden carp transforming into a dragon far away, and pray for a long life of happiness and longevity" (*欣赏精湛工艺之余,还可神游仙山楼阁,遥观金鳞化龙,祈盼福寿绵长*) highlights the projective association of jade, connotating the positive symbolic meaning. It is explicitly effective in branding as the indicators of the leisure activities enjoyed by ancient gentlemen (e.g., viewing waterfalls, visiting friends, hunting) portray a mental representation that the collection of jade carving is recreational and invaluable. As a country with a profound history and enriched civilisation, the perception of the dragon has undergone a process of evolution in its cultural formation, which can be traced back to the Neolithic Age, as long as 8,000 years ago. This is illustrated in the texts, such as using a metaphor as the accompaniment of the intellectuals, to denote that the palace museum increases its market competitiveness based on reconstructing an identity for the young consumers, that is, possessing jade decoration has increasingly become a distinctive culture exclusive to the imperial family.

Moreover, the social media Weibo plays a key role in promoting an artistic youth image. By associating the artistic jade artwork with someone who has the characteristics of "ancient style (*古风*)" and "national style(*国风*)" via verbal articulation, the perlocutionary act is fulfilled. Young consumers are prompted to develop the enthusiasm to follow the national trend, for the reason that wearing the decorations posted on Weibo coincides with the symbol of ancient imperial. Under the repackaging of social media, the Chinese brand identity became dynamic and modern, combining the classical tradition and modern affinity. The unique feature of hybridity is realized by the color catalog used by the national brand, which is reflected in that it avoids becoming stereotype in the selection of colour. Inspired by Chinese poetry, the palette of the apparel and the accessories highlights the integration of cultural connotations and personal traits that differentiate the young consumers' expression of individual styles. This new symbol is deeply identified with Generation Z in passionate affection as cultural morality. The national brand products enable the millennial to elaborate cultural systems by transforming the products into lifestyle symbols.

5.2   Reinterpreting Traditional Aesthetics: A Unique Hybridity of Tradition and Modernity

China is a society with a high pragmatism ranking, so it prefers to maintain time-honoured traditions [22]. In an age when integrating tradition and modernity is keenly pursued, it seems that the 'old is classic' is still applicable to Chinese tourism, where traditional culture and a time-honoured history are hallmarks of an established national brand, as observed in the fishing history description. The celebrity effect is also observed in the promotion of hair accessories, i.e. the fashion trend associated with it and the popular icon of ancient figures (see Figure 2). This is perceived as crucial to establishing credentials in brand discourses as tradition is greatly valued in Chinese society.

As noted by van Leeuwen [23], with the increasing quantity of competing brands, producers have begun to elaborate symbolic systems to transform their products into lifestyle symbols, to differentiate consumers in terms of expressive meanings that were traditionally associated with individual styles, such as feelings, attitudes, and personality traits. The introduction of available colours often involves evaluations. Colour catalogs are also associated with positive connotations and signify personality traits [23]. From a social semiotic perspective, the brave employ of contrastive colours on the Weibo of the palace museum, for instance, the combinations of yellow and green in Figure 2, creates a simple but refreshing atmosphere. The trendy cultural image avoids becoming a stereotypical icon in the connotation of colour, portraying the palace museum as a leading role in disseminating knowledge and fashionable innovation.

Figure 2 Accessories and Collections on Weibo of the Palace Museum
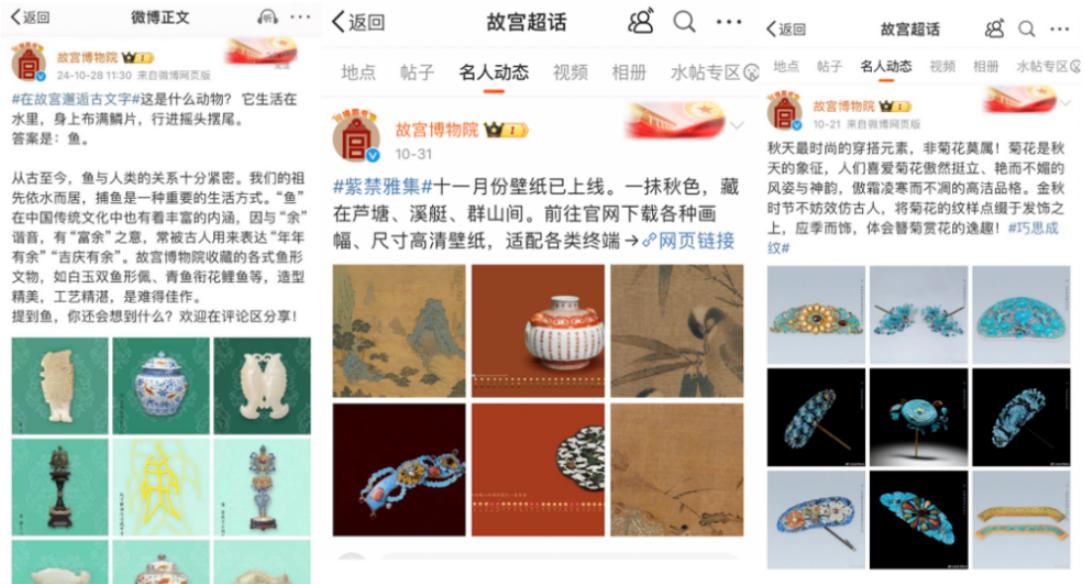
As exemplified in Figure 2, popular fashionable colours in the Chinese style are frequently used in the design of accessories and collections. For instance, "Moon White (*月白*)" reflects the delicate hue of moonlight. "Ink Blue (*黛蓝*)" is reminiscent of the deep blue used in traditional ink paintings. "Crow Blue (*鸦青*)", a dark shade similar to the sheen of a crow's feathers, and "Water Green (*水绿*)" captures the gentle tones of flowing water. Yellow holds significant cultural value in China and is often associated with imperial power, prosperity, and the earth. The national brand chose the most distinctive yellow as the main colour of the headwear and ornaments, observing the hybridity of appeals regarding product performance, social justice, economic egalitarianism, and sensitivity to the environment, which indicates multi-valued emotional branding.

These colours are inspired by various elements from traditional patterns, artefacts, literary works, and apparel. This palette with Chinese cultural roots not only shows the characteristics and charm of traditional culture but also highlights its cultural connotations and artistic conception. With the background of a modern colour scheme, the ancient style of cultural literacy is represented in a modern style that is pure, fresh, and elegant. The incorporation of ancient and national styles is the tone of China's national identity, which is manifested in "an entanglement of modern feminist ideas and traditional anti-feminist values" [10]. The attributes of independence and difference are deeply identified with young people in passionate affection as cultural morality.

Creative tourist discourse practice is shaped as somehow distinct from corporate communication. One remarkable feature is adopting a conversational style (i.e. riddle) to establish an intimate and interactive posture (see Figure 2). Such an intimate sense is evident in the text of the post. These colloquial expressions mimic the tenor of the conversation in effecting a friendly tone, with the application of the double exclamation marks and question marks further signifying a sense of resonance. This conversational genre is regarded as an attempt to imitate the customer-oriented marketing discourse to draw audiences to the brand.

Colloquial Expressions of Weibo Post

Text 1. 这不是我们嬛嬛吗?

[Isn't it Zhenhuan (a character based on the Empress Xiaoshengxian, Lady Niohuru, consort of the Yongzheng Emperor and mother of the Qianlong Emperor)?]

Text 2. 别说生活在十八世纪的中国,就是现在来说,这母子俩也是高寿的,况且他们真正做到了大富贵寿亦考!!

[Not to mention that even in 18th century China, this mother and son would have lived a long life, but they have truly achieved great wealth and longevity!!]
(Note on November 6)

The combination of national fashion colours portrays the confident optimism and passion of the modern young people, which is consistent with the cultural identity of trendy China. This cultural identity will build an emotional connection with young consumers, who recognize that Chinese aesthetics should represent the vogue cultural image, with trends as the foundation and driving force for its development. By innovating from being influenced by traditional culture to enhancing understanding through the consumption of creative products, social media has played a significant role in changing people's attitudes to national culture by establishing a creative cultural identity. The evolving of social media enable participants to make contribution to share the content, changing from passive viewing to engaging participation of media topics [24]. This shift has changed how cultures are affected by symbolic media and, in turn, how cultures may interplay with new media [25].

5.3   Repackaging Cultural Image: Chilly Adaptability and Avant-garde Innovation

The branding effect is also reinforced by introducing the techonology-based identity of the palace museum. Regarding interpersonal meaning, the Palace Museum stands as an exemplary of adaptability and innovation its digital initiatives. National tide culture emphasizes the inheritance of traditional values and the combination of modern innovation, through which young people can not only respect traditional culture but also show their adaptability and innovation in their modern lifestyles. The Palace Museum exemplifies adaptability and innovation through its digital initiatives, which enhance visitor engagement and cultural experience. The filming technique shown on the Wechat of the palace museum uses close-up, medium and long-distance shots to represent the beauty and mystery of the ancient collections from different perspectives. The palace museum is the traditional cultural icon of China that is deeply rooted in the heart of Chinese people. The design uses 3D technique and virtual reality to reshape the brand-new image of the imperial symbol. According to Visual Grammar, the long-distance shot is used to express the grandness and magnificence of the architecture (see Figure 3). In contrast, medium-distance shot reduces the separation between the young viewer and the collection, offering opportunities for them to appreciate the exquisiteness of the antiquities. Finally, along the progressive transition to close-up, the exquisite details of the cultural relics are exposed to the audience. In such a way of alternatively employing different shots, the essential artistic craftsmanship of the ancient Chinese interacts with the viewers, thus generating perceived ease under the immersive digital experience. Moreover, by using the panoramic view, the overview of the palace museum is sketched within a second. The incorporation of digital technology with ancient heritages can represent the spiritual factors of Chinese cultural image----adaptive and creative. This cultural identity can lead to tourist's satisfaction in intangible cultural heritage tourism, where satisfaction entails loyalty.

Facilitated by the multimodal display of the WeChat game, the palace's interface layout shows a balanced distribution of images that creates visual harmony. As viewers, we naturally slide or scroll the displayed artefacts in the left-to-right flow. The color in the background contrasts with that of the artefacts, making each object stand out against a generally neutral or dark background. The frontal angles of the artifacts allow for clear visibility of the features and textures, facilitating direct engagement. The integration of VR in museum branding, as illustrated by the digital representation of the Forbidden City, exerts great impact on the construction of social identity for the Z generation. This fusion fosters a sense of belonging, empowering young individuals to reinterpret cultural heritage in ways that align with their digital lifestyles and social values.

The palace museum aims to establish an equal relationship with the visitors by allowing viewers to perceive the three-dimensional form of the ancient artefacts to have a sense of omniscience. In terms of camera angles, eye levels are frequently used to show the antiques, such as the Cloisonné kettles (景泰蓝) and the enamel (珐琅) that suggests a friendly connection with the viewer. Introducing the delicate metalwork and the intricate designs that implicate imperial luxury in an approachable manner. In order to create a more dynamic and intriguing visual narrative, Porcelain (瓷器) vases with floral patterns are taken from a frontal angle (e.g., Fig. 3), projecting a sense of immersion so that the represented images are part of the readers' world. The exterior design of the palace architecture is shot from an oblique angle. As Kress and van Leeuwen [18] noted, an oblique angle may imply an exclusive stance. A social distance has been created to appeal to the visitors with a larger view that strategically beckons them to probe into the imperial mystery through real experience to a greater extent. In addition, VR technology is used to illustrate the traditional architectural style of northern China's traditional courtyard (四合院). This captures the essence of innovation faced with the modern challenges in creative tourism [26]. The marketing system operates in a broad socio-cultural context that involves the country's political, social, and moral values. The central layout of these courtyards is shown by bird's views. This layout stands for balance and harmony that fosters familial unity and coexistence between humans and nature. All these components collectively represent the beliefs of Chinese on spirit and philosophical ideals. For young people who are very attached to the deep historical roots of their culture, this promoting strategy is powerful.

The rise of the national tide was established under the framework of cultural adaptation and innovation that may forge new paths for developing national brands in the competitive landscape. By embracing and reinterpreting traditional aesthetics, Chinese brands are creating a dialogue between the past and the present essential for fostering national identity, as they seek to redefine what it means to be Chinese in a diverse world.

Figure 3 Wechat Platform of V Palace Museum

5.4   Reassessing Chinese Cultural Values: Individuality and Self-Creation

Branding is a management concept [12] that refers to a fundamental strategic process of effective marketing, which involves promoting the products or services as well as establishing a brand name and identity to develop a competitive advantage for institutions [27]. Since 2008, many national trends have emerged, blending Chinese brand heritage with contemporary aesthetics and cutting-edge technology. This has driven a shift from "Made in China" to "Created in China", exemplified by innovative domestic brands like *Huawei and Xiaomi*, now esteemed as "the pride of Chinese products". Characterized by the trendy design that cultivates comprehensive Chinese aesthetics, they have progressively received the young generation's admiration, leading to the term "year of the national trend" and "paying for nostalgic feelings" emerging as a prevalent buzzword for 2018. Prior to 2018, national trends referred to niche and unconventional designer brands, different from the contemporary denotation that investigated not only the market but also the reassessment of Chinese cultural values.

Following its successful economic reform, the Chinese nationalism has turned to its quest for great cultural resources. The Chinese Z generation sustained their patriotic consensus through mingling popular culture with innumerable iconic cultural elements that signify the nation in multiple and contested ways. The mass culture such as pop music, fiction and film further "subdues the spirit and intelligence of the 'people' by the ideological messages it transmits, shaped around values which assert the benefits of materialism, glamour and individualism" [21]

The brand image of the palace museum, "cute Yongzheng(萌萌的雍正)", combines traditional culture with a chilly conveyance through the promotional slogan "Your majesty cannot see through it (朕不能看透)" for an eye mask, emphasizing the good quality of the product while fulfilling the museum's public service duties, such as sociocultural education. The narrative style is emotional, focusing on portraying historical figures in anecdotes and restoring ancient daily life through minor characters and stories, whose vibrant and lively storytelling style is adaptive to the Z generation (see Text 3 and Text 4).

Figure 4: The brand image of the Palace Museum from Sohu.com

Text 3: "死板的文物通过动态介绍讲解和演绎等等,好像跨越时间距离让生

活在21世纪的我'见到'了生活在清朝的雍正皇帝"(微信平台留言)。

[Dynamic introductions, explanations and interpretations enable me to "meet" Emperor Yongzheng who lived in the Qing Dynasty, through the immovable remnants of culture in a manner that seems to blur the spatiotemporal boundaries.]

---- A WeChat reviewer

Text 4: "之前我只觉得雍正是通常意义上的皇帝形象,很少了解。微信平台上雍正的形象更加贴近自身的生活,可以了解到他的一些比较俗的喜好,从个人审美的角度看到他个人性格的一面"(微信平台留言)。

[I just simply regarded Yongzheng as the stereotypical image of the Chinese emperor while knowing quite little about him. The graphic representation of Qianlong on the Wechat app is more approachable to my real life, through which I can learn about his common interests and discover his personal traits from my aesthetic perspective.]

---- A WeChat reviewer

The recognition of cultural values is essential to cultural identity. In other words, the acknowledgement of cultural values indicates that all members possess an accurate comprehension and profound insight into the value implications intrinsic to their culture. The conditions for this acknowledgement of values are inextricably linked to a particular national structure and framework that constitutes a logical rationale for cultural values, offering cultural impetus for forming collective values among individual members of society. According to Hoyer, et.al [28], within social media, interpersonal connectivity is formed through social networking sites, leading to a complete shift in social connection patterns of people. The national brands find important connotations from the retrospective elements of Chinese culture that match the spiritual ideology and

sociocultural trends. By juxtaposing innovations with modern aesthetic implications, positive emotional connection is elicited among young consumers.

Figure 5 Palace Museum's Homepage

The palace museum's homepage is designed as a hypertextual webpage which encompasses several sub-pages. Visitors will first read or at least scan the main page before their in-depth navigation. Regarding compositional structure, since Chinese culture is characterized by high power distance, which means collectivistic interests and obligations are above individual interests and pleasure [29]. For this reason, the layout of the palace museum website is more complicated and hierarchical like the Chinese character *guo* (literally means country), displaying an unsymmetrical structure. Specially, the homepage is divided into distinct zones with special content. The first zone is the masthead banner for displaying the logo and name of the museum, which is generally located at the top left of the webpages (as indicated in Figure 5). The generic function of displaying the logo and name of the museum is to identify the institution. These two graphical elements, logographically and typographically, together define the visual brand identity of the museum. There is an element of aesthetics in creating the palace museum's logo: from an emblem that is loaded with figurative images (e.g. the architecture) to a symbolic and multifaceted identity which is reminiscent of the museum's cultural connotation (i.e., Chinese names presented in calligraphy). In terms of the names, the size of the Chinese character name is larger than the corresponding Roman letter name. Meanwhile, the Chinese character name is placed above the Roman letter name. It reveals that the Chinese character name, as the ideal and salient information, deserves more emphasis on identifying the museum image [18]. The application of bond font for the number of collections implied an official attitudinal meaning to project a sense of professionalism in academia. In contrast, the large font of the title for the virtual tour offering indicates a formal sense of digital technology for the museum. Moving down the banner, there is a dynamic masthead picture that takes up the most conspicuous space on the webpage. This image makes the page visually intricate and engaging, stimulating readers' interest to continue the web reading.

To align readers attitudinally towards the webpage and the content, the homepage seeks to establish zones by displaying the organization of the webpage into functional sections. The homepage uses a top-middle-

bottom approach on its layout to present information, which is common to many corporate web-mediated genres. The webpage offers a freedom of navigation to audiences. The dropdown and clickable navigation menus located at the top is utilized to guide readers to get access to multiple information about the museum. As web readers, we tend to systematically view the online discourse according to grid sections from the top to the bottom and from left to right. According to Kress and van Leeuwen [18], the elements on the upper part of the page appeal to the viewer's emotions, expressing ideal elements that are more salient and simply contain the general essence of information. However, the elements on the bottom have an informative appeal to show practical and specific information. The engaging content and elements are placed at the middle of the museum webpage with a salient space, such as the digital collection of the antiques, the graphics of the latest exhibitions and the opening information. The palace museum uses dark colors as the background of top and bottom banners, which project a classical sense and aesthetic image of the webpage. Texts about news releasing, activity updating, academic exchange and social media tag, and graphics about the digital museum cluster in the middle of the page with a bright-color background. It implies the importance of information organization, which shows a preferred way of presenting the the most pivotal information at the center place in professional and promotional settings.

6.   Conclusion

This study employs a multimodal social semiotic analysis to investigate the national brand identity of Chinese museum through the new media of creative tourism. It identifies key attributes of Chinese national branding, including literary youth, a blend of tradition and modernity, and individuality. The study illustrates how national brands of creative tourism use branding strategies to publicise prestigious cultural heritages and chic marketing in promotional discourses. These strategies reshape their brand image as a bond echoed by consumers' aspirations that fosters a unique youth subculture integrating popular culture with national icons. It reveals an interdiscursive mix of being informative, promotional as well as interpersonal. This is displayed through a fusion of different modes of communication.

The Palace Museum strongly prefers pictures symbolizing cultural values, which present historical architecture as both magnificence and grandeur, with the purpose of reminding viewers of the long-established history. Chinese society prefers to maintain traditional and cultural norms; therefore, a time-honored history is the hallmark. This finding supports that tourism discourses are culture-based, and that they originate in accordance with the social contexts in which they are rooted. The museum also portrays itself as an exemplification of deploying cutting-edge modern technology and offering a user-friendly digital museum experience. This approach suggests that the creative tourism brand strives to establish a prestigious and innovative identity as a professional institution within the cultural preservation sphere. They aim to be seen as both stewards of history and culture and as contributors to public education. This study contributes to expanding the knowledge regarding branding practice, identity construction, and marketization in the creative tourism industry.

However, the consumption frenzy of creative tourism has intensified a trend toward commodity fetishism. Excessive commercialization may trap young people in cultural consumerism, which may be attributed to their desire for consumption as a means of displaying identity and individuality. As a result, it may cause a loss of personal spiritual development. In order to rectify this, the national brand for creative tourism should negotiate the tension between preserving culture and drowning in the overpowering effects of consumerism. Future studies should consider how to strike a balance between the protection of cultural heritage and thoughtful commercialization in brand communication.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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