

Elements of Jasmine Tea Packaging that Influence Customers' Awareness

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Abstract Historically, Chinese tea was considered medicinal and a condiment. Tea now exists as a daily beverage for young people. Jasmine tea is widely available in Chinese beverage stores, but little attention has been devoted to its history. Packaging is the visual presentation of products in beverage retailers and an effective method of introducing tea culture. This study's objectives are to 1) investigate and analyze the current status of jasmine tea, 2) investigate how to disseminate tea culture through beverage store packaging, and 3) propose the implementation of its culture in jasmine tea packaging. The study searched tea-related market reports and literature, combined with the field observation of Guangxi jasmine and Chinese chain beverage stores. The study proposes the investigation content of tea packaging that affects consumers' cultural awareness, taking Guangxi jasmine tea as a case. The findings are as follows: 1) Chinese young people prefer new tea drinks, and their packaging conveys tea culture awareness to the public. 2) Jasmine tea packaging can influence the public's awareness of tea culture through the text, pattern, and icon of Guangxi origin.

Keywords Jasmine tea; Tea packing elements; Customer awareness; Tea drinking; Cultural elements

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Introduction

Tea, a spiritual drink invented thousands of years ago in China, has been well received both domestically and internationally. As the world's largest tea producer and the country with the longest history, China plays an important role in the global tea industry. In 2021, the most lucrative tea exporting countries were China (USD 2.1 billion), Kenya (USD 1.2 billion), and Sri Lanka (USD 732.4 million) (Workman, 2023). Chinese tea, as a historical and cultural carrier, represents China's most important cultural heritage from antiquity to the present (Guo, 2007). In China, there are numerous types of tea, including black tea, green tea, and scented tea, which have a rich history. Jasmine tea is one of the most popular scented teas in China (CTMA, 2022), and it is currently the most common type of tea sold in new Chinese beverage stores. The Chinese tea market's revenue has increased from 351.8 billion yuan in 2016 to 522.1 billion yuan in 2021, with a compound annual growth rate of 8.2% (CTMA, 2022). The Chinese new tea drink market has expanded from 42.2 billion yuan in 2017 to 290 billion yuan in 2022 (Ren, 2023; Shen, 2023). According to these developments, new teas represent a significant portion of the tea market's revenue.

Recent data show that tea consumption in China's domestic market is increasing year after year and that tea consumers are becoming younger. In terms of new-style tea consumption, consumers aged 18 to 30 who use the Ele.me software to order tea drinks account for 61% (Ele.me, 2023). Ele.me is a local lifestyle platform that provides online food delivery across China, and its data may reflect modern people's dietary preferences (Chen & Shen, 2023). However, younger audiences are generally unaware of the history of tea or tea drinking culture.

Tea has gone through several stages of evolution, from early medicinal drinks to modern new tea beverages. New-style tea is made primarily of tea and served with dairy products or fruits. It is now the most popular beverage among young Chinese people. In the past, drinking tea was a way to unwind and relax. However, in today's fast-paced society, tea is viewed as a quick refreshment that can be consumed on the go. Package design can influence people's perceptions of tea drinking culture.

Research on the impact of packaging design on consumer perception has consistently confirmed that the response to tea knowledge-related information conveyed through tea packaging reflects consumer perception (Gómez et al., 2015). Using relevant elements in packaging not only allows consumers to gain a new understanding of a product but also piques the interest of potential customers (Silayoi & Speece, 2004).

Product packaging is the first visual impression that consumers receive (Batra & Homer, 2004), and food packaging plays an important role in information transmission and communication (Robertson, 2005). Packaging can also be used to communicate ethnic culture to consumers (Berg-Weitzel & Laar, 2001). Tea information and culture can effectively convey tea-drinking knowledge and related practical skills via tea packaging. Young people can gain an understanding of Chinese tea culture by viewing new tea packaging on a daily basis. The study proposes a scheme for incorporating jasmine tea culture into tea packaging after analyzing existing cases.

Significance of the problem

The tea-drinking culture has changed dramatically as a result of today's rapid social change. Much of its knowledge, which was once known to laymen, is now becoming less familiar to its drinkers. However, tea packaging can still play an important role in educating the public about tea culture. Researchers conducted this study to effectively disseminate tea knowledge through packaging.

Research objectives

- 1) Investigate and analyze the current situation of jasmine tea;
- 2) Discuss how to spread tea culture through beverage store packaging;
- 3) Propose the content implementation of jasmine tea culture in the packaging.

Research method

Young generations will undoubtedly determine the course of tea-drinking culture in the future. Thus, the packages of tea beverages to which young people are most frequently exposed comprised the sample population. The study investigated the utilization of text, graphics, and labels on packaging for jasmine tea in order to develop a structure for designing jasmine tea packaging that effectively communicates tea knowledge. The study consisted of three distinct components: criteria for selecting jasmine tea brands, elements of packaging that communicate the selection criteria for tea culture, and a proposal for packaging jasmine tea in an effective manner. As a case study, the proposed Heng County jasmine tea package was utilized.

The researchers conducted a comprehensive literature search on the topic of tea and packaging design. Data were gathered from China's top ten new tea brands for 2023, as well as Heng County, Guangxi's jasmine tea origin. To better propose the packaging of jasmine tea forms, five beverage packaging types reflecting knowledge of Chinese tea culture were chosen for case study.

Jasmine tea brands selection criteria

The historical records and introduction of jasmine tea are derived from CNKI Chinese academic papers. China National Knowledge Infrastructure is China's largest and most comprehensive Chinese periodic retrieval database, which accurately and objectively reflects the current research status of Chinese science (Jiang, 2015). Ten new chain tea brands were selected as the data for the analysis of the current situation of jasmine tea. The determination of the ten brand stores comes from the "Top Ten Favorite New Tea Drink Brands for Chinese Consumers in 2023" provided by data.iimedia.cn.

Packaging which conveys tea culture selection criteria

The study analyzes the case of tea beverage packaging with Chinese tea culture elements from three aspects: text, pattern, and icon. Five cases were selected for analysis, and the data were collected from new Chinese tea chain brands. By studying representative young tea packaging, we can better introduce jasmine tea culture to young people.

Proposing effective jasmine tea packaging

The scope of investigation of jasmine tea is Heng County, Guangxi. Due to the large production of jasmine in Heng County but the weak brand value (Daily, 2022; Pang, 2020), Heng County was selected as the research area. The information about jasmine tea in Heng County, Guangxi, comes from the data collected by the author during a field investigation in Heng County, Guangxi. The characteristics of local jasmine tea culture are summarized through on-the-spot investigations of the environment, production bases, museums, and trading markets. Finally, a more effective content framework for the packaging design of Heng jasmine tea is proposed from the text, pattern, and logo aspects.

Findings

Jasmine tea is made from tea base and jasmine flowers through scenting techniques. Scenting techniques refer to appropriately stacking flowers and tea in a particular proportion so that the tea can absorb the aroma of flowers (Ni, 2023). The scenting process of jasmine is very complicated, and advanced jasmine tea needs to be scented many times. Figure. 1 is the general production process of jasmine tea.

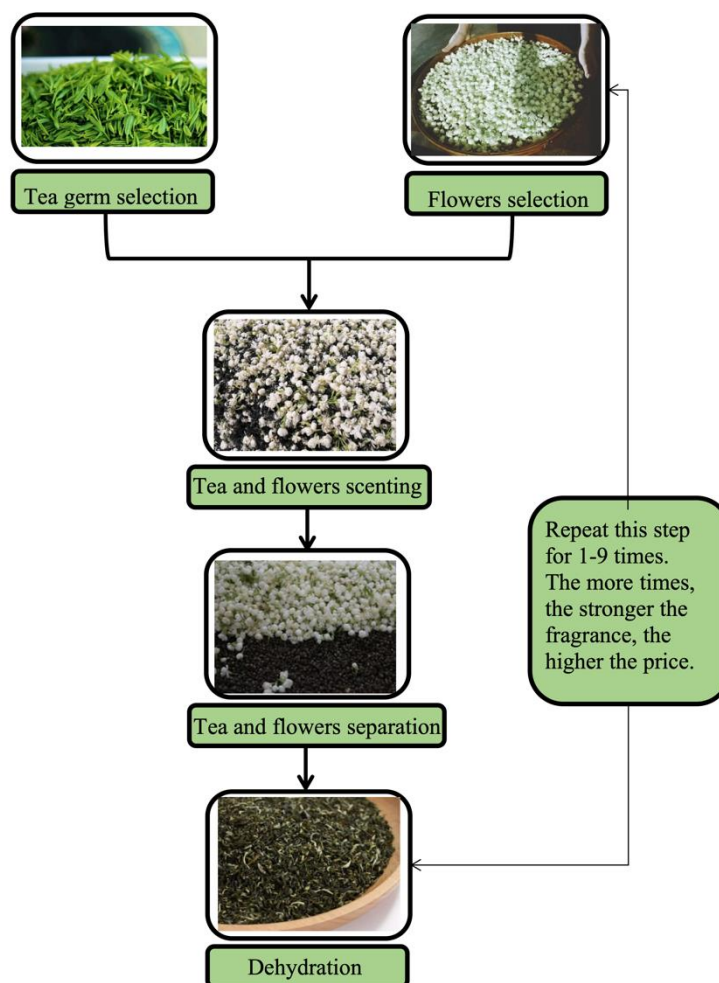


Figure 1 The production process of jasmine tea

Source: Illustrated by the author

History and current situation of jasmine tea

Jasmine tea is a kind of scented tea characterized by the natural jasmine fragrance of the tea leaves. Jasmine tea is one of the most representative teas in China. The “Historical Book” of the Han Dynasty records that jasmine originated in the ancient Roman Empire in the early days and spread to China through the Silk Road. It was planted in Guangdong and Fujian during the Han and Jin Dynasties. There was jasmine tea during the Song Dynasty in China, and there were many workshops in Suzhou and Fuzhou in the Qing Dynasty to produce jasmine tea and sell it well all over the place. In the Ming Dynasty, Guangxi planted jasmine on a large scale and then formed an industry. Up to now, Heng County, Guangxi jasmine tea, the largest production area in China, has achieved poverty alleviation in the production area (Li & Liu, 2019).

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, jasmine tea was used as one of the gifts for foreign guests, and it was called “the smell of Chinese spring” (Pang, 2020). Early jasmine was introduced to China through Buddhism, and later became popular in the court and gradually became a daily tea drink among Chinese folks (Cai, 2018).

When milk tea was not so famous, groups among the younger generation in China believed drinking tea was old-fashioned. Due to increased production costs, the price of jasmine tea as a pure tea has remained relatively high (Liu, 2021). This also makes jasmine tea lag behind in research and development for a while, and needs to be more well-known than other teas. After the popularity of milk tea, tea slowly entered the world of young people. Jasmine tea has a strong aroma and can be drunk by all ages.

In recent years, jasmine tea has been used as the base in most of the tea drinks that young people like. The study selected ten popular new tea brands for investigation and counted the current proportion of jasmine tea in the beverage market.

Table 1 depicts the number of ten popular chain brands of tea beverages on the menu. Jasmine tea is a large proportion of tea containing drinks. Nine out of ten brands surveyed use jasmine tea as a raw beverage material. More than half of tea-containing beverages use jasmine tea as the primary raw material in four brands. From these ten Chinese chain brands, we know that jasmine tea is widely found in modern new tea drinks and is accepted by the public.

Table 1 The Number of Tea Drinks and the Number of Drinks Containing Jasmine Tea in Ten Chain Beverage Stores

Brand name	Number of Drinks containing Tea	Number of Drinks using Jasmine Tea
Alittle Tea	52	16
Auntea Jenny	17	14
Coco	20	7
Goof Me	23	13
Heytea	42	0
Mixue Ice Cream & Tea	20	1
Naixue	25	13
Sexy Tea	32	10
Shuyi	22	11
Tea Baidao	29	13

Source: The data was collected from ten brands' WeChat ordering websites on July 10, 2023.

Note: Compiled by the researchers. The table is sorted alphabetically.

The table above shows that jasmine tea is commonly used in tea beverages sold in China's beverage stores. Aside from the sale of bulk jasmine tea drinks, young Chinese people are unaware of jasmine tea's culture and history. The number of scenting sessions and the type of tea were the keywords used when introducing jasmine tea brands.

How beverage packaging conveys tea culture

The design of packaging is to engage consumers through sensory stimulation. During perceptual analysis, consumers frequently decipher stimuli into categorical codes such as brand names, brand packaging images, and textual information (Draskovic et al., 2009). Classification using traditional packaging classification codes as a case study provides a better understanding of how tea culture is communicated through beverage packaging. Many large-scale new tea shops will create corresponding beverage cup packaging to coincide with festivals or events. Tea culture is also represented and communicated through these words, patterns, and icons.

1) Textual Information

Text is key in conveying brand messages on packaging (Velasco & Spence, 2019). It also plays a vital role in the delivery of modern drinking cups. NAIXUE is one of the pioneers of new tea drinks in China and has innovated the tea-making process and the blending of tea drinks. Creating a brand-new way of drinking tea for young people makes more young people fall in love with drinking tea and promotes the innovative development of Chinese tea culture (Wu, 2023).

In October 2021, NAIXUE launched the industry's first cup of Yashi Duck Shit milk tea, making this Chaoshan niche tea a popular drink nationwide (Li & Li, 2023). Yashi Duck Shit tea does not mean it has the fragrance of duck droppings, but its tea leaves are grown in yellow duck droppings soil. This unique name attracts young people who do not know it. NAIXUE applied a simple font description on the beverage packaging with this tea as the tea base to inform everyone.



Figure 2 Naixue's Yashi Duck Shit Milk Tea Cup

Source: Photographed by the researchers.

Note: The figure is from Naixue's tea beverage packaging launched in 2022. The image analysis explains the meaning of the Chinese sentences on the packaging cup.

Figure 2 shows the packaging of Naixue's Yashi Duck Shit milk tea drink. The origin and characteristics of Yashi Duck Shit tea are mainly described in words on the packaged cup. In this way, Naixue has promoted this niche tea in China to young people. Through the packaging, many people also know and understand the characteristics of this tea. This has played a perfect role in promoting Chinese tea culture. In 2022, Naixue cooperated with Chinese costume TV series and added a text introduction to the tea ordering method in the Song Dynasty on the drink cup. In this way, the tea brewing techniques in the history of China have been spread to customers.

2) Pattern

The graphic design of packaging visual elements plays a role in creating the aesthetics of product packaging. It is also one of the most powerful tools for grabbing consumers' attention during buying (Honea & Horsky, 2012). Pattern can convey story, action, and ingredients.

Ah Ma Handmade is a brand that makes tea drinks traditionally handmade. The brand mainly evokes people's childhood memories of grandma through handmade formulas. In 2022, Ah Ma Handmade launched a handmade lemon tea. The packaging of this drink depicts grandma beating lemons with a tool to make lemon tea. This packaging allows customers to understand traditional lemon tea production methods intuitively. In 2022, Heytea launched a new tea beverage with patterns of men and women getting married and offering tea. Heytea is a tea drink brand that focuses on presenting the aroma of high-quality tea and is the pioneer of cheese milk tea. Its store decoration caters to the preferences of young people and has Chinese cultural heritage (Tian & Zhou, 2023).

Figure 3 is the drink packaging cup launched by Heytea on a unique Love Day in China. The overall packaging uses red, which is commonly used in Chinese weddings. At a traditional Chinese wedding, the couple need serve tea to their parents together. This traditional tea culture custom is reflected in the tea cups of Heytea and combined with the brand's logo pattern and products to redesign the tea ceremony in the new era. The packaging pattern is related to the brand product and reminds consumers of traditional Chinese tea culture.



Figure 3 Heytea's Tea Cup on a Unique Love Celebration Day

Source: Photographed by the author

3) Icon

The logo is the most recognizable icon on beverage packaging. The use of a logo promotes the brand. Sexy Tea is positioned as a new Chinese-style tea drink, and its taste, menu, and visual design are consistent with that positioning. Its primary customers are mostly young people born in the 1990s, so their designs are in line with current trends and combine Chinese style (Li & Zhang, 2021). With the logo, Sexy Tea directly reflects the characteristics of traditional Chinese tea culture. Figure 4 shows the pattern of Sexy Tea's brand logo. It draws inspiration from images of ancient Chinese ladies, and

the design of holding fans and beauties exemplifies the nobility and elegance of Chinese traditional antiquity. Behind the background is an ancient Chinese octagonal window with a structure resembling the Chinese word for "tea." According to the Interbrand Schechter study, the picture logo was the only widely recognized and recognized logo. Images and natural processing can help convey the meaning of sign expressions more effectively (Henderson & Cote, 1998).



Figure 4 Sexy Tea Logo

Source: Analyzed by the author

Results and discussion

The relationship between text, graphics, and icons and their impact on consumer awareness

Packaging plays a role in consumer awareness and purchasing decisions (Gómez et al., 2015). Figure 5 shows that words, graphics, and icons in packaging have different influences on consumers. Graphics in packaging play a role in attracting consumers to purchase (Underwood, 2003). Consumers will be interested in the patterns on the packaging, which will affect consumers' purchasing decisions. The production and characteristics of jasmine tea can be expressed through patterns, and consumers can understand the product without words. The drawing of the pattern can give consumers a particular imagination space for the product. Text descriptions allow consumers to gain more tea knowledge. Consumers can understand products better through text explanations. The icon on the tea packaging contains external links, which can interact with consumers. Consumers can obtain more information through interaction to improve consumers awareness of tea (Oaya et al., 2017). Certification and geographical icons on tea packaging can also help consumers understand the product better.

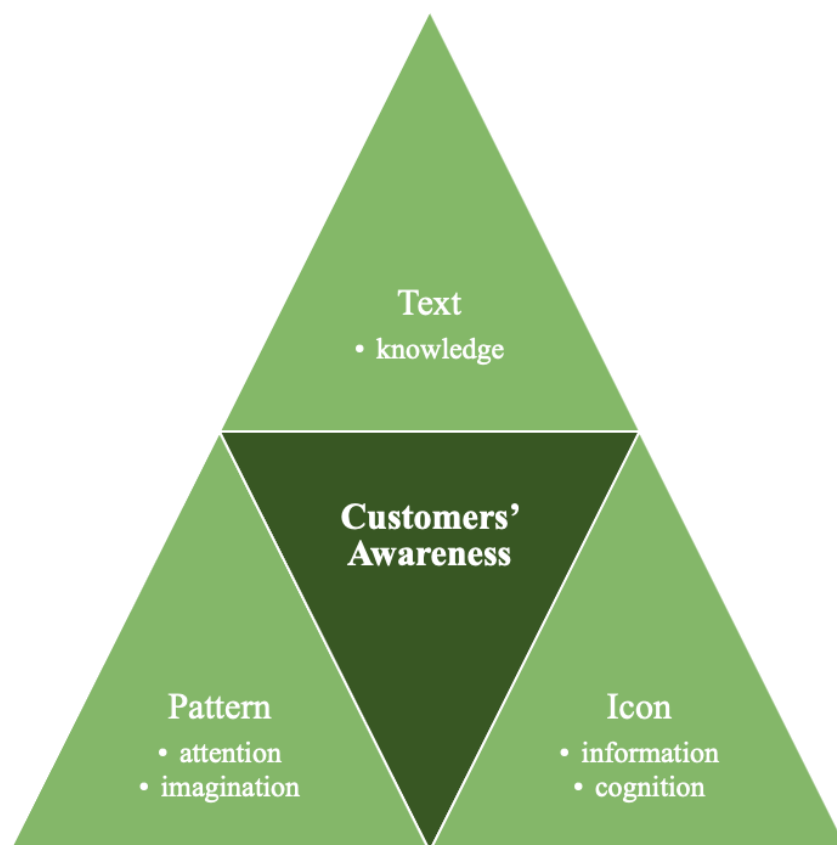


Figure 5 Text, Pattern, and Icons on Packaging Impacting Consumer Awareness

Source: Illustrated by the author

Cultural Elements Extraction of Heng County's Jasmine Tea

1) Textual Data

The text in the package can explain the product in detail. Consumers can learn more about products through the text on the packaging. Table 2 lists the contents that can express the cultural characteristics of jasmine tea in Heng County, Guangxi. Regarding text expression, the unique production process of Chinese jasmine tea is a feature. There will be different distinctions in the number of scenting times for making jasmine, which is also a way to identify the level of jasmine.

There are many different names for jasmine tea, depending on the scented tea leaves. These names also represent different characteristics of jasmine tea. Due to the long history of making jasmine tea in China, all related poems describe jasmine tea. Many ancient poets wrote poems about jasmine to praise jasmine. Through the description of ancient Chinese poems, Chinese consumers can see the past and present of jasmine. Jasmine's catchphrases and advertising words are quick memory points for young people. In the promotion, many jasmine tea products will insert buzzwords about jasmine or jasmine tea. The Chinese pronunciation of jasmine is close to the pronunciation of "Mo Li" in Chinese. "Mo Li" means not to separate in China. This particular meaning also enhances the memory of jasmine tea among young people.

Table 2 Text information classification with cultural characteristics of jasmine tea in Heng County, Guangxi

Subject	Chinese characters	Pinyin	Meaning
Production techniques	窨制工艺	Xunzhi gongyi	Scenting process
	两窨~十窨	Liangxun-shixun	Two ~ ten scenting
Geographical information	堆窨	Duixun	Heap scent
	广西横县	Guangxi Hengxian	Guangxi Heng County
Product descriptions	茉莉花之都	Molihua zhi du	Jasmine City
	中华茉莉园	Zhonghua moliyuan	Chinese Jasmine Garden
	三伏天茉莉	Sanfutian moli	Jasmine in dog days (the hottest period of the year)
	晴天茉莉	Qingtian moli	Jasmine in sunny days
Lyrics	只尝花香而不见花	Zhi chang huaxiang er bujian hua	Only taste the fragrance of flowers without flowers
	六月茉莉	Liuyue moli	June Jasmine
Poetry	茉莉花	Molihua	Jasmine
	茉莉	Moli	Jasmine
	之子方热中，濯濯冰雪花。	Zhizi fang re zhong, zhuozhuo bingxue hua	Jasmine is described as a snowflake that blooms in hot weather. - Song Dynasty Xu Kai "Jasmine"
	荔枝乡里玲珑雪，来助长安一夏凉。	Liizhi xiangli linglong xue, lai zhu changan yixia liang	Comparing the snow-white flesh of harvested lychee to jasmine, it brings coolness in summer. Song Dynasty Xu Wei "Jasmine"
Types of jasmine tea	疏放一枝浑似雪，湘帘月上影婵娟。	Shu fang yizhi hunsi xue, xiang lian yue shang ying chanjuan	A snow-white jasmine flower looks like a beautiful woman in the moonlight. Qing Dynasty Qian Hengsheng "Jasmine"
	茉莉雪芽	Moli xueya	Jasmine Snow Bud
Related words	茉莉松针	Moli songzhen	Jasmine Pine Needle
	茉莉白毫	Moli baihao	Jasmine Baihao
	茉莉龙珠	Moli Longzhu	Jasmine Dragon Bead
	茉莉曲螺	Moli quluo	Jasmine Conch
	茉莉银环	Moli yinhuan	Jasmine Silver Ring
	白首莫离	Bai shou mo li	Never be apart till hoary head
	人间第一香	Renjian di yi xiang	The first fragrance in the world
	窨得茉莉无上味，列作人间第一香	Xun de moli wu shang wei, lie zuo renjian di yi xiang	The scented jasmine is unparalleled and ranks as the first fragrance in the world
	好一朵横州茉莉花	Hao yiduo hengzhou molihua	A good Hengzhou jasmine

Source: Compiled and analyzed by the author

2) Pattern

Patterns can increase the visual value of a brand and improve its aesthetic qualities. The benefit of graphics is that they can capture consumers' attention and elicit positive emotions (Smith & Taylor, 2004). Table 3 depicts the pattern classification of cultural characteristics of jasmine tea. The exceptional craftsmanship and geographical environment of jasmine tea can be graphically represented on the tea packaging. Jasmine tea comes in several varieties, and the shapes of the tea leaves vary as well.

Jasmine tea is made from double-petal jasmine flowers. The pattern can directly convey the double-petal jasmine to the eyes of customers. The historical celebrities involved in jasmine tea can better connect with customers. Empress Dowager Cixi and Chairman Mao Zedong, both known to Chinese people, are historical figures who enjoy jasmine tea. Local flower farmers in Heng County, Guangxi, pick jasmine in a unique style. The production tools and environment for producing jasmine tea are also used to demonstrate its characteristics.

Table 3 Pattern Classification with Cultural Characteristics of Jasmine Tea in Heng County, Guangxi

Production techniques		
Geographical environment		
Related celebrities	Empress Dowager Cixi, Chairman Mao Zedong	
Jasmine		
Tea leaves		
Flower pickers		

Production environment



Source: Compiled by the author

3) Icon

Cultural icons on jasmine tea packaging can include external links, as well as geographical and certification icons. Different types of icons serve different purposes when used in applications. The primary external links are Wechat's official account, an online shopping mall, an application, and an anti-counterfeiting code. Wechat's official account is a common way for Chinese people to access information platforms, and it is also an important channel for some merchants to conduct product marketing and brand communication (Liu, 2019).

In a user-centric era, a platform is required to comprehend the data and feedback of consumers interacting with each packaging stage (Mumani & Stone, 2018). Online shopping malls and applications can offer consumers greater convenience and interaction. Consumers can scan the anti-counterfeiting code on the packaging to determine whether the tea was produced by the brand, which guarantees its quality (Zhao et al., 2017). Geographic identifiers improve consumers' perceptions of tea quality, and their use can boost purchase intentions to some extent (Wang et al., 2022).

Heng County, Guangxi, has a unique geographical icon that also represents the city's characteristics. Jasmine tea in Heng County, Guangxi, has two certification icons, the Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage Mark and the Chinese Geographical Protection Product Mark. Increasing certification initiatives address public concerns about the quality of tea products in the same way that they do with other commodities. (Raynolds & Ngcwangu, 2010).

Table 4 Classification of Icons with Cultural Characteristics of Jasmine Tea in Heng County, Guangxi

External links	Wechat official account, online shopping mall, application, anti-counterfeiting code	
Geographical indications		
Certification marks		

Source: Compiled by the author

Conclusion

Despite its ever-changing lifestyle, Chinese tea is undergoing innovation and inheritance. We must confront the challenge of innovating the essence of drinking tea. These popular new tea shops connect the younger generation to the life of tea, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of pure tea and carry on the Chinese tea tradition.

Although young people need to understand the knowledge of jasmine tea, they consume it daily. Through the analysis of packaging strategies of some new tea drinks, tea culture can be reflected and spread through packaging. Text, graphics, and icons used on beverage packaging help young people understand tea culture. Jasmine tea in Heng County, Guangxi, has unique text, patterns, and icon content. Inserting the cultural characteristics of jasmine tea in the packaging can better promote jasmine tea.

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