

## The Relationship Between Chinese Calligraphy and Modern Fashion Design for Chinese Identity of Z Generation Young People

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores how calligraphy, an important part of traditional Chinese culture, influences modern fashion design among young people in China's Generation Z. As this group increasingly expresses interest in their cultural identity and heritage, the research uses quantitative method to understand this trend. Recent trends indicate a renewed interest among the youth in choosing fashion that reflects cultural heritage, as seen in the popularity of traditional styles at fashion events and on social media. By using case studies and surveys, the study provides practical insights for fashion designers. It suggests that incorporating traditional elements in fashion not only enhances aesthetic appeal but also strengthens cultural identity. The research finds a positive link between income levels and cultural identity, suggesting that those with higher incomes have more resources to explore and showcase their cultural roots. Interestingly, the study finds that individuals from lower-income backgrounds also show a strong cultural identity, possibly using cultural expression as a form of empowerment. The analysis further indicates that a person's occupation and education significantly shape their cultural identity, influencing their fashion preferences. With its significant findings from variance analysis, the study stresses the importance of these factors in cultural expression. By gathering detailed insights from case studies and consumer feedback, the study offers specific guidance for designers looking to blend traditional Chinese elements with modern fashion, thereby promoting cultural appreciation and exchange on a global stage.

**Keywords:** Calligraphic elements, Cultural identity, Modern fashion design, Z generation.

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## Hubungan antara Kaligrafi Cina dan Reka Bentuk Fesyen Moden untuk Identiti Cina dalam Kalangan Anak Muda Generasi Z

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### ABSTRAK

*Kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengkaji kaedah elemen kaligrafi, aspek utama budaya tradisional Cina, mempunyai kaitan yang signifikan dengan reka bentuk fesyen moden, untuk identiti anak muda Cina generasi Z. Dengan menggunakan analisis kuantitatif, kajian ini bertujuan mencari cara yang lebih baik untuk menggabungkan elemen kaligrafi dengan fesyen kontemporari. Dengan menggunakan analisis kuantitatif, kajian ini bertujuan membangunkan rangka kerja yang menggabungkan unsur budaya tradisional dengan identiti budaya, menawarkan idea kreatif baharu untuk pereka fesyen kontemporari untuk mempromosikan budaya tradisional Cina. Oleh itu, dengan menggunakan analisis kes dan soal selidik, kajian ini mencadangkan hubungan yang signifikan antara tahap pendapatan dan identiti budaya. Tahap pendapatan yang lebih tinggi dikaitkan dengan skor identiti budaya yang lebih tinggi. Ini menunjukkan bahawa walaupun identiti budaya cenderung meningkat dengan pendapatan, ia amat kukuh dalam kalangan pelajar berpendapatan rendah. Selain itu, analisis varians menunjukkan bahawa identiti budaya berbeza dengan ketara dengan pekerjaan dan latar belakang pendidikan yang berbeza. Nilai-p yang ketara menunjukkan bahawa pekerjaan dan pendidikan adalah penting dalam membentuk identiti budaya, mempengaruhi cara individu berhubung dengan warisan budaya mereka. Melalui kajian kes terperinci dan tinjauan tentang sikap dan penerimaan pengguna muda, kajian ini menawarkan maklum balas pasaran dan panduan reka bentuk untuk pereka fesyen dan jenama. Ini membantu mengimbangi warisan budaya dengan inovasi fesyen, mempromosikan penerokaan dan pemeliharaan budaya tradisional Cina dan memudahkan pertukaran budaya.*

**Kata Kunci:** Elemen kaligrafi, Bentuk fesyen moden, Generasi Z, Identiti budaya

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## 1.0 Introduction

Clothing is a basic necessity for humans, and over time, it has grown from a simple need to a significant cultural symbol. Fashion design is deeply connected to society, reflecting changes in culture and social values throughout history and across different regions (Tomasic, 2023). As societies develop, fashion evolves as well, acting not only as a form of artistic expression but also as a measure of social change and cultural identity. The various styles and choices in clothing around the world highlight the different ways people understand and experience life, influenced by their unique cultures and lifestyles. Features like graphics, colours, shapes, and textures in clothing hold important cultural meanings, representing the shared values and heritage of a community. The popularity of these design elements shows their significance in culture, emphasising fashion's role in both maintaining and evolving cultural traditions. Fashion acts as a mirror for personal and collective expression, impacting and reflecting cultural and social changes (Tomasic, 2023). The influence of fashion is particularly clear in modern clothing trends, which have reshaped aesthetic tastes, ways of living, and cultural values.

Chinese calligraphy is seen as a fundamental part of Chinese culture, representing a rich history and a consistent tradition that goes beyond just writing. It emphasises the philosophical and artistic values that come with the practice. In recent times, however, calligraphy has undergone significant changes, branching into many new artistic forms within both visual and performing arts (Lezzi, 2024). This transformation demonstrates calligraphy's flexibility and its ability to blend with modern art movements while preserving its cultural significance. For example, contemporary artists are using calligraphic techniques in various mediums such as painting, sculpture, and digital art, creating new works that connect with current social issues and artistic trends. Calligraphy, however, is being reimagined in performance arts, where live demonstrations and interactive exhibits let audiences experience this age-old craft in new and exciting ways (Lezzi, 2024). This broadening of artistic expressions, known as 'art from calligraphy,' showcases how calligraphy remains relevant today and its ability to flourish in our interconnected world, where cultural exchange promotes the merging of traditional and modern art forms.

Moreover, traditional cultural elements in China are diverse and unique, deeply influencing Chinese consumers (Shi & Jiang, 2022). These longstanding elements are treasures of Chinese visual culture, expressing ideas through graphics or characters (Yu, 2022). However, with the advancement of modern society, traditional culture faces challenges in its preservation as aspects such as language, clothing, and lifestyle gradually modernise (Zhu et al., 2022). Modern development has revitalised the spread of traditional culture globally. Incorporating traditional cultural elements into modern designs satisfies contemporary consumers' desires for products with unique cultural backgrounds, creating inclusive and fashionable aesthetics (Liu, 2023). In the context of cultural diversification and global economic growth, promoting Chinese traditional culture globally is essential for establishing national cultural confidence (Wu, 2021).

In relation to Chinese calligraphy, it embodies the essence of Chinese culture. Preserving calligraphy enhances cultural identity and pride while driving innovation in the arts (Liu, 2022). Calligraphy is deeply connected with fashion design in terms of historical roots, aesthetics, and artistic techniques (Wang, 2023). The focus of clothing design research has shifted over time. Before 2004, research was fragmented, but between 2004 and 2010, it



centred on cross-cultural and regional fashion. Since 2011, the emphasis has been on cultural, regional, and traditional ethnic clothing (Zou et al., 2022). With societal development and improved living standards, Chinese consumers increasingly demand creative clothing that balances practicality and artistry (Wei, 2020).

Moreover, the rapid evolution of modern clothing design has shortened the popularity cycles of fashion. Consumers now have higher expectations for the aesthetic and creative quality of fashion products (Kwon & Kim, 2019). Traditional marketing methods in fashion no longer suffice, necessitating innovative approaches in clothing design (Susilowati & Sugandini, 2018; Abalos, 2020). Addressing the emotional needs of consumers in design and marketing enhances brand competitiveness, as emotional engagement drives brand loyalty (Adhikari & Pan, 2019). Ethnocentrism, the belief in the superiority of one's group, influences consumer behaviour in China (El Banna et al., 2018). This trend of Chinese nationalism in consumption is evident (Shi & Jiang, 2022). In ethnocentric cultures, designers often incorporate their cultural concepts into their designs (Shi & Jiang, 2022). Recently, there has been a movement in modern design to merge traditional Chinese cultural elements with contemporary designs, yielding successful results (Ni et al., 2022).

### *Problem Statement*

The link between fashion and culture is strong, shaping how clothing design reflects the values and traditions of all Chinese people in China. In fashion studies, key cultural ideas such as cultural heritage, traditional craftsmanship, cultural transmission, and cultural identity are essential (Zou et al., 2022). Fashion trends develop from the various cultures and regions they originate from, so understanding these traditional cultures is vital for appreciating the complexities of fashion (Zou & Joneurairatana, 2020). When designers incorporate traditional cultural elements into their clothing, they boost creativity while adding cultural significance and unique traits to the garments. This approach not only enhances the visual appeal of fashion but also helps preserve and advance Chinese culture (Liu, 2023). By wearing fashion that reflects their cultural heritage, individuals build a sense of identity and continuity that is important for personal expression and cultural representation. Thus, integrating traditional elements into modern clothing design is an effective way for Chinese people, in general, to honour and maintain their rich cultural heritage while adapting to contemporary global influences. Designers have a cultural responsibility to express national traditions through visual symbols, effectively spreading culture globally (Liu et al., 2018).

Incorporating traditional cultural elements into modern clothing design not only reflects changing tastes among the public but also helps to preserve and promote traditional culture (Wang, 2023). More and more Chinese designers are realising the importance of including traditional culture in their fashion designs (Wang, 2021). The blending of traditional Chinese elements is becoming a strong influence in contemporary fashion, with designers working to integrate these cultural features into their collections (Yin, 2019). However, this process does present some challenges. Some designers might only apply traditional elements in a superficial way, leading to a lack of true creativity and depth in their designs (Wang, 2021). Others may focus too much on their personal artistic expression, overlooking what consumers actually want (Ma, 2022). Despite a strong desire to innovate in modern clothing design, effectively showcasing the rich and complex aspects of Chinese traditional culture can be difficult. Therefore, it is essential for designers to approach these challenges carefully, ensuring their work reflects both the cultural heritage they wish to honour and the interests of today's audience. Designers must further study these traditions deeply to capture their



essence while also integrating modern design concepts (Ma, 2022).

Traditional university curriculums often overemphasize theoretical research and lack practical guidance on design innovation, limiting the education of designers (Ma, 2022). The future of fashion design will inevitably involve the application of traditional cultural elements. Consumers today are motivated by more than just practicality; they seek cultural meaning, personalization, and spiritual satisfaction in clothing. The younger generation, in particular, desires unique clothing that reflects their cultural identity. This presents challenges for fashion designers in merging traditional cultural elements with modern design (Yu, 2022). Consequently, research into the use of calligraphy elements in modern fashion design and the cultural identity of Generation Z is essential. Thus, based on the stated problem statement, the objectives of this study are, firstly to identify the incorporation of Chinese calligraphy in modern fashion design, secondly to explore the perception among z generation towards Chinese calligraphy elements in fashion, and eventually propose guidelines for ethical fashion design in Chinese calligraphy context.

This study's theoretical significance lies in exploring how calligraphic elements, a key aspect of Chinese traditional culture, can be integrated into modern fashion design. By using quantitative analyses, the study aims to find better ways to combine calligraphic elements with contemporary fashion. Moreover, this study offers valuable research methods for applying traditional Chinese cultural elements in modern fashion design. Using case analysis and questionnaires, it examines how calligraphic elements are used in fashion and their effects. This provides insights for similar research. By employing quantitative analyses, the study aims to develop a framework that combines traditional cultural elements with cultural identity, offering new creative ideas for contemporary fashion designers to promote traditional Chinese culture. And eventually, this study provides new ways to incorporate calligraphic elements into modern fashion design. Through detailed case studies and surveys on young consumers' attitudes and acceptance, it offers market feedback and design guidance for fashion designers and brands. This helps balance cultural heritage with fashion innovation, promoting the exploration and preservation of Chinese traditional culture and facilitating cultural exchange.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Chinese Traditional Elements and Modern Clothing Design**

Before blending traditional elements with modern clothing design, designers must follow three steps: defining the theme, selecting and analysing materials, and extracting and applying elements. After gathering relevant case studies and creating a database, core elements are extracted from the materials. Designers can then adjust the proportion and layout of these elements and integrate them into modern designs. Throughout this process, balancing ideals and sensibility is crucial (Zhang, 2021).

New Chinese designers use two main methods to integrate traditional elements with modern design. The first method is to visualise and symbolise traditional cultural elements to convey meaning. The second method is to reinterpret these elements by incorporating them into the style, fabric, pattern, colour, or production process of clothing design (Yang, 2023). In combining traditional cultural elements with modern clothing design, it is important to ensure the



quality, emotional appeal, and diversity of the clothing (Fu, 2022). When reorganising traditional Chinese cultural elements, designers should extract key characteristics and recombine them according to specific design requirements. This allows them to retain cultural significance while making reasonable modifications (Wang, 2022). Fabric selection should consider both comfort and composition to ensure the final product effectively showcases cultural elements (Zhang et al., 2022). In choosing colours, designers must account for the cultural meanings of different colours to preserve their significance (Zhang et al., 2022).

## 2.2 Calligraphy Elements and Contemporary Fashion Design

Calligraphy is a prominent traditional art form in China, emphasising the form and structure of brushstrokes to convey cultural and spiritual meanings. It seeks to express the calligrapher's thoughts and emotions through artistic mood and conception (Wang, 2023). In modern fashion design, calligraphic elements can be applied directly or indirectly. Direct applications include techniques such as embroidery, applique, patchwork, knitting, and printing and dyeing (Xu, 2012).

In terms of direct incorporation, firstly, there is embroidery, which is a key craft in traditional Chinese ethnic cultures and involves using needles and threads to create decorative patterns on fabric (Chen, 2007). While modern fashion often uses machine embroidery for efficiency, this method replicates traditional manual embroidery by creating patterns on a grid and sewing them onto garments with a flat sewing machine (Xu, 2012). Calligraphy embroidery combines calligraphic art with traditional Chinese embroidery, adding cultural and artistic value to clothing (Xiao, 2021). By using calligraphy in embroidery, designers can showcase their understanding of traditional culture and promote its dissemination. This technique appeals to consumers seeking personalised and innovative clothing, enhancing the attractiveness of the garments (Wang, 2023).

Secondly, the appliqué and patchwork involve cutting and attaching fabrics to garments. Appliqué uses sewing for attachment, while patchwork uses adhesive to create a three-dimensional effect. Both techniques are easy to implement and suitable for mass production (Zhou, 2022). And thirdly, there is knitting, which involving intricately wrapping and sewing calligraphic works onto clothing, using the artistic flow of lines. This technique is often seen on areas like trouser cuffs and belts, connecting the upper and lower parts of the garment and highlighting the design (Xu, 2012).

And then, in terms of indirect incorporation, firstly is the font style which Chinese calligraphy features six main styles, which are regular script (楷书), clerical script (隶书), running script (行书), seal script (篆书), cursive script (草书), and Yan style (燕书), in which each with unique characteristics and meanings (Qin, 2013).

In fashion design, regular, running, and cursive scripts are commonly used, as their variations enhance clothing designs in distinct ways (Wang & Zu, 2012). For instance, a designer incorporated seal script elements on the shoulders and sashes of gowns at a Cairo Opera House fashion show. The regular script follows strict rules, including stroke length and angles. Designers use its structured nature with techniques like wrapping to create garments that appear square,





upright, and restrained (Sun et al., 2008). The cursive script, characterised by connected strokes and rounded brushwork, lacks strict rules and allows for free expression. Designers can use large, asymmetrical fabrics and irregular folds to create simple and elegant clothing, reflecting the script's unrestrained style (Ma, 2010). Then, running script balances regular and cursive scripts, offering flexibility without being too rigid or too free. Designers can incorporate this spirit into fabric cutting, creating garments that are both structured and fluid (Zhao & Qin, 2006).

Secondly is the stroke lines, in which the lines play a crucial role in both calligraphy and fashion design. The beauty of calligraphy lies in the strokes, expressing the calligrapher's spirit through variations in lines. Straight strokes convey dignity and stability, while curves evoke softness and elegance. Fashion designers use contour, structural, and division lines to enhance creativity and expression in clothing. For example, in qipao design, line variations decorate collars, cuffs, and hems, blending calligraphy with fashion/ Ancient designers used lines to segment space on clothing, highlighting the golden ratio of the body and adding layers to garments. Soft lines on skirts emphasised femininity and layering (Yuan, 1994). The intricate changes in calligraphy strokes, such as lifting, pressing, and retracting the brush, inspire fashion designers to innovate with clothing lines. Decorative techniques like edging and lace on collars can mirror the starting and finishing strokes of calligraphy (Yuan, 2000).

Thirdly, the colour and ink tones also influence fashion design. Chinese designers, influenced by Confucianism, prefer pure colours and use blue, red, yellow, white, and black as basic colours. The Yin-Yang and Five Elements theory elevated yellow as a primary colour, while red became popular for its auspicious connotations (Zhao, 2022). In calligraphy, the depth and layers of ink convey emotions; thick ink expresses excitement, while light ink conveys relaxation. Fashion designers can use these tonal variations to create depth and combinations within the same colour, enhancing the artistic conception of clothing.

### **2.3 Aesthetic Values and Clothing Consumption among Young Chinese**

Aesthetics is the ability to perceive the compatibility and beauty of fashion items. It influences clothing design on two levels. The first level is shaped by a collective consensus, where widely recognised aesthetics impact mainstream fashion design. The second level involves aesthetics created by designers using their expertise (Hawthorne, 1967; Eckman, 1992; Entwistle, 2009; Zou et al., 2022). Fashion is seen as a form of individualisation and self-expression (Mayer, 2018). For communities, ethnic groups, or cultural backgrounds, fashion acts as a mirror (Fatonah et al., 2022). Young people seek fashion and personalisation to express their attitudes (Chen, 2016). In this ever-changing era, young consumers pursue personalised fashion to express different personalities and voices through their consumption behaviours. Nowadays, the focus has shifted from the functionality of clothing to its cultural connotations (Guo & Xiao, 2021). Chinese fashion consumers are moving from material to spiritual consumption.

According to McKinsey's 2019 Global Fashion Industry Report, China's young



population spent \$35 to \$38 billion on trendy brands (Lu, 2019). The 2019 China Trendy Consumption Development Report highlighted the expanding market share of Guochao clothing brands, now accounting for 15% of the market (Zhou, 2020). The report also noted that those born after 1995 and 2000, known as Generation Z, are becoming the main force in the Guochao market. This generation, born between the 1990s and 2010, is characterised by high confidence in national culture and expresses their attachment to clothing design through Guochao (Su, 2021). Guochao clothing integrates Chinese cultural elements with modern fashion, demonstrating significant market potential (Hauschild et al., 2020). The core of Guochao brands lies in the cultural empathy and identification of consumers with the clothing. Guochao represents cultural consumption, satisfying personal spiritual needs and fostering recognition and resonance among modern Chinese youth (Pan, 2016). This consumption reflects their social community and fulfils certain moral obligations (Bergman, 2005). However, many local Guochao brands struggle with aesthetic appeal while trying to highlight traditional elements (Dai, 2007).

The 2021 Baidu Guochao Search Big Data report showed a 528% surge in interest in Guochao over the past decade, with the clothing industry being the most popular sector for Guochao consumers (Zhang & Tian, 2021). The 2022 Young Consumer Insight Report found that Generation Z in China accounts for 74% of Guochao brand consumption (Baidu People's Research Institute, 2022). Data from China's largest trendy brand app "DE's" indicated that Generation Z contributes to over 87% of Guochao consumption (Huang, 2022). Generation Z consumers are willing to consume products that reflect cultural confidence and new Chinese-style aesthetics, finding community recognition and belonging through these consumption behaviours (Sun, 2021).

## **2.4 Research Theories**

There are two applicable theories in this study, which are cultural identity theory and symbolic interactionism theory. Firstly, cultural identity theory is a broad theory encompassing multiple fields, such as sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies, and it lacks specific representative scholars. Identity can be defined and understood from both psychological and sociological perspectives. Psychologically, identity involves the process of individuals psychologically aligning with others or groups. Sociologically, individual identity is the process of enhancing one's personality by assimilating external elements, while social identity involves individuals expressing a sense of belonging to a group through their behaviour (Vaughan & Rodriguez, 2013)

The degree of identification refers to the extent to which the information conveyed by an object aligns with one's self-concept (Rio et al., 2001). Sociologically, this can include ethnic, national, social, and cultural identities. Cultural identity focuses on how individuals express their beliefs through identification, whereas other forms of identity emphasise defining who individuals are. Many scholars have defined cultural identity as the behaviour of individuals expressing themselves through their attitudes and actions based on their recognition of cultural objects (Erikson, 1968; Belk, 1988).





Research on cultural identity is shifting from qualitative studies to empirical research. Oetting and Beauvais (1990) defined the degree of cultural identification as the extent to which an individual consciously invests in or belongs to a cultural group. Scholars construct cultural identity scales to conduct empirical research, with the Cultural Identity Scale (OCIS) by Oetting and Beauvais (1990) being one of the most representative tools for measuring cultural identification in cross-cultural contexts. Dehyle (1992) suggested that cultural identity scales should focus on dimensions like cultural investment, cultural belonging, and cultural integration.

The second applicable research theory in this study is the symbolic interactionism theory. This theory is proposed by George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer in the early 20th century, explores how individuals interact with society to form their sense of self. Mead described how these interactions occur within a symbolic environment, where a shared understanding of social context allows individuals to shape society through their interactions (Mead, 1934). Symbolic Interactionism adds complexity and significance to ideas by endowing objects, such as clothing, with meaning. Preiholt (2012) used this theory to explain the shift from collective fashion choices to individual styles, noting that the meaning of clothing changes based on different times, places, and the roles of designers.

### **3.0 Methodology**

#### **3.1 Selection of Research Methods**

The research design framework categorises methodologies into quantitative analysis based on research objectives (Creswell, 2003:2). Quantitative research aims to extend existing knowledge by exploring and discovering new insights (Flick, 2002; Waller et al., 2016). It emphasises broad understanding without intervention, enabling diverse and profound studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative methods, like surveys, ensure data reliability but require substantial sample sizes and may struggle with non-digitizable social phenomena (Dudwick et al., 2006).

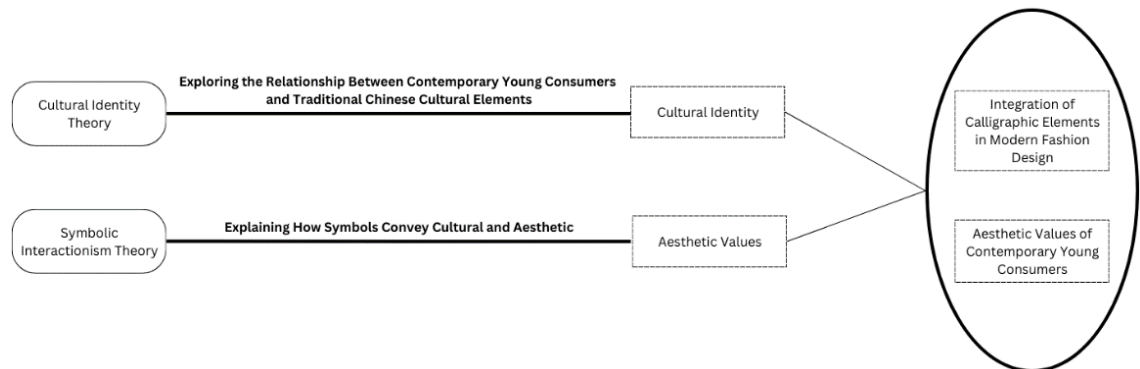
#### **3.2 Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts Cultural Identity Theory and Symbolic Interactionism Theory as its theoretical frameworks. Cultural Identity Theory encompasses cultural identity, cultural symbols, and cultural interaction. Cultural identity refers to how individuals integrate cultural values into their sense of belonging to a specific culture. Cultural symbols are expressions that embody these values, and cultural interaction explores how individuals relate to these symbols (Davis, 1994). In this study, Cultural Identity Theory examines how individuals establish and express their cultural identity through fashion, particularly in relation to calligraphic elements.

Symbolic Interactionism Theory focuses on symbols, symbolic meaning, and interactionism within cultural and social contexts. It explains how symbols convey meanings and how these meanings are constructed through interactions (Denzin, 2004). Symbolic Interactionism Theory is relevant to understanding how calligraphic elements convey symbolic meanings in fashion design and influence



aesthetic preferences and cultural identities among young consumers. The integration of Cultural Identity Theory and Symbolic Interactionism Theory in this study explores how individuals' cultural identities interact with calligraphic elements in fashion design. It examines how these elements convey symbolic meanings and influence consumers' preferences and identities.



**Figure 1: Research Framework**

### 3.3 Research Design

This study utilises quantitative methods; aims to understand the aesthetic preferences and cultural identities of young consumers regarding the incorporation of calligraphy elements in fashion design. Quantitative methods allow for large-scale data collection to quantify strategies and relationships between calligraphy elements and contemporary aesthetic values. Questionnaire surveys are employed as a common quantitative method to gather data and statistically analyse relationships between variables (Yauch & Steudel, 2003:473). The surveys will help validate research hypotheses and provide substantial data support for the study.

### 3.4 Data Collection

In the quantitative research phase of this study, the survey aims to explore how strategies incorporating Chinese calligraphy elements into modern fashion design influence the aesthetic preferences and cultural identity of the Chinese Z generation.

The first three sections predominantly feature multiple-choice questions. The initial section gathers personal information from respondents, encompassing details such as age, gender, education level, income, and related data. The second section, focused on perceptions of calligraphy elements, explores how respondents view these elements in clothing design. The third section delves into respondents' clothing consumption behaviours, including their aesthetic preferences, standards, and preferred price ranges. The fourth section primarily investigates cultural identity across five dimensions: willingness-to-act factors, pride cognition factors, style perception factors, style and material factors, and etiquette consumption factors.



This section of the questionnaire utilises the Likert scale, employing a 1–5-point system ranging from options like strongly disagree to strongly agree. This format enables researchers to quantify responses effectively. The questionnaire will be conducted digitally, specifically online. Utilising the virtual platform allows researchers to reach a broader audience for surveys or interviews (Wright, 2000). Online surveys also expedite respondent recruitment, enabling swift outreach to young people across different regions via platforms like email and WeChat (Yun & Trumbo, 2000). Approximately 300 young individuals in China will receive these survey questionnaires digitally, ensuring a robust dataset that enhances the accuracy and reliability of data analysis.

The sampling technique employed in the questionnaire survey is probabilistic, involving random selection of samples. This method ensures the sample represents the broader population, facilitating the generalisation of research findings. The survey begins by querying participants about their age; respondents not belonging to Generation Z will be excluded from further participation, whereas those who qualify will proceed. To minimise potential issues during the research process, a pre-test of the questionnaire will be conducted. This step aims to validate adherence to study guidelines and refine the research instrument based on feedback. Teachers and friends will review the survey questionnaire after its design phase to confirm its soundness and simulate data analysis, ensuring the study design's feasibility.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Method**

Based on the research objectives of this study, data analysis methods encompass content analysis, descriptive statistical analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and cross-analysis. Firstly, content analysis involves studying multimedia information like text, images, or audio to identify patterns and themes objectively. This method utilises data from representative cases and relevant literature to document characteristics of integrating calligraphy into modern fashion design. Researchers create a coding system to analyse variables such as quantity, size, layout, style, colour scheme, and symbolic nature of calligraphy elements, ensuring consistency in coding (Hruschka et al., 2004; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Content analysis reveals strategies and trends in how calligraphy is employed in fashion design.

Secondly, descriptive statistical analysis organises, summarises, and presents data graphically and numerically to simplify complex information. This method uses tables, charts, and graphs to analyse data collected from the questionnaire survey, providing insights into the aesthetic preferences of young consumers regarding calligraphy in fashion (Kaur et al., 2018). Statistical indicators such as mean, median, standard deviation, and frequency distribution help describe these preferences comprehensively. Thirdly, correlation analysis examines relationships between variables using correlation coefficients, where values range from -1 to 1. A positive correlation indicates a positive relationship, while a negative correlation signifies the opposite; a coefficient of 0 indicates no correlation (Gogtay & Thatte, 2017). This analysis uses questionnaire data to



explore relationships between calligraphy use in fashion design and consumer cultural identity.

And then, regression analysis explores relationships between independent and dependent variables, predicting the impact of independent variables on the dependent ones. Regression coefficients and R-squared values indicate the strength of these relationships (Freund et al., 2006). This method helps researchers understand how strategies for integrating calligraphy elements influence the aesthetic values of young consumers. Eventually, cross-analysis compares differences or similarities between different groups using cross-tables and chi-squared tests. These methods analyze multiple variables from the questionnaire to identify relationships and trends among different segments of the Z generation (Kamakura & Wedel, 1997). Cross-analysis aids in understanding variations in aesthetic preferences, consumption behavior, and cultural identity related to calligraphy-inspired fashion among different Z generation groups.

### 3.6 Limitations of the Study

The participants in this study are young individuals from China, which could restrict how broadly the research findings can be applied. China is culturally diverse, with differences in cultural identity and clothing preferences among people from various regions, backgrounds, and age groups. Additionally, while questionnaire surveys are widely used for quantitative analysis, they can be influenced by subjectivity. Because the survey touches on cultural identity, respondents might tend to give socially desirable responses. Moreover, limitations in time and resources during sampling could impact the thoroughness and depth of the data collected.

## 4.0 Results

### 4.1 Sample Background Characterisation

**Table 3:** Sample Background Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Significance of variable	Number	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	105	52.5
	Female	95	47.5
Marital Status	Single	111	55.5
	Married	89	44.5
Level of education	High School	11	5.5
	College	26	13
	Bachelor	102	51
	Master Degree	49	24.5
	PhD	12	6
Income level	Below RMB 1,500	21	10.5
	RMB 1,500-3,000	27	13.5
	RMB 3,000-4,500	96	48
	RMB 4,500-6,000	31	15.5
	More than RMB 6,000	25	12.5
Occupation	Civil servants	25	12.5
	Regular employee	65	32.5
	Senior Management	18	9



Professionals and technicians	18	9
Freelancers	16	8
Salespersons	12	6
Self-employed	14	7
Students	32	16

In sample selection, we chose respondents whose ages are representative of Generation Z and who are not directly employed in the fashion industry. General descriptions of the sample's gender, marital status, education level, income level, and occupation are provided (see Table 3).

## 4.2 Gender Difference Analysis

**Table 4:** Gender Differences in Identity with Chinese Calligraphic Elements in Dress Culture in Generation Z

	Male		Female		T	P
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Total Cultural Identity Score	3.3859	0.66351	3.3667	0.80741	0.182	0.856
Pride Perception Factor	3.3314	0.70647	3.2589	0.84343	0.655	0.513
Willingness Behavior Factor	3.3790	0.72532	3.3579	0.83838	0.190	0.850
Style Perception Factor	3.3752	0.79614	3.4147	0.84463	-0.346	0.730
Style and Material Perception Factor	3.3562	0.79614	3.3789	0.89703	-0.189	0.850
Ritual Consumption Factor	3.4876	0.71302	3.4232	0.82764	0.587	0.558

This study uses an independent samples t-test to assess whether gender differences in cultural identity exist, treating gender as the independent variable and the scores from each dimension of the total scale as the dependent variables. As shown in Table 4, although females had a slightly lower overall average score compared to males, the difference was minor. The analysis across all factors revealed that the average scores for males and females were nearly the same, indicating that gender does not significantly impact cultural identity. The small variations in scores suggest that cultural identity is not closely linked to gender in this study. Therefore, the data supports the conclusion that there is no significant gender-based differences in cultural identity within the sample.

## 4.3 Analysis of Differences in Marital Status

**Table 5:** Analysis of Marital Status Differences in the Degree of Cultural Identity of Chinese Calligraphy Elements in the Z Generation's Clothing Culture

	Single		Married		T	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Total Cultural Identity Score	3.3881	0.79837	3.3627	0.64787	0.248	0.804
Pride Perception Factor	3.3550	0.87040	3.2247	0.62944	1.226	0.222



Willingness Behavior Factor	3.3604	0.84372	3.3798	0.69482	-0.178	0.859
Style Perception Factor	3.4090	0.86566	3.3753	0.71466	0.302	0.763
Style and Material Perception Factor	3.3550	0.87623	3.3820	0.80546	-0.227	0.821
Ritual Consumption Factor	3.4613	0.84199	3.4517	0.66982	0.090	0.929

This study uses an independent samples t-test to see if marital status affects cultural identity, with marital status as the independent variable and the scores from each dimension of the total scale as the dependent variable. As shown in Table 5, the analysis found only small differences in average scores between single and married participants. There were no statistically significant differences in overall cultural identity scores or in any individual dimensions, indicating that marital status does not significantly impact cultural identity. The similar scores between the two groups suggest that cultural identity remains consistent whether a person is single or married. Thus, the data supports the conclusion that marital status does not significantly affect cultural identity in this sample.

#### 4.4 Analysis of Income Level Differences

**Table 6:** Income Level Differences in the Degree of Cultural Identity of Chinese Calligraphy Elements in the Z Generation's Clothing Culture

	Below Rmb 1500		Rmb1500-3000		Rmb3000-4000		Rmb4500-6000		More than Rmb 6000			
	Me	SD	Me	SD	Me	SD	Me	SD	Me	SD	F	P
Total Cultural Identity Score	3.9 181	0.93 488	3.3 319	0.90 821	3.2 350	0.52 908	3.2 877	0.76 409	3.6 256	0.76 698	854. 902	0.0 00
Pride Perception Factor	4.1 143	1.04 225	3.2 815	0.95 637	3.1 521	0.55 040	3.1 226	0.74 776	3.4 00	0.66 833	799. 389	0.0 00
Willingness Behavior Factor	3.8 381	1.04 426	3.3 037	0.94 685	3.2 375	0.58 278	3.3 097	0.80 967	3.6 240	0.80 689	734. 531	0.0 00
Style Perception Factor	3.9 429	1.03 372	3.3 333	0.97 822	3.2 458	0.58 290	3.3 290	0.81 248	3.6 480	0.88 559	712. 879	0.0 00
Style and Material Perception Factor	3.7 619	1.08 742	3.2 963	1.06 463	3.2 083	0.65 271	3.3 613	0.81 227	3.7 280	0.89 234	624. 620	0.0 00
Ritual Consumption Factor	3.9 333	0.98 455	3.4 444	10.4 120	3.3 312	0.54 431	3.3 161	0.78 277	3.7 280	0.78 077	782. 533	0.0 00





This study conducts an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine differences in cultural identity across different income levels. The results, presented in Table 6, showed significant F-values and p-values close to 0, indicating that income level has a strong impact on cultural identity. The analysis revealed that as income levels rise, average cultural identity scores also tend to increase, suggesting that people with higher incomes are more likely to express cultural identity. However, the group with an income below RMB 1500 had the highest average score. Further investigation showed that this group was largely made up of students, who accounted for 71%. This is likely because students are more exposed to traditional cultural activities and knowledge through their education, which enhances their cultural identity. We also observed higher standard deviations in the higher-income groups, indicating greater variability in cultural identity among these individuals. Overall, these findings suggest that income level significantly affects cultural identity, with the most pronounced expression seen among lower-income students.

#### 4.5 Analysis of Differences in Occupation and Educational Attainment

**Table 7:** One-way ANOVA Results of Differences in Cultural Identity of Chinese Calligraphy Elements in Clothing Culture among Different Occupations of the Z Generation

Cultural Identity Factor	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Total Cultural Identity Score	1686.258	8	210.782	517.354	0.000
Pride Perception Factor	1646.617	8	205.827	459.446	0.000
Willingness Behavior Factor	1682.0800	8	210.260	452.936	0.000
Style Perception Factor	1695.383	8	211.923	431.683	0.000
Style and Material Perception Factor	1682.239	8	210.280	386.029	0.000



Ritual Consumption Factor	1728.908	8	216.113	480.825	0.000
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**Table 8:** One-way ANOVA Results of Differences in Cultural Identity of Chinese Calligraphy Elements in Clothing Culture among Z Generation Groups with Different Educational Levels

Cultural Identity Factor	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Total Cultural Identity Score	1680.842	2	840.421	2004.069	0.000
Pride Perception Factor	1638.112	2	819.056	1737.677	0.000
Willingness Behavior Factor	1676.737	2	838.368	1766.890	0.000
Style Perception Factor	1689.504	2	844.752	1680.418	0.000
Style and Material Perception Factor	1675.851	2	837.925	1503.665	0.000
Ritual Consumption Factor	1724.863	2	862.432	1895.972	0.000

This study analyses variance (ANOVA) to determine if cultural identity differs significantly across various occupations and education levels. The results, presented in Tables 7 and 8, showed that the p-values for both the total scale scores and individual dimensions were below 0.05. This indicates significant differences in cultural identity among groups with different occupations and



educational backgrounds. The low p-values suggest that occupation and education level are important factors in shaping cultural identity, leading to noticeable differences in how cultural identity is expressed. These findings highlight the need to consider both occupation and education when studying cultural identity, as they play a significant role in influencing individuals' cultural perspectives.

#### 4.6 Cluster Analysis

Cluster analysis is a data analysis method that groups individuals based on the attributes of samples using mathematical techniques. After grouping, individuals within the same cluster exhibit high similarity, while those in different clusters show significant differences. To uncover the internal diversity among individuals in the Z generation, researchers conducted cluster analysis. Through cluster analysis, respondents with similar characteristics in the Z generation were divided into different subgroups. Researchers then conducted an in-depth exploration of the similarities and differences in cultural identity among these subgroups, enabling a more personalised and comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the attitudes and levels of cultural identity toward calligraphy-inspired clothing in the Z generation.

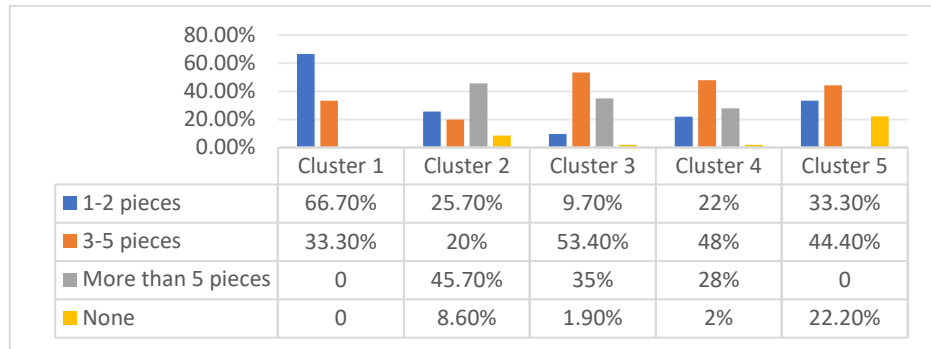
**Table 9:** Cluster Analysis Results

Cluster	Sample size	Percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
1	3	1.5	1.5
2	35	17.5	19
3	103	51.5	70.5
4	50	25	95.5
5	9	4.5	100

The method of K-means clustering is used to analyse the sample groups, with the results presented in Table 9. This analysis revealed five distinct categories based on scores in factors like willingness behaviour, pride cognition, style perception, style material, and etiquette consumption. Notably, the first and fifth categories have the fewest samples, making up less than 20% of the total, which suggests these are less common or extreme cases. In contrast, the third category includes the largest portion of the samples, at 51.5%, indicating it is the most prevalent profile. These observations support the need for further examination of each category's specific behaviours and cognitive traits, as understanding these differences can offer valuable insights into the diverse ways cultural identity is expressed among the participants.

#### 4.7 Ownership of Chinese Calligraphy Element Clothing

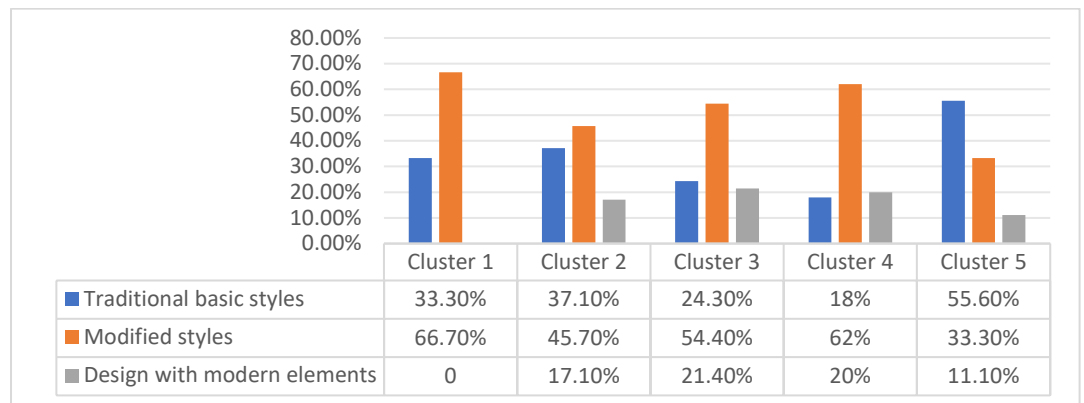




**Figure 2:** Ownership of Calligraphy Element Clothing among Different Types of Groups

Through the interactive analysis of "Ownership of calligraphy-themed clothing" and group types (Figure 2), it was found that the majority of samples in cluster 1 owned 1-2 pieces of calligraphy-themed clothing, while samples in clusters 2 to 4 ranged from none to more than five pieces. Most individuals in Cluster 2 owned more than five pieces, while in Cluster 3, the majority owned 3-5 pieces, accounting for 53.4% of the total. Similarly, Cluster 4 mostly owned 3-5 pieces of Chinese calligraphy-themed clothing, while Cluster 5 had fewer, with none owning more than five pieces.

#### 4.8 Preferences for Chinese Calligraphy-themed Clothing Styles

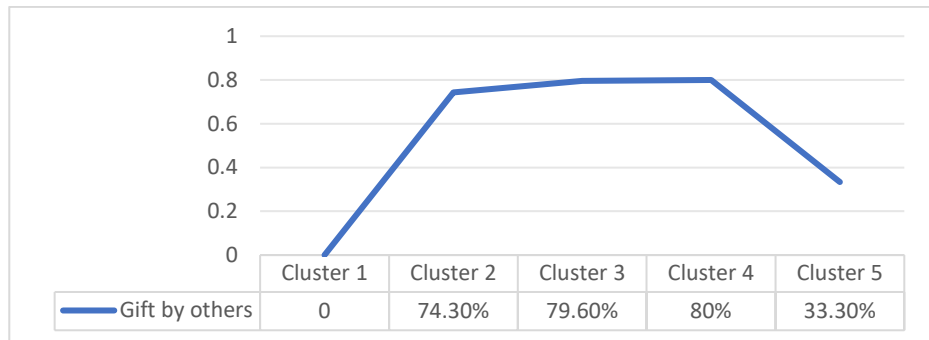


**Figure 3:** Differences in Preferred Styles of Calligraphy-themed Clothing among Different Types of Groups

Through an interactive analysis of "Preference for Chinese calligraphy-style clothing" and group types (Figure 3), it was found that samples from Cluster 1 to Cluster 4 all preferred modified styles. However, samples from Cluster 5 preferred designs with modern elements.



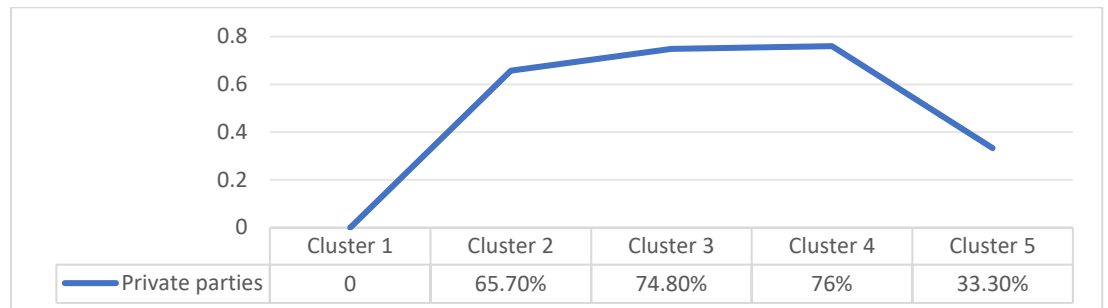
#### 4.9 Channels for Purchasing Chinese Calligraphy-themed Clothing Styles



**Figure 4:** Differences in Purchasing Channels for Calligraphy-themed Clothing among Different Types of Groups

The analysis of "Acquisition channels for calligraphy-themed clothing" across different group types, shown in Figure 4, found that "Gift by others" was the most common way people obtained these items. This channel was most popular in Cluster 4, followed by Clusters 3, 2, 5, and 1. This pattern suggests that Cluster 4 has the strongest preference for receiving calligraphy-themed clothing as a gift, with this preference decreasing in the other clusters. These findings highlight the significance of gift-giving in different groups and offer insights into how various clusters prefer to acquire calligraphy-themed clothing.

#### 4.10 Occasions for Wearing Chinese Elements Clothing

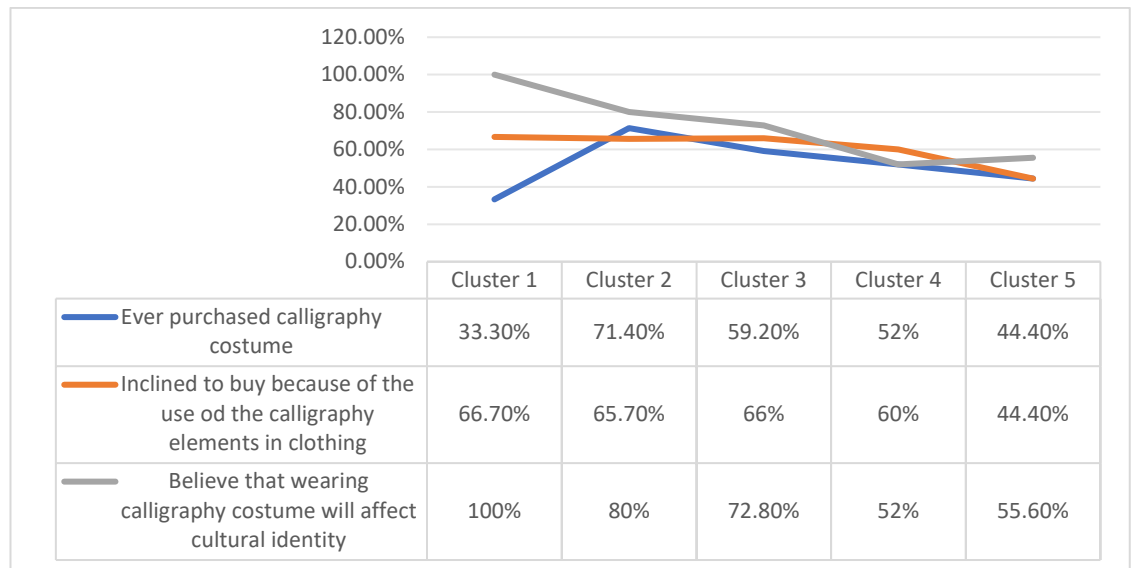


**Figure 5:** Differences in Occasions for Wearing Calligraphy-themed Clothing among Different Types of Groups

The analysis of "Occasions for wearing calligraphy-themed clothing," shown in Figure 5, revealed that "Private parties" were the most popular occasion for wearing these clothes. The highest preference for private parties was found in Cluster 4, followed by Clusters 3, 2, 5, and 1. This suggests that people in Cluster 4 are most likely to wear calligraphy-themed clothing to private parties, with this preference decreasing in the other clusters. This trend highlights the strong association between private parties and calligraphy-themed clothing and provides useful information about the preferred contexts for wearing these garments.



#### 4.11 Factors Influencing or Hindering Your Consumption of Chinese Calligraphy-themed Clothing



**Figure 6:** Purchasing Behavior of Different Groups Towards Calligraphy Costume

Figure 6 shows a clear difference in how Clusters 1 and 2 engage with calligraphy-themed clothing. Cluster 2 is the leading group in purchases, with 71.40% of its members having bought such clothing, indicating strong interest and appreciation for these items. In contrast, only 33.3% of Cluster 1 members reported buying calligraphy-themed clothing, reflecting less involvement in this market. However, Cluster 1 members strongly believe that cultural clothing affects cultural identity, with 100% affirming this belief. Additionally, 66.60% of them would consider buying clothing with calligraphy elements. This difference suggests that while Cluster 1 values the cultural significance of calligraphy-themed clothing, they have not yet matched Cluster 2's level of purchasing activity.

## 5.0 Conclusion

This study explored how different demographic factors affect cultural identity and consumer behavior towards Chinese calligraphy-themed clothing. The analysis firstly showed that gender and marital status have little effect on cultural identity. Statistical tests revealed no significant differences in cultural identity scores between males and females or between single and married individuals. This indicates that cultural identity is largely unaffected by these demographic factors. Then, the study found a notable link between income level and cultural identity. Higher income levels were associated with higher cultural identity scores. Interestingly, students in lower-income brackets had the highest scores, likely due to their active participation in traditional cultural activities through their education. This suggests that while cultural identity tends to increase with income, it is particularly strong among lower-income students. Moreover, variance analysis showed that cultural identity varies significantly with different occupations and educational backgrounds. The significant p-values indicate that occupation and education are important in shaping cultural identity, influencing how individuals relate to their cultural





heritage. Furthermore, the study found that people mostly acquire calligraphy-themed clothing as gifts, especially in Cluster 4. Private parties were the most common occasion for wearing such clothing, with Cluster 4 showing the highest preference. Important factors in purchasing decisions included the design reflecting traditional culture and fabric quality. A lack of interest in calligraphy was a major barrier to purchase, particularly in Cluster 5. Price preferences varied, with Clusters 1 and 4 favouring lower-priced items for daily use and Clusters 5 and 2 preferring higher-priced options for special occasions.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to enhance cultural engagement and consumer satisfaction with Chinese calligraphy-themed clothing. Firstly, since gender and marital status do not significantly influence cultural identity, marketing efforts should focus on other demographic factors that show more variation, such as income, occupation, and education. Targeted educational initiatives and cultural programs could be particularly effective in engaging lower-income students who display a strong connection to cultural identity. For consumer preferences, it is recommended that marketers emphasise traditional cultural elements and high-quality fabrics, as these are key factors in purchasing decisions. However, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The analysis primarily focused on demographic factors such as gender, marital status, income level, occupation, and education, which may not capture other relevant variables influencing cultural identity and consumer behaviour. The study's reliance on statistical tests for these variables, while revealing general trends, may not account for nuances in individual experiences or regional differences. Additionally, the research also did not account for potential biases in self-reported data, which might affect the accuracy of the findings. Future studies should consider a more diverse sample and explore additional factors that might influence cultural identity and consumer behaviour more comprehensively

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