

Research on the Visual Identity Design of Fruit Brands in Fengxian District, Shanghai

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Abstract

Driven by the rural revitalisation strategy, the construction of 'beautiful countryside' has been actively pursued across various regions. However, rural brands still face challenges such as single development models, serious homogenisation, and insufficient market competitiveness. In response to these challenges, this study examines the fruit industry in Fengxian District, Shanghai, exploring how visual identity design can enhance brand uniqueness and market competitiveness, thereby promoting regional economic development. The study begins with an in-depth analysis of the current state of the fruit industry in Fengxian District. Despite having rich agricultural resources and a superior ecological environment, Fengxian's fruit brands struggle to stand out in the highly competitive market, particularly against the brands from Chongming County and neighboring regions like Zhejiang and Jiangsu. Through literature review, field research, interviews, and questionnaires, this study comprehensively assesses the status and challenges of Fengxian's fruit brands, delving into their brand resources, environment, and cultural advantages to provide a scientific foundation for visual identity design. Based on these insights, the study proposes a visual identity design strategy for Fengxian fruit brands, aiming to create a unique and recognisable brand image by clarifying brand positioning and integrating regional culture and ecological strengths. The strategy seeks to visually convey the high quality and uniqueness of Fengxian fruits, enhancing consumer identification and loyalty to the brand. The results indicate that a well-planned visual identity design significantly enhances the market competitiveness of Fengxian fruit brands and provides a scientific basis for policy formulation, thereby promoting the sustainable development of the fruit industry in Fengxian District. This study not only offers practical strategies for enhancing Fengxian fruit brands but also serves as a reference model for rural fruit branding nationwide, contributing to the broader goal of rural revitalisation.

Keywords: Fengxian District Fruit, Brand Status, Green Ecology, Creative Design.

Since the 20th century, the Chinese government has implemented rural revitalization through various strategies, such as village construction, land reform, agricultural cooperatives, and rural industrialization, continually advancing its efforts (Wang Anzhong, 2008). The Chinese government has consistently emphasized rural revitalization, formulating numerous policies over time. In 2004, the “three rural issues” were elevated to a key position in the national development strategy, marking a significant milestone. These efforts have created substantial opportunities for rural development. However, the rural branding process has led to the emergence of numerous homogenized and low-quality brands, undermining both the healthy development of the market and consumer trust in rural products. This issue, coupled with the lack of systematic brand planning and professional design guidance, has resulted in similar and uninspired brand visuals. As a result, the brand image lacks distinctiveness, making it challenging to secure a favorable position in the market. This study uses rural fruit brands in Fengxian District as a case study, analyzing their current state and exploring the regional cultural characteristics of the district. The research aims to effectively promote the upgrading and sustainable development of rural fruit brands through creative design, thereby contributing to rural revitalization.

Fengxian District, is an integral part of Shanghai. According to Shanghai’s “14th Five-Year Plan,” Fengxian is set to become a node city with distinctive industrial characteristics and unique ecological endowments within Shanghai’s southern riverside coastal development corridor.

According to Philip Kotler, the father of modern marketing, a brand is a name, moniker, mark, logo, design, or a combination of these elements used to identify a company’s products and services and to differentiate them from its competitors (Philip Kotler, 1991). The brand is the main tool in the promotion of agricultural

products, and the branding process is a necessary condition for achieving the goals (Natalya Pyzhikova, Tatyana Smirnov, etc.2020).

Branding agricultural products involves operators designing a distinct brand identity based on market demand and the unique characteristics of local resources (Ding Dongdong, 2010). An agricultural product brand serves as a key identifier for recognizing operators, the origin, and the quality of products. It is also an intangible asset for operators and a vital bridge between consumers and producers (Lin Guanying, 2019).

Western countries place significant emphasis on the preservation and development of rural agricultural products with national characteristics, resulting in numerous successful cases of rural agricultural product branding. For instance, in the Southern California citrus industry, the integration of dispersed citrus growers under the unified Sunkist brand has successfully driven the region’s economic development (Yao, Wei; Fan, Kai, 2010). In Japan’s Malu Village, Kochi Prefecture, the brand design of rural agricultural products, centered on nostalgia and featuring pomelo as the main element and product, has successfully established a unique brand image (He Yinchun, Xue Tingting, 2020).



Figure 1 Cases of Rural Industry Branding

Shanghai’s neighboring provinces and cities have successfully established distinctive rural agricultural product brands. For example,

Quzhou, Zhejiang Province, has increased farmers' income in traditional agriculture through the establishment and promotion of citrus cultural brands, while also enabling them to gain additional economic benefits from tertiary industries such as leisure and tourism (Li Zhiqiang, 2019).

Branding rural Fruit in Fengxian District is not only an effective means of addressing current market competition and bottlenecks in rural economic development but also a powerful tool for realizing cultural heritage, ecological protection, and economic growth.

Research Objectives

The uniqueness and market competitiveness of Fengxian fruit brands are enhanced through visual image design, which in turn promotes regional economic development. This process involves an in-depth analysis of the current situation and challenges of rural fruit brands in Fengxian District, Shanghai, exploring the cultural and ecological advantages of Fengxian fruits, and formulating and implementing a recognisable brand image design strategy to achieve sustainable brand development.

Research Methodology

This study employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods as follows:

1.Literature Review: Reviewing relevant policy documents, the China Geographical Indication Products database, academic papers, and industry reports, drawing on existing theories and practices to provide theoretical support for the brand design of rural Fruit in Fengxian District.

2.Field Research: Conduct fieldwork in Fengxian District to gain an in-depth understanding of the district's agricultural resources, ecological environment, cultural background, and existing brand development.

3.Interviews and Questionnaires: In-depth interviews were conducted with the staff of the Agricultural and Rural Committee of Shanghai and Fengxian District, brand design experts, and local farmers to gather their insights, suggestions, and practical needs for rural agricultural branding. Questionnaires were designed and distributed to consumers to assess their awareness, purchasing behavior, and brand preferences regarding rural Fruit brands in Fengxian District.

4.Data Analysis: The information gathered during field research and literature review was classified and analyzed to elucidate the development status and challenges of rural Fruit brands in Fengxian District. Additionally, the questionnaire data were statistically processed using statistical software to quantify brand status and consumer perception.

Through the systematic application of these research methods, we comprehensively analyzed the current status and challenges of rural Fruit brands in Fengxian District, implemented creative design strategies, and provided theoretical support and practical guidance for the development of rural Fruit in the district.

Research tools

Research tools for branding rural Fruit in Fengxian District, Shanghai include observation forms, interviews, questionnaires, and evaluation forms.

1.Observation Form. From August to September 2023, field observations were conducted in Qingxi Old Street, Wufang Village, and Nansing Village in Qingcun Town, Fengxian District. The purpose was to understand the history, current development status, and characteristics of rural industry brands. The collected information was categorized and organized for further analysis.

2.Questionnaire.The researcher selected four groups of respondents: villagers in Qingcun Town, tourists visiting Qingcun Town, brand

design experts, and the staff of the Agricultural and Rural Committee of Shanghai and Fengxian District. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed, and 100 were collected, yielding a response rate of 83%. The questionnaires were distributed through random sampling to ensure that the samples were representative and statistically valid. The main purpose was to understand the respondents' perceptions, needs, and opinions on rural industry branding, enabling a comprehensive grasp of their views and the extraction of key information.

3. Interview Form. In June 2024, three groups of experts were contacted, and individual experts were interviewed based on a predefined survey question outline. The experts shared their views on rural industry brand design, emphasizing that the brand design in Fengxian District should focus on artistry, humanity, and sustainability.

4. Evaluation Form. The evaluation form was used to comprehensively assess the feedback from experts, consumers, villagers, and staff of the Shanghai Municipal Agriculture and Rural Affairs Commission regarding the completed rural industry brand design. The feedback was utilized to refine and improve the brand design.

Research Results

1. Current Situation and Challenges of Rural Fruit Branding in Fengxian District

As a key Fruit ion area in Shanghai, Fengxian District boasts rich natural resources and a unique regional culture, providing a solid foundation for the branding of rural Fruit. However, despite this strong foundation, the process of brand-building for rural Fruit in Fengxian District still encounters several pressing challenges.

1.1 Brand Market Awareness Needs Improvement: A review of the "Chinese Geographical Indications" product catalog revealed that Fengxian District has two recognized geographical indication products: "Zhuanghang Honey Pear" and "Fengxian Yellow Peach." While these products are known

for their unique quality and strong regional characteristics and have achieved some market recognition, their national influence remains insufficient.

1.2 Ambiguous Brand Positioning and Weak Market Competitiveness: Rural brands in Fengxian District suffer from unclear market positioning, and their core brand values are not effectively communicated. As a result, the brands in Fengxian District struggle to establish a strong market presence amid intense competition from similar products in surrounding areas such as Zhejiang and Jiangsu.

1.3 Significant Homogenization of Brand Design: The design of rural agricultural brands in Fengxian District is largely homogenized, lacking innovation and personalized expression, making it difficult for these brands to distinguish themselves in a highly competitive market. Although Fengxian District is rich in regional cultural resources such as "Xian culture," "Haitang culture," and "ancient bridge culture," these elements have not been fully explored and incorporated into brand building, resulting in a lack of cultural depth. Consequently, the brands fail to resonate emotionally with consumers.

1.4 Insufficient Innovation Capacity: Rural Fruit brands in Fengxian District lag in product development and innovation, failing to innovate in line with consumer demand, resulting in products with limited appeal in the market. In some cases, such as the Fengxian yellow peach cannery, a lack of brand design led to sales difficulties and eventual closure. Although the Fengxian Yellow Peach Festival has been held annually since 2010, over 14 years, the industry centered around this cultural element as an IP has had limited impact.



Figure 2 Fengxian Yellow peaches and Yellow Peach Canning Factory (closed down)

1.5 Insufficient Brand Dissemination: Currently, the dissemination of rural Fruit brands in Fengxian District is primarily focused on the local market, lacking broader publicity channels and methods, which results in limited brand awareness and influence.

Although Fengxian's rural agricultural brands have developed to some extent, significant challenges remain in brand design, cultural connotation, dissemination efforts, market positioning, and innovation capacity. These issues not only restrict the further development of Fengxian's rural Fruit brands but also affect their competitiveness in both national and international markets. Fengxian District needs to undertake an in-depth study and develop systematic solutions to these challenges. By establishing a distinctive rural Fruit brand from a brand design perspective, the district can promote the sustainable development of the regional economy.

2.Creative Design of Rural Fruit Brands in Fengxian District

2.1 Design Positioning

2.1.1 Humanistic Characteristics of the Brand: Brand design needs to be combined with the cultural characteristics of Fengxian, to build distinctive rural Fruit with obvious brand effect, and to create a rural brand with regional cultural characteristics. Fengxian culture mainly includes "Xian" culture, "Haitang" culture, and "ancient bridge" culture. (Zhang Wenbin, 2023). At the same time, the brand design should be combined with Fengxian's folk art to establish a distinctive brand of rural Fruit.

2.1.2 Artistry of the Brand: The artistic aesthetic image plays a vital role in attracting audiences and consumers. The brand design of rural Fruit should integrate various design techniques from a brand planning perspective. Artistic methods should be employed to optimize rural product brand design, with a focus on the coherence of visual elements and fashionability. Design empowers rural Fruit brands by expanding new value and development spaces,

thereby fostering the endogenous power needed for rural revitalization.

2.1.3 Brand Sustainability: Sustainable brand development involves not only green ecological design but also the application of sustainable concepts in product development. For instance, Fengxian yellow peaches could be sold fresh during the peak season, while a portion could be processed into canned peaches, dried peaches, or even peach kernels, with peach branches used for handicrafts. Packaging design for these products should prioritize in-situ solutions using environmentally friendly materials, ensuring the brand's sustainable development. Clearly defining the positioning of Fengxian's rural agricultural brands is essential for condensing brand value and creating sustainable brand vitality.

2.2 Creative Design Strategy

2.2.1 Aesthetic art integration strategy: aesthetic innovation of rural Fruit brands

By integrating Fengxian's "Xian" culture, "Haitang" culture, and "Ancient Bridge" culture, the brand design aims to establish a distinctively artistic brand image. The design emphasizes the coherence and modern appeal of visual elements to align the brand image with contemporary aesthetic trends. For instance, in designing the logo for Fengxian yellow peaches, the ancient bridge's shape can be abstracted into line art, or the ripples of the sea pond can be merged with the bridge's form to create a distinctive visual symbol. Utilizing the yellow peach's color as the primary palette, the brand's color scheme can be developed to craft an artistic brand image that reflects Fengxian's regional characteristics.

2.2.2 Eco-sustainable strategy: brand green development path

Encourage sustainable brand and product development by leveraging Fengxian's natural resources for eco-friendly designs, adopting sustainable materials and processes, and creating value-added rural products. Designs should be simple and environmentally friendly. For example, the logo design can adopt a simple

shape and minimize the use of multiple colors, making it more convenient for printing and environmentally friendly. Packaging for Fengxian yellow peaches can utilize biodegradable materials like straw and molded pulp, as well as recyclable papercraft elements. Additionally, product diversification should be pursued. Surplus Fengxian yellow peaches can be processed into canned goods, dried peaches, and even peach kernel or branch-based handicrafts, thereby creating a multi-tiered product chain and extending the industrial value chain.

2.2.3 Humanistic care strategy: building the emotional resonance of the brand

Brand design should emphasize Fengxian's humanistic traits, establishing an emotional connection with consumers through emotionally driven design and integrating Fengxian's culture via brand storytelling. For instance, characteristic elements of Fengxian can be incorporated into the logo design, and the packaging or product manuals can narrate the history of Fengxian yellow peach cultivation and its ties to Confucianism. This approach allows consumers to appreciate the product's flavor while connecting with its cultural depth.




3. Sample Study-Taking Shanghai Fengxian Yellow Peach Brand as an Example

3.1 Sample Background Overview

Qingcun Town, located in the central part of Fengxian District, Shanghai, spans an area of 73.1 square kilometers. It is home to Qingxi Old Street, a renowned tourist attraction with a history of more than 1,400 years. Wufang Village in Qingcun Town is one of Shanghai's first nine model villages for rural revitalization and has been honored with the title of China's Beautiful Leisure Village. Qingcun Town enjoys a monsoon subtropical maritime climate characterized by abundant light and rainfall, creating highly favorable conditions for crop growth.

Qingcun Town's yellow peaches are a specialty of Fengxian District, Shanghai, and hold a national geographical indication for Fruit. The town has over 6,000 acres dedicated to peach cultivation. Each year, the blooming of peach blossoms in Qingcun Town attracts numerous tourists. The Yellow Peach Festival has become a hallmark event for Qingcun Town and Fengxian District. However, yellow peach products face significant sales challenges. After the Yellow Peach Festival, many products remain unsold, a situation exacerbated by the influx of fresh peaches from neighboring provinces and cities, including Pudong and Songjiang within the same period. The Fengxian yellow peach brand struggles with low market recognition and competitiveness due to its lack of a distinctive brand image.

3.2 Brand Value Analysis of Fengxian Yellow Peach

Time	Pictures	Status of yellow peaches	Brand value
Spring		peach blossom	Ecotourism, ornamental value
Summer		Fruit trees are green and lush	Protecting the environment, preventing heatstroke, and ecological value
Autumn		Yellow Peach Ripening	Increase in farmers' income, economic value


Winter		Deep processing of yellow peach products, Yellow Peach Crafts	Ornamental value, economic value, sustainable value
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Figure 3 Brand value of yellow peaches

3.3 Design Conceptualization

3.3.1 Combination of cultural heritage and regional characteristics

The logo design of Fengxian yellow peach draws inspiration from the region's natural ecology and distinctive cultural heritage. The logo centers on the image of the Fengxian yellow peach, emphasizing its roundness and fullness, symbolizing harvest and prosperity. The curved river on the yellow peach forms an 'S' shape, symbolizing the initial of Shanghai and representing the Huangpu River, the city's mother river, thus conveying the regional and international aspirations of Fengxian yellow peach. The river, depicted with water waves reminiscent of an ancient bridge, represents Fengxian's 'pond' and 'ancient bridge' cultures. Beneath this, the seal script for 'Xian' is incorporated, reflecting Fengxian's 'Xian' culture. This fusion of traditional culture with a modern visual image gives the logo a contemporary appeal while retaining cultural depth. The integration of natural and human elements in the design makes the logo not just a brand symbol, but also an expression of cultural identity.

3.3.2 Color positioning and emotional resonance

The design primarily uses yellow and green. Yellow reflects the natural hue of yellow peaches, symbolizing harvest and abundance, while green represents ecology, nature, and environmental protection. The main graphic, resembling a small figure consuming green, highlights the ecological, healthy, and environmentally friendly qualities of Fengxian yellow peaches, emphasizing the significance of sustainable development.

3.3.3 The integration of simple modern and traditional art

The logo design embraces the principles of environmental protection and energy efficiency. The design style is simple and modern, with color choices rooted in natural tones, aligning with the environmental protection concept and enhancing the brand's ecological image.

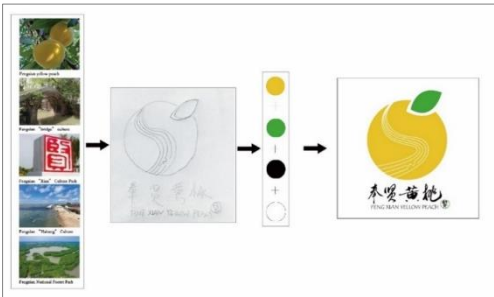


Figure 4 Logo Inspiration

3.4 Finished design

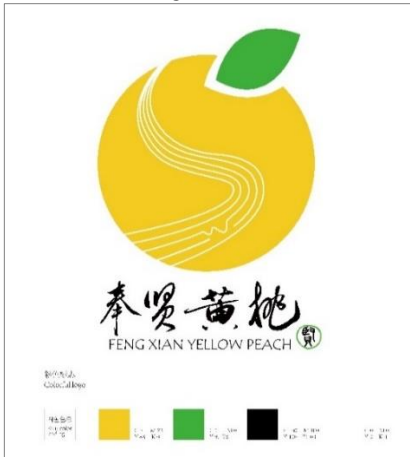


Figure 5 Fengxian Yellow Peach Logo

The Fengxian Yellow Peach logo design encapsulates the core values of the brand by seamlessly integrating artistry, cultural significance, and sustainability. This design reflects the brand's distinctive positioning within the contemporary market.

4. Creative design evaluation

The research on brand development and design strategy for rural industries in Fengxian District, Shanghai, is compiled into a handbook format, detailing the background, current status, features, design positioning, conceptualization, and logo design of the sample. Copies of this handbook were distributed to brand design experts for feedback. Following this, a quantitative questionnaire titled "Fengxian Yellow Peach Brand Design User Satisfaction Research Questionnaire" was created via Questionnaire Star. The questionnaire was distributed online to collect comprehensive evaluations of the program. The quantitative data gathered from these responses were used to assess the effectiveness and satisfaction with the design strategy. This assessment provides a scientific foundation for optimizing the design to ensure the branding of rural industries in Fengxian District is scientifically grounded, effective, and forward-looking.

The community provided a highly favorable evaluation of the brand development and design strategy for rural industries in Fengxian District, Shanghai. They expressed satisfaction with the brand logo design, which effectively reflects the natural, green, and local characteristics of the rural industry. Moreover, the brand design is unique, accurately conveys the local characteristics and resources, and supports sustainable development.

The logo design has enhanced consumer awareness of Fengxian District's rural industry brand, fostering goodwill and trust in the region. The multi-dimensional product evaluation indicates that the design is effective, fully reflects the region's cultural characteristics, and supports the sustainable development of the local rural industry.

Discussion

1. Limitations

Although this study identifies a series of challenges and solutions for branding rural agricultural products in Fengxian District using Fengxian fruits as a case, certain limitations remain. Firstly, the research sample is primarily concentrated in Fengxian District, and this regional focus may limit the generalisability of the findings. Secondly, due to time and resource constraints, this study was unable to conduct large-scale empirical validation, suggesting that future research should be extended to other regions with more in-depth empirical analyses.

2. Future Research

Expand the scope of brand design beyond rural Fruit to include ancient towns, cultural tourism demonstration zones, and traditional skills, creating a more comprehensive and systematic approach to branding. Utilize new technologies such as AR, VR, and AI to enhance brand imagery in the digital realm, providing users with immersive experiences. Implement dynamic color systems and personalized color matching to make the brand image more flexible and appealing. Leverage innovative technologies and materials to drive brand design innovation for rural Fruit.

Research Conclusion

1. Challenges and opportunities coexist for rural Fruit brands in Fengxian District. While the district benefits from abundant agricultural resources and a superior ecological environment, resulting in a certain level of local market visibility, the brand development model's singularity and the prominent issue of brand homogenization require attention. The overall brand image and market recognition need enhancement. Moreover, Fengxian District faces competitive pressure from Chongming County within Shanghai, as well as from rural agricultural brands in neighboring provinces such as Zhejiang and Jiangsu.

2.The diversified value of rural Fruit brands in Fengxian District.Extends beyond their economic significance, encompassing ornamental, ecological, and sustainable development values. By implementing brand differentiation and unique design, these varied values can be further realized, thereby boosting market competitiveness and consumer recognition.

3. Strategy and direction of brand design.The rural Fruit brand design in Fengxian District must fully leverage the brand's resource, environmental, and cultural advantages, clarify its market positioning, and develop a distinctive brand image. The design process should comprehensively consider the brand's historical, cultural, and geographical characteristics, along with consumer demands, to create a brand system that aligns with Fengxian District's unique attributes, thereby achieving brand differentiation and competitiveness.

4. Practical significance of the study and policy recommendations.This study offers a scientific foundation for the design and development of rural agricultural brands in Fengxian District, as well as robust support for government policy formulation. The findings indicate that through scientifically informed brand design and promotion strategies, Fengxian District can cultivate a unique brand image within the globalized market, thereby enhancing the overall competitiveness of its rural Fruit and contributing to rural revitalization efforts.

In summary, this study offers both theoretical support and practical guidance for building rural Fruit brands in Fengxian District. It also serves as a model for developing rural Fruit within a global context. By leveraging the findings of this research, Fengxian District can more effectively utilize its resource advantages to establish a globally competitive rural Fruit brand, thereby achieving sustainable rural economic development.

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