

A Study on the Modern Design Transformation Pathway of Traditional Auspicious Motifs Based on the FCCS Framework

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Abstract

Against the growing emphasis on the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional Chinese culture, auspicious motifs on ceramics have been widely adopted in cultural and creative products, brand identity systems, and digital media design. However, many contemporary design practices remain limited to the direct reproduction of traditional graphic forms, often overlooking the coordinated relationships among visual form, color, composition, and cultural meaning. As a consequence, traditional motifs are frequently reduced to superficial visual symbols, weakening their cultural significance and limiting their effectiveness in contemporary design. To address this issue, this study investigates auspicious motifs on ceramics from the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods of the Qing Dynasty from the perspective of design semiotics. Based on theories of design semiotics and visual grammar, an FCCS analytical framework comprising Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic is developed. A total of 70 representative ceramic samples were systematically analyzed using standardized coding and comparative analysis to identify recurring patterns in the visual language of traditional auspicious motifs. The results reveal that Qing Dynasty ceramic auspicious motifs constitute an integrated visual semiotic system in which the four FCCS dimensions function collaboratively rather than independently. Although the visual characteristics of motifs vary across the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods, stable relationships among form, color, composition, and cultural semantics are consistently maintained. These findings demonstrate that the contemporary transformation of traditional motifs should preserve both their visual identity and cultural meaning instead of relying solely on graphic simplification or stylistic imitation. Based on these findings, this study proposes an FCCS-guided design transformation pathway consisting of four sequential stages: cultural decoding, visual extraction, structural reconstruction, and design re-encoding. The proposed

framework provides a systematic analytical method for investigating traditional visual culture and offers practical guidance for the contemporary application of ceramic auspicious motifs in cultural and creative products, branding, packaging, digital media, and other design contexts.

Keywords: Design Semiotics, FCCS Analytical Framework, Qing Dynasty Ceramics, Auspicious Motifs, Design Transformation

Introduction

In recent years, the growing popularity of Guochao design, intangible cultural heritage products, and digital visual media has encouraged designers to draw increasingly on traditional Chinese ceramic auspicious motifs. Motifs such as dragons and phoenixes, longevity peaches, children at play, and scrolling floral patterns now appear widely in packaging, IP character design, spatial decoration, textile prints, and other contemporary applications. However, a review of current design practices reveals several recurring problems. In many cases, designers extract and reuse only partial graphic elements, while the original compositional order is weakened during simplification, traditional color relationships are arbitrarily altered, and the cultural meanings associated with longevity, prosperity, ritual hierarchy, and literati taste are overlooked. As a result, some contemporary applications retain the outward appearance of traditional motifs but lose their cultural depth, producing designs that are visually similar to the originals yet semantically superficial.

Existing studies on traditional auspicious motifs can broadly be divided into two main strands. The first approaches the subject from the perspectives of art history and folklore, focusing primarily on historical origins, thematic development, and the interpretation of symbolic meanings. Although such studies have established an important cultural foundation, they generally lack standardized tools for analysing visual structure and therefore offer limited support for systematic comparisons of form, color, and composition across different historical periods. The second strand is more closely related to cultural and creative design practice, but much of this work is based on individual product cases and tends to concentrate on techniques such as simplification, abstraction, and graphic adaptation. A unified research system linking cultural meaning, visual language, and contemporary design suitability has yet to be fully established, and a transferable methodology for design transformation remains insufficiently developed.

On this basis, three major research gaps can be identified. First, there is still a lack of an integrated analytical approach capable of examining form, color, composition, and cultural meaning within a single framework, resulting in fragmented interpretations of traditional motifs. Second, many contemporary transformations separate visual form from cultural content, leaving the problem of symbolic superficiality unresolved. Third, existing studies have not yet established a clearly staged and standardized process that can guide the systematic transformation of traditional motifs into contemporary design language.

To address these gaps, this study analyses 70 samples of auspicious ceramic motifs from the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods of the Qing Dynasty through standardized coding and comparative analysis. Drawing on Saussure's theory of the sign, Barthes's theory of myth and secondary signification, and Kress's visual grammar, the study develops the four-dimensional FCCS analytical framework, comprising Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic.

The framework is used to identify recurring visual and semantic patterns within the selected samples and to establish a four-stage design transformation pathway consisting of cultural decoding, visual extraction, structural reconstruction, and design re-encoding. Through this process, the study seeks to provide both a theoretical model and an operational approach for the creative transformation of traditional cultural resources.

Literature Review

Studies on Auspicious Motifs in Qing Dynasty Ceramics

Research on the history of Chinese ceramics has produced substantial scholarly achievements. Geng Baochang, in *Identification of Ming and Qing Porcelain*, systematically summarized the decorative and technological characteristics of ceramic wares from the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong reigns, with particular emphasis on object identification and stylistic description. Scholars such as Wang Shucun and Chen Lüsheng have interpreted the auspicious meanings of motifs including dragons, phoenixes, children at play, and bogu (antiquities) from the perspective of folk imagery. However, their studies primarily focus on iconographic interpretation and symbolic meanings, while offering relatively limited structural analysis of form, color, and composition.

International research on material culture and visual symbolism has mainly concentrated on Western painting and decorative patterns, with comparatively limited attention devoted to the semiotic analysis of traditional Chinese ceramic auspicious motifs. As a result, a unified analytical framework specifically suited to the characteristics of Chinese auspicious visual culture has yet to be established. Furthermore, most chronological studies examine the Kangxi, Yongzheng, or Qianlong period independently. Comparative research employing a standardized coding system across all three reigns remains limited, making it difficult to identify broader and more generalizable patterns in the visual language of auspicious motifs.

Studies on the Contemporary Design Transformation of Traditional Motifs

Existing studies on the contemporary application of traditional motifs have largely focused on individual cultural and creative product cases, with most discussions emphasizing graphic simplification, abstraction, deformation, and stylistic adaptation. Two major limitations can be identified. First, these studies tend to prioritize visual appearance while paying insufficient attention to the preservation of cultural meaning, resulting in design transformations that modify graphic forms without maintaining their semantic continuity. Second, the absence of a standardized analytical framework means that different studies employ independent research approaches, making it difficult to establish a transferable methodology for design practice. Consequently, a comprehensive transformation model that integrates both visual structure and cultural semantics has yet to be developed, leaving the problem of symbolic superficiality insufficiently addressed.

Research on Design Semiotics and Visual Grammar

The theoretical foundations of this study are rooted in design semiotics and visual grammar. Saussure's distinction between the signifier and the signified established the fundamental structure of semiotic analysis (Saussure, 2011), while Barthes proposed the concept of secondary signification through myth. Eco's theory of the open text and Kress's theory of visual grammar further expanded the interpretation of visual communication and image-

based meaning-making, together forming a comprehensive theoretical framework for the analysis of visual symbols.

Although these theories have been widely introduced in existing Chinese scholarship, they are generally applied independently and primarily used for conceptual or textual interpretation. Few studies have integrated these theoretical perspectives into a unified analytical framework or translated them into standardized coding methods for the systematic analysis and contemporary design transformation of traditional ceramic motifs. Consequently, the practical application of semiotic theory in cultural and creative design remains relatively underdeveloped.

Critical Review of Existing Research

In recent years, extensive research has been conducted on traditional Chinese motifs, ceramic decorative art, and design semiotics in both Chinese and international scholarship. Existing studies can generally be categorized into three main areas. The first explores the historical development and cultural symbolism of auspicious motifs from the perspectives of ceramic history, art history, and folk culture. The second focuses on representative motifs—including dragons, phoenixes, bats, and longevity characters—to examine their symbolic meanings and aesthetic characteristics. The third investigates the contemporary application of traditional motifs in cultural and creative products, visual communication, and related design fields.

Although these studies have established an important foundation for understanding the historical and cultural significance of traditional Chinese auspicious motifs, several limitations remain.

First, existing research has largely emphasized historical interpretation and cultural symbolism while paying comparatively little attention to the systematic analysis of visual structure. Most studies concentrate on what traditional motifs represent rather than how visual meaning is constructed. The relationships among form, color, composition, and cultural semantics have yet to be examined within a unified analytical framework, limiting the comparability of existing research.

Second, comparative studies across different historical periods remain insufficient. Most previous research focuses on a single reign period—Kangxi, Yongzheng, or Qianlong—or on individual motif categories. Systematic comparisons across all three periods are relatively rare, making it difficult to reveal the overall evolution of the visual language of Qing Dynasty auspicious motifs.

Third, the application of design semiotics to traditional motif research requires further development. Design semiotics emphasizes the interaction among visual form, symbolic meaning, and cultural communication, offering a valuable theoretical perspective for the study of traditional motifs. However, most existing studies remain at the level of theoretical discussion, with relatively few integrating design semiotics into the systematic visual analysis of traditional ceramic motifs. In particular, the role of visual form in constructing cultural meaning has not yet been comprehensively explained. Design research increasingly calls for analytical frameworks capable of bridging theoretical inquiry and practical application rather than remaining at the conceptual level.

Fourth, research on the contemporary transformation of traditional motifs lacks a systematic methodology. Although many studies apply traditional motifs to cultural and creative products, branding, and visual communication, few have established a comprehensive approach for extracting visual structures, preserving cultural semantics, and translating traditional motifs into contemporary design language. Consequently, many contemporary applications remain limited to superficial formal adaptation rather than achieving meaningful cultural continuity.

To address these research gaps, this study develops the FCCS analytical framework, comprising Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic, and applies it to auspicious motifs on ceramics from the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods of the Qing Dynasty. Through standardized coding, cross-period comparison, and design semiotic analysis, the study systematically reveals the developmental patterns of the visual language of traditional motifs and proposes an FCCS-guided design transformation pathway. In doing so, it seeks to overcome the limitations of existing research in visual structural analysis, cross-period comparison, and systematic design transformation methodology.

Research Methodology

To ensure a systematic and logically coherent research process, this study establishes an overall research framework (Figure 1). The research begins with a comprehensive review of the literature on Qing Dynasty ceramic auspicious motifs, the contemporary transformation of traditional motifs, and the theoretical development of design semiotics. Based on the identified research gaps, the research objectives and analytical focus are defined.

The empirical investigation is conducted using 70 representative ceramic samples from the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods of the Qing Dynasty. An FCCS analytical framework, consisting of Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic, is developed to examine the visual and cultural characteristics of traditional auspicious motifs. Through a standardized coding procedure, visual information from each sample is systematically extracted and organized, enabling recurring structural patterns to be identified across the four analytical dimensions. Building upon the coding results, the study examines the relationships among form, color, composition, and cultural meaning to reveal the underlying principles governing the visual language of Qing Dynasty ceramic auspicious motifs. The analytical findings are subsequently translated into an FCCS-guided design transformation pathway comprising four sequential stages: cultural decoding, visual extraction, structural reconstruction, and design re-encoding. By integrating visual analysis with cultural interpretation and design application, the proposed model establishes a systematic methodological framework for the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional cultural resources.

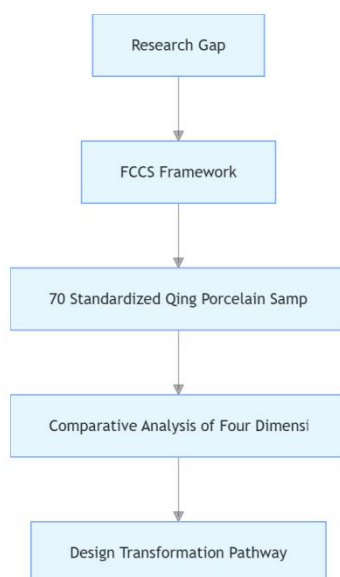


Figure 1. Research Framework of the Study

Research Samples

The empirical dataset of this study consists of 70 representative samples of auspicious motifs on Qing Dynasty ceramics, including 23 samples from the Kangxi period, 22 from the Yongzheng period, and 25 from the Qianlong period. The selected samples are classified into four thematic categories: dragon and phoenix motifs, longevity motifs, children-at-play motifs, and antiquities, floral, and auspicious bird motifs.

Each sample was systematically analyzed using the FCCS framework through standardized coding across four analytical dimensions: Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic. This standardized dataset enables a comparative investigation of the visual characteristics of auspicious motifs across the three reign periods, facilitating the identification of recurring visual patterns and providing an empirical foundation for the subsequent development of the proposed design transformation framework.

Definition and Analytical Logic of the FCCS Framework

The FCCS analytical framework consists of four interrelated dimensions that collectively describe the visual structure and cultural meaning of traditional ceramic auspicious motifs.

Form refers to the primary visual configuration of a motif, including its dominant shape, structural outline, and distinctive graphic elements. Representative motifs such as dragons, longevity peaches, children at play, and scrolling peonies possess strong cultural recognizability and therefore constitute the essential visual identity that should be retained during contemporary design transformation.

Color represents the chromatic system derived from traditional ceramic glazing techniques and historical color conventions. Blue-and-white porcelain conveys simplicity and elegance,

famille rose emphasizes softness and subtle tonal variation, enamel decoration reflects richness and refinement, while monochrome colored grounds communicate solemnity and ceremonial aesthetics. These color systems function not only as visual attributes but also as important carriers of symbolic and emotional meaning.

Composition describes the spatial organization and visual arrangement of decorative motifs. Based on the characteristics of Qing Dynasty ceramics, four principal compositional types are identified: continuous composition, all-over composition, cartouche composition, and central composition. These compositional strategies establish stable viewing hierarchies and visual order, providing transferable principles for contemporary applications such as graphic layout, packaging, and interface design.

Semantic refers to the underlying cultural meanings embodied in traditional motifs. Four major semantic categories are identified: imperial authority and ritual order, longevity and blessings, family prosperity and fertility, and literati aesthetics and scholarly refinement. These semantic dimensions distinguish auspicious motifs from purely decorative ornamentation and constitute the cultural foundation of their visual expression.

Rather than functioning independently, the four dimensions operate as an integrated system. Form serves as the visual carrier, Color reinforces emotional and symbolic expression, Composition organizes visual perception, and Semantic conveys cultural meaning. The study argues that the contemporary transformation of traditional motifs should preserve the coordinated relationship among all four dimensions, as altering any single dimension in isolation may weaken the integrity of the original visual language and its cultural significance.

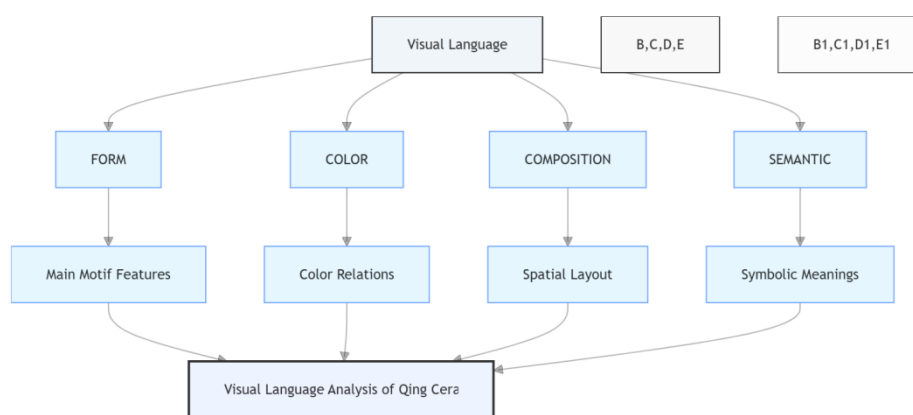


Figure 2. FCCS Analytical Framework

Figure 2 summarizes the relationships among the four FCCS dimensions. Rather than functioning independently, Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic interact to constitute an integrated visual language system. Their combined analysis provides the analytical basis for examining historical variation and subsequent design transformation.

Table 1

Components and Analytical Dimensions of the FCCS Framework

Analytical Dimension	Analytical Focus	Primary Content	Research Purpose
FORM	Motif morphology	Dragon motifs, longevity characters, children-at-play motifs, floral and bird motifs, etc.	Identify the core visual characteristics of the motifs
COLOR	Color system	Blue-and-white, wucai (polychrome), famille rose, enamel decoration, etc.	Examine patterns of color expression and symbolic representation
COMPOSITION	Spatial organization	Continuous composition, cartouche composition, all-over composition, central composition	Analyze principles of visual organization and spatial arrangement
SEMANTIC	Cultural meaning	Auspiciousness, longevity, ritual order, ethics, and related symbolic meanings	Explain the construction and communication of cultural meaning

Overall Research Procedure*The Research was Conducted Through a Four-Stage Analytical Process*

In the first stage, the standardized FCCS coding results of the 70 selected ceramic samples were systematically examined to identify the inherent characteristics of auspicious motifs across the four analytical dimensions—Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic—and to compare their visual patterns among the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods.

In the second stage, common deficiencies in contemporary Guochao and cultural and creative design practices were identified through a review of representative design cases. Four recurring issues were recognized: overemphasis on formal adaptation, neglect of traditional color systems, disruption of conventional compositional principles, and loss of the cultural meanings embodied in traditional auspicious motifs.

In the third stage, the analytical findings were translated into an FCCS-guided design transformation pathway, consisting of four sequential phases: cultural decoding, visual extraction, structural reconstruction, and design re-encoding. This pathway provides a systematic procedure for transforming traditional motifs into contemporary design language while maintaining both their visual identity and cultural significance.

In the fourth stage, differentiated application strategies were proposed for three representative design contexts: cultural and creative products, graphic and brand visual design, and digital IP and interactive media. These strategies demonstrate how the FCCS framework can be adapted to different design scenarios while preserving the essential visual and semantic characteristics of traditional auspicious motifs.

Discussion*How the FCCS Framework Addresses Current Challenges in Contemporary Design*

In recent years, traditional Chinese cultural elements have been increasingly incorporated into cultural and creative products, brand identity design, and digital media. Despite this growing interest, contemporary design practice continues to face persistent challenges, including superficial use of symbols, weakened cultural meanings, and insufficient adaptation

to modern design contexts. Based on the FCCS coding analysis of 70 ceramic samples from the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods, this study finds that these problems do not stem from a lack of contemporary relevance in traditional motifs themselves. Rather, they arise from an insufficient understanding of the relationships among the visual and cultural components that constitute the traditional visual language. In many cases, designers appropriate isolated graphic elements while neglecting the underlying visual organization and cultural logic, resulting in a disconnect between visual representation and symbolic meaning. The findings indicate that auspicious motifs on Qing Dynasty ceramics should not be regarded as isolated decorative elements but as an integrated visual semiotic system composed of four interrelated dimensions: Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic. These dimensions operate in a coordinated manner. Form establishes the primary visual identity of a motif, Color reinforces emotional expression and symbolic associations, Composition organizes visual hierarchy and spatial relationships, while Semantic conveys stable cultural meanings. Although the visual characteristics of motifs evolved across the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods, the interaction among these four dimensions remained relatively consistent, providing the structural foundation for the continuity of the visual language of Qing Dynasty ceramic decoration.

Building upon these findings, this study develops the FCCS analytical framework and further proposes an FCCS-guided design transformation pathway. Within this framework, the Semantic dimension serves as the starting point by identifying and preserving the core cultural meanings of traditional motifs before design transformation begins. The Form dimension extracts representative visual characteristics that maintain the recognizability of traditional motifs while accommodating contemporary aesthetic preferences. The Color dimension translates traditional ceramic color systems and their symbolic associations into contemporary color strategies. The Composition dimension reorganizes conventional compositional principles to enable traditional motifs to be effectively adapted to various design media, including packaging, brand identity systems, and digital communication platforms. Through the coordinated transformation of these four dimensions, the framework establishes a systematic approach for translating traditional visual language into contemporary design practice.

The FCCS framework also complements existing studies on traditional motifs. Previous research has primarily examined auspicious motifs from the perspectives of ceramic history, art history, and folk culture, focusing on their historical origins, thematic classification, and symbolic meanings. Comparatively less attention has been paid to the role of visual structure in the construction of cultural meaning. By integrating Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic into a unified analytical framework, the FCCS approach explains not only what traditional motifs represent but also how they communicate meaning through visual organization. This integrated perspective bridges visual structural analysis and cultural semantic interpretation, extending the application of design semiotics to the study of traditional Chinese motifs while providing a stronger theoretical foundation for their contemporary design transformation.

Table 2

Comparative FCCS Characteristics Across the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong Periods

	Form	Color	Composition	Semantic
Kangxi	Strong principal motifs and clear visual focus	Blue-and-white and strong polychrome contrasts	Continuous and all-over compositions	Ritual authority and direct auspicious symbolism
Yongzheng	Refined forms and balanced motif relationships	Softer and more delicate color systems	Greater use of cartouche and restrained spatial organization	Literati aesthetics and refined auspicious meanings
Qianlong	Multiple motifs and highly integrated decorative elements	Rich polychrome and colored-ground systems	Multi-layered and composite structures	Multiple and overlapping cultural meanings

The standardized FCCS coding results reveal clear differences in the visual language of auspicious motifs across the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods. As summarized in Table 2, Kangxi motifs are characterized by strong principal forms, high visual contrast, and direct symbolic expression. Yongzheng motifs exhibit greater compositional balance, softer color relationships, and refined cultural semantics, reflecting a more restrained visual aesthetic. In contrast, Qianlong motifs demonstrate increased decorative complexity, richer color systems, and multi-layered compositional structures, resulting in more elaborate symbolic representations.

Although the visual characteristics vary considerably across the three reign periods, the four FCCS dimensions remain closely interconnected. Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic function together as an integrated visual language system, providing the empirical basis for the subsequent development of the FCCS-guided design transformation pathway.

Potential Design Adaptation Strategies for Motifs Across the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong Periods

The findings demonstrate that auspicious motifs from different periods of the Qing Dynasty exhibit distinctive characteristics in their visual language, resulting in different potentials for contemporary design applications.

Motifs from the Kangxi period are characterized by prominent visual subjects, bold linear expression, and strong color contrasts, giving them a highly recognizable visual identity. These characteristics make them particularly suitable for design contexts that emphasize visual impact, such as brand identity design, Guochao-inspired products, and digital visual communication.

In contrast, motifs from the Yongzheng period display more restrained compositions, harmonious color relationships, and a well-balanced visual order. Their refined aesthetic qualities align closely with the design requirements of premium lifestyle products and are therefore well suited to high-end cultural and creative products, tea ware, and cultural gift design.

The Qianlong period is distinguished by its rich decorative vocabulary, complex compositional hierarchy, and elaborate ornamental effects. These characteristics make its motifs particularly appropriate for large-scale pattern applications, including packaging design, textile design, exhibition design, and spatial decoration.

These findings suggest that motifs from different historical periods should not be regarded as superior or inferior to one another. Instead, each period possesses distinctive visual strengths that correspond to different contemporary design contexts. The selection of traditional motifs should therefore be guided by product positioning, communication objectives, and application scenarios to maximize the effectiveness of cultural expression in modern design. The proposed adaptation strategies are derived from the visual characteristics identified through the FCCS coding analysis of the 70 ceramic samples. They should therefore be understood as design-oriented implications rather than empirically validated prescriptions. The relatively stable combinations of form, color, composition, and cultural semantics identified across the three periods provide a basis for considering different contemporary application possibilities. Further user studies and design experiments are required to evaluate the effectiveness of these proposed adaptations in specific design contexts.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, the FCCS analytical framework proposed in this study extends conventional approaches to traditional motif research, which have largely focused on thematic classification and cultural interpretation. By integrating Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic within a unified analytical system, the framework establishes a comprehensive approach that connects visual structural analysis with the interpretation of cultural meaning. In addition to explaining the developmental patterns of the visual language of auspicious motifs on Qing Dynasty ceramics, the framework also demonstrates strong potential for application to other forms of traditional decorative art and visual culture.

From a practical perspective, this study develops an FCCS-guided design transformation pathway consisting of four sequential stages: cultural decoding, visual extraction, structural reconstruction, and design re-encoding. Compared with approaches that simply reproduce traditional patterns, this methodology emphasizes both the preservation of cultural meaning and the reorganization of visual language. Consequently, it reduces the risk of symbolic misinterpretation and superficial cultural representation while providing practical guidance for the design of cultural and creative products, brand identity systems, and digital media. More broadly, contemporary design research increasingly emphasizes a transition from experience-based practice to methodology-driven design. The FCCS analytical framework and its associated design transformation pathway seek to establish a coherent connection between traditional motif analysis, cultural interpretation, and contemporary design application. By providing a structured, operational, and replicable methodology, the proposed framework contributes not only to a more systematic utilization of traditional cultural resources in modern design but also offers a transferable analytical approach for future research on traditional visual culture and design innovation.

Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on auspicious motifs found on ceramics from the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods of the Qing Dynasty. Consequently, the applicability of the proposed FCCS analytical framework to other categories of traditional Chinese art has not yet been fully examined. Future research may extend the framework to additional artistic media, such as textiles and embroidery, lacquerware, bronzeware, and mural paintings, in order to evaluate its broader applicability and analytical robustness across different forms of traditional visual culture.

Furthermore, the present study primarily adopts a design semiotics perspective to investigate the visual language and cultural meanings of traditional motifs. Although the proposed design transformation pathway is theoretically grounded, its practical effectiveness has not been validated through empirical approaches such as user experience studies, eye-tracking experiments, or market evaluation. Future studies are therefore encouraged to integrate user-centered research methods to further refine the FCCS framework and assess its effectiveness in real-world design applications.

Accordingly, the FCCS framework proposed in this study should be regarded as a foundational analytical tool for investigating the contemporary transformation of traditional motifs rather than as a universal model applicable to every design context. Its practical implementation should be adapted according to specific design objectives, media characteristics, and user requirements to ensure both cultural authenticity and design effectiveness.

Conclusion

This study investigates auspicious motifs on ceramics from the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods of the Qing Dynasty by adopting a design semiotics perspective. An FCCS analytical framework, comprising Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic, was developed and applied to the systematic analysis of 70 representative ceramic samples. The findings reveal the evolutionary characteristics of the visual language of Qing Dynasty ceramic auspicious motifs, explain the mechanisms through which their cultural meanings are constructed, and establish a pathway for their contemporary design transformation. The results demonstrate that traditional ceramic auspicious motifs should not be regarded as isolated decorative images; rather, they constitute an integrated visual semiotic system in which form, color, composition, and cultural semantics interact continuously to support the expression and transmission of cultural meaning.

The FCCS analytical framework developed in this study integrates the four analytical dimensions of Form, Color, Composition, and Semantic into a unified methodological system, establishing a direct connection between visual structural analysis and cultural semantic interpretation. Unlike conventional studies that primarily focus on motif classification, historical interpretation, or symbolic meaning, the FCCS framework explains not only what traditional motifs represent but also how they generate and communicate meaning through their visual organization. In addition, this study proposes an FCCS-guided design transformation pathway, consisting of cultural decoding, visual extraction, structural reconstruction, and design re-encoding, thereby providing a systematic methodology for translating traditional cultural resources into contemporary design practice.

The comparative analysis further indicates that the Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong periods developed distinctive combinations of visual form, color organization, composition, and cultural semantics. These differences provide differentiated resources for contemporary design transformation. Rather than directly reproducing historical motifs, designers should select and reinterpret traditional visual resources according to specific communication objectives, media conditions, and cultural contexts.

Overall, this study deepens the understanding of the visual language of Qing Dynasty ceramic auspicious motifs while extending the application of design semiotics to the study of

traditional Chinese visual culture. The FCCS analytical framework possesses both theoretical significance and practical applicability, enriching existing methodologies for traditional motif research and offering a structured approach to the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional cultural resources. As emerging fields such as digital humanities, artificial intelligence-assisted design, and user-centered design research continue to evolve, the FCCS framework has considerable potential for further refinement and broader application in digital heritage preservation, cultural IP development, and cross-media design innovation.

Future research may expand the analytical scope to include auspicious motifs from the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, as well as ceramic productions from different kiln systems, in order to further validate and refine the FCCS framework. Establishing a standardized FCCS-based motif database would provide stronger support for large-scale comparative research. In addition, empirical studies incorporating user experience evaluation, eye-tracking experiments, and design practice assessments are recommended to optimize the extraction of visual forms and color systems, thereby extending the application of the proposed framework to areas such as intangible cultural heritage digitization, cultural IP development, and AI-assisted design.

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