

# The Research on Analysis of Rural Industry Brand Characteristics and Creative Design Strategies in Fengxian District of Shanghai

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## Abstract

The accelerated pace of urbanization, rural areas confront challenges including sluggish economic growth, population decline, and the deterioration of traditional industries. To address these challenges and promote the sustainable development of rural industries, this study focuses on Fengxian District in Shanghai, conducting an analysis of rural industry brand characteristics and creative design strategies. This study aimed to investigate the characteristics of industry brands and develop creative design strategies in Fengxian District, Shanghai. The samples of this study were 65 participants that were obtained from purposive sampling. The research instruments were the questionnaires and the interviews. This research employs a mixed-methods approach, primarily qualitative, integrating materials. The data from the questionnaires was analyzed using 1) descriptive statistics and 2) content analysis for qualitative data from the interview.

The findings revealed two key results as follows: 1) Fengxian District's rural industry brand is distinguished by its natural, green, and local attributes, and 2) The creative design strategy involves using Fengxian yellow peaches as a case study, deeply exploring and inheriting cultural resources, integrating natural landscapes and ecological concepts, and utilizing innovative design and artistic expression to develop brand IP and marketing strategies. The proposed creative design strategy, as outlined in this study, not only offers a concrete implementation plan for the development of the rural industry brand in Fengxian District but also serves as a valuable reference for rural brand building in other regions. Moreover, these results contribute to promoting the sustainable development of rural industries in Fengxian District, assist in achieving the goal of rural revitalization, and offer theoretical support and practical guidance for Chinese rural industries to establish a unique brand image in the context of globalization.

**Keywords:** Rural Industry; Brand Characteristics; Creative Design Strategies; Fengxian District; Shanghai

## Introduction

Against the backdrop of the current accelerated urbanization process, rural areas are facing multiple challenges such as insufficient impetus for economic development, continuous population loss, and the decline of traditional industries, which has led to unsustainable economic development in rural areas and a significant weakening of regional competitiveness. To address this critical situation, the Chinese government proposed “establishing strong brands for agricultural products” in 2018, and further emphasized the need to comprehensively promote the revitalization of the countryside in 2022, promoting the revitalization of industries, talents, culture, ecology and organizations and striving to achieve high-quality development of the rural economy (Qi Meiwen, 2022).

Rural industrial brand design refers to enhancing the attractiveness and development potential of rural areas through the integration, creation, and promotion of rural industrial resources. The aim is to create a brand image with rural characteristics and market value. The Chinese government attaches great importance to rural revitalization, providing opportunities for rural development. However, in the process of rural industry branding, problems such as product brand homogenization, simplistic brand visual design, and lagging communication media have been revealed. By analyzing the existing characteristics of rural industry branding, we can effectively promote the upgrading of rural industries through innovative design strategies, thereby injecting new vitality into their development.

As an international metropolis, Shanghai's brand design holds a certain degree of influence globally. Fengxian District, as part of Shanghai, provides an opportunity to study rural industrial branding. By examining the rural industrial brand in Fengxian District, we can develop brand design strategies that align with rural cultural characteristics, offering a reference for brand design in other areas.

Brand building, is the innovative road of rural industrial development, but also the necessary way out of the current predicament. (Wang Yuewei, Tong Qing, et al., 2019), Rural industrial branding involves assigning unique brand value and market image to rural agricultural products, handicrafts, tourism resources, and other industrial products and services through systematic brand planning, design, and promotion based on the distinctive natural resources, cultural heritage, and production methods of the countryside. Rural industrial branding not only emphasizes the quality and characteristics of products but also focuses on the storytelling and cultural connotation of the brand to enhance market competitiveness and consumer brand loyalty. Rural industry brands must highlight their unique local characteristics, including natural resources, production methods, and cultural traditions, which should be fully reflected in the brand (Robert Govers & Frank M. Go, 2009). The core value of the brand is crucial to its success. Through brand design and promotion, value can be added to rural products and services, thereby improving market competitiveness (David A. Aaker, 1991). In the context of market economy, as the market for traditional agricultural products is close to a perfectly competitive market, the competition in the field of traditional agricultural products is intense, and agricultural product brands with a holistic brand design plan are in a relatively advantageous position (Cen Caiyun, 2010). Chen Yaqun argues that rural brand image design activities are always centered on the "vernacular" as a guiding principle (Chen Yaqun, 2024). Chen Yaqun argues that rural brand image design activities are always centered on the "vernacular" as a guiding principle. Hankinson (Graham Hankinson, 2004) states that the success of rural industrial branding lies in identifying and highlighting regional characteristics and constructing a unique brand image and story to form a deep impression and identity in

consumers' minds. The construction of rural industrial brands not only helps to enhance the market competitiveness of products and services but also promotes the sustainable development of the rural economy and the inheritance and innovation of local culture.

As the rural revitalization policy deepens, the state places greater emphasis on brand design and culture, positioning the establishment of agricultural product brands as a key trend in China's agricultural modernization (Li Jingguo, 2014). Li's research underscores the importance of integrating folk culture into the design of regional public brands for agricultural products. By thoroughly exploring the origin, history, and characteristics of regional folk culture and integrating these elements into public packaging and promotional materials, folk culture becomes an integral part of the design, marketing, and promotion of agricultural product brands. This approach fosters psychological and visual resonance with consumers, thereby achieving greater brand recognition (Li Guoqing & Qin Hongwei, 2024).

As Shanghai's rural industry reforms progress, the branding efforts in Fengxian District have become increasingly sophisticated and well-defined. At this critical stage, conducting a comprehensive and in-depth study is essential. However, Fengxian District's rural industry brands face several challenges: the rapid development of rural industry brands in the neighboring provinces of Zhejiang and Jiangsu has intensified the competitive pressure on Fengxian District. Moreover, similar local brands in Shanghai have also excelled in rural industry branding, further amplifying the competitive pressure on Fengxian District. Through a detailed analysis of rural industry brand characteristics and the formulation of practical branding strategies, we can not only highlight the unique regional characteristics of the countryside but also effectively prevent the homogenization of rural industries and promote their sustainable development.

## **Research Objectives**

To investigate the characteristics of industry brands and develop creative design strategies in Fengxian District, Shanghai.

## **Research Methodology**

### **1. Research Design**

This study adopts a mixed research method combining qualitative and quantitative methods, and comprehensively analyzes the status quo and development strategy of rural industrial brands in Fengxian District, Shanghai, through a literature review, interviews, observations, and questionnaires, combining case studies and data statistics, to construct a systematic research framework, and to provide practical guidance for the creative design and promotion strategy of rural industrial brands in Fengxian District.

### **2. Population and sample**

The study population includes people related to rural industry brands in Fengxian District, Shanghai, including staff of Fengxian District Agricultural and Rural Committee, rural industry brand leaders, design experts, and local villagers, totaling 16 people. Meanwhile, consumers of rural industries in Fengxian District were randomly selected, totaling 310 people. This ensures the breadth and representativeness of the sample.

### **3. Research tools**

This study used a variety of research tools, including questionnaires, assessment forms, and specialized mapping and design software to ensure the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the data collection, analysis, and design process.

The researchers collected data by selecting people directly related to the branding of the rural industry to distribute questionnaires. The questionnaire gathers respondents' evaluations of the characteristics of rural industry brands in Fengxian District, such as uniqueness, cultural connotation and so on. Additionally, the questionnaire collects respondents' suggestions and expectations for Fengxian District's rural industry brands, which serve as a reference for brand creativity and design.

The evaluation form is used to systematically assess the existing brand and market situation. Comparing and analyzing the current situation of rural industry brands in Fengxian District with competitive brands, provides data support for brand design and promotion strategies. The evaluation form is distributed to people related to the rural industry branding in Fengxian District. The feedback collected will be used to continuously improve the design of Fengxian District's rural industry brand.

Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and other professional design software for brand logo design solutions and other visual presentations.

### **4. Data collection**

#### **4.1 Qualitative data collection**

##### **4.1.1 Literature review**

The sources of information include the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development's "Geographical Indication Products of China" among others. By reviewing relevant policy documents, research reports, and academic papers, the information is sorted and categorized to understand the background, current situation, and characteristics of rural branding.

##### **4.1.2 Interview Method**

Interview subjects include relevant staff of the Fengxian District Agricultural and Rural Committee, design experts, local villagers, and consumers. The interviews focus on in-depth discussions about the current situation, characteristics, and design elements of rural industry brands in Fengxian District to obtain relevant information.

##### **4.1.3 Observation Method**

On-site research on rural industry brands in Fengxian District is conducted to observe the actual operation of the brands and record their characteristics and development through field visits to rural industry bases in Fengxian District. At the same time, visual information, such as brand logos, packaging designs, and product displays, is collected.

##### **4.1.4 Case Analysis Method**

By analyzing successful cases of rural industry branding both domestically and internationally, we extract experiences and strategies with reference significance.

#### 4.2 Quantitative data collection

A questionnaire is designed and distributed to residents and consumers to understand their awareness, satisfaction, and expectations regarding the rural industry brand in Fengxian District. The questionnaire includes items on brand awareness, brand image, market acceptance, and product quality.

#### 5. Data analysis

Collect basic data on rural industry brands in Fengxian District, Shanghai. Use Excel and other statistical software to statistically analyze the questionnaire data to show the advantages and development potential of Fengxian District's rural industry brands, and provide data support for subsequent brand design strategies.

#### 6. Conceptual framework

Based on the theory and practice of rural industry branding, the research constructs a comprehensive conceptual framework of “brand characteristics - creative design strategy - brand visual image design - brand marketing and promotion”. The framework provides systematic theoretical guidance and data support for the comprehensive development of rural industrial branding in Fengxian District, and ensures the feasibility and innovation of the research results in theory and practice.

### Research Results

Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires, including the recognition, satisfaction, and market acceptance of Fengxian's rural industry brands among consumers, which showed that most consumers recognized the natural and ecological green characteristics of Fengxian's rural brands and the brand's local characteristics. In addition, field research collected on-site pictures of Fengxian's yellow peach industry, and qualitative interviews were conducted with staff from the Agriculture and Rural Committee of Fengxian District in Shanghai, rural industry brand leaders, design experts, and local villagers, with questions such as, “How can the brand better reflect the local characteristics?” and “What design elements can reflect the local characteristics?” These quantitative data and qualitative evidence together form strong support for the research results and guarantee the reliability of the findings.

#### 1. Characteristics of Rural Industry Brands in Fengxian District

Using the products of Fengxian District's rural industry brand that are selected as "China's Geographical Indication Products" as examples, we analyze the characteristics of the rural industry brand in Fengxian District, Shanghai, as follows:

##### 1.1 Natural Characteristics

Rural industry products come from nature, with a unique local flavor. The brand of rural industry in Fengxian District of Shanghai exhibits natural characteristics, primarily through the use of natural materials for packaging, such as plant branches, rattan, leaves, roots, stems, and wood. Additionally, the design of the product packaging often utilizes natural graphics of plant branches and leaves, flowers, fruits, or realistic images.

## 1.2 Ecological Green Features

The ecological green features of the rural industry brand in Fengxian District, Shanghai, emphasize environmental protection, sustainable development, and ecological construction. Fengxian District boasts a good ecological environment with high forest coverage, featuring the largest forest park in Shanghai, the Shanghai Bay National Forest Park, covering an area of 15,983.5 mu. The district has a high proportion of green, high-quality agricultural products.

As of January 2023, a total of 1,000 agricultural products in Shanghai have been granted the right to use the green food logo, accounting for 24% of the total output of local agricultural products, placing it at the forefront of the country. Fengxian District is a key production base for high-quality agricultural products, with a systematic production and supply system. Green, high-quality agricultural products in the region account for nearly 30% of the total output, gradually forming a comprehensive green production pattern in urban agriculture.

Fengxian rural industry brands emphasize green principles. The color and shape design of the brand reflects concepts of energy saving, non-pollution, and environmental protection. Packaging materials often include natural elements such as plant branches, rattan, leaves, roots, stems, and wood. Additionally, the packaging design frequently incorporates natural plant branches and leaves, flowers, fruit graphics, or photos of agricultural products as main design elements.

The green and ecological characteristics of Fengxian District's rural industry brand are highlighted by adherence to sustainable development, continuous innovation, and practical policy implementation. These efforts have established the district as an exemplary rural industry brand, combining environmental friendliness, social responsibility, and economic benefits.

## 1.3 Local Characteristics

Fengxian District has developed a distinctive rural industry brand, leveraging its unique geographical location and rich natural resources.

### 1.3.1 Unique Cultural Traditions

Fengxian District possesses a rich historical and cultural heritage, including traditional handicrafts, folk arts, and festivals. These cultural traditions add unique connotations to the rural industry brand. For example, local straw crafts, paper-cutting art, and traditional food not only have strong local characteristics but also showcase the cultural heritage and craftsmanship of Fengxian District.

### 1.3.2 Distinctive Regional Characteristics

Fengxian District's geographical location and climatic conditions contribute to the unique flavors and qualities of its agricultural products. For example, Fengxian District's fruits are cherished by consumers for their freshness, naturalness, and deliciousness. These geographical characteristics give agricultural products a competitive market advantage.

### 1.3.3 Strong Local Flavor

The rural industry in Fengxian District is primarily operated through agricultural cooperatives, with production areas being relatively decentralized. Product packaging and sales are often initiated by farmers themselves, lacking professional design guidance, thus making the local vernacular cultural characteristics more prominent. Fengxian's rural industry brands exhibit local cultural characteristics, with more ecological design traits and relatively simple and rough product processing methods. In terms of packaging presentation, the colors strongly reflect local flavors but lack modern elements.

## **2. Creative Design Strategy**

The brand design strategy of rural industry in Fengxian District seeks to leverage its advantages in nature, green principles, and local characteristics. It aims to combine regional and human resources to achieve sustainable development and market competitiveness through innovative design and effective communication.

### **2.1 In-depth Excavation and Inheritance of Cultural Resources**

Fengxian culture is integrated into the brand design by exploring Fengxian's historical stories and legends to establish the cultural background of the brand. Additionally, local folk culture is incorporated into the brand design to enhance its cultural richness and affinity.

### **2.2 Integration of Natural Landscape and Ecological Concepts**

Developing products in line with ecological concepts, and enhancing the green image of the brand.

### **2.3 Innovative Design and Artistic Expression**

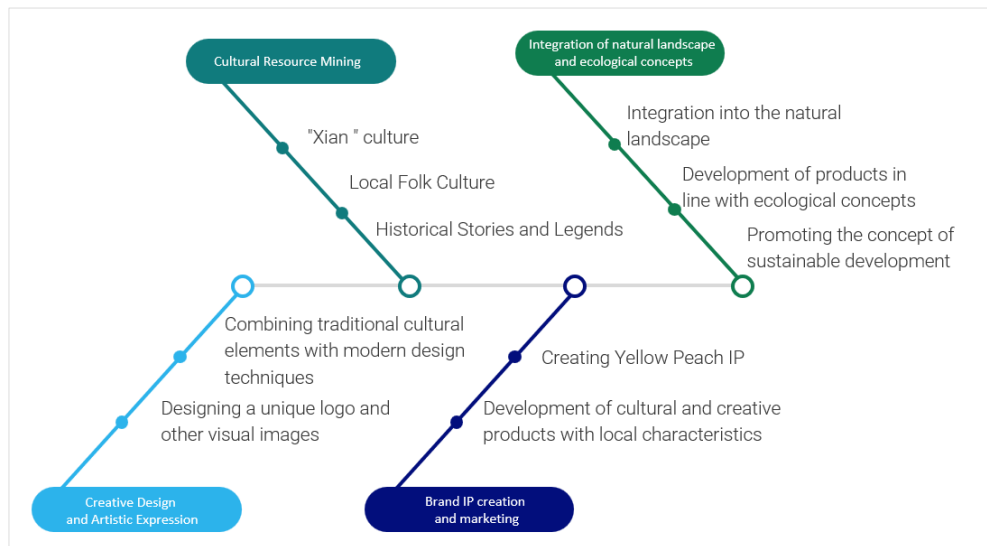
Combining traditional cultural elements with modern design techniques to create a brand image with both artistic and modern aesthetics.

### **2.4 Brand IP Creation and Market Promotion**

Using Fengxian yellow peaches, selected as China's Geographical Indications Product, as the core, creating a distinctive rural industry IP with brand effect to enhance brand awareness and market influence. Developing cultural and creative products with local characteristics, such as yellow peach handicrafts, to extend the brand value chain and increase its added value.

Utilizing social media, short video platforms, and other new media channels to promote the brand comprehensively and enhance its market coverage and influence. Organizing activities such as the Yellow Peach Festival enhances consumer participation and brand recognition, improving the brand's reputation and loyalty.

Through the above strategies, Fengxian District's rural industry brands will not only gain higher visibility in local and neighboring markets but also establish a significant influence nationwide. These strategies will promote the sustainable development of the rural industry and contribute to the goal of rural revitalization.



**Figure 1** Creative Design Strategy for Rural Industry Branding in Fengxian District

### 3. Fengxian Yellow Peach Logo Design







#### 3.1 Reasons for choosing Fengxian yellow peaches as a research sample

Fengxian yellow peaches have been designated as "China's geographical indications products," and the natural environment and geographic location of Fengxian District impart a unique quality and flavor to the yellow peaches produced here. Fengxian District boasts rich historical and cultural resources, and these cultural elements endow the Fengxian yellow peach brand with deep cultural connotations, making it not only an agricultural product brand but also a cultural heritage and promotion tool. Although Fengxian yellow peaches enjoy a certain degree of regional popularity, their influence on a national scale still has room for improvement. Through systematic brand design and promotion, Fengxian yellow peaches have the potential to become a nationally recognized agricultural brand, further driving the development of rural industries in Fengxian District.

#### 3.2 Sources of Inspiration

Fengxian District has a rich historical and cultural heritage; these elements can imbue the Fengxian yellow peach brand with deep cultural connotations. At the same time, the natural landscape elements of Fengxian District can be incorporated into the brand design. The planting and production process of Fengxian yellow peaches emphasizes green and ecological concepts. This concept of sustainable development can be reflected in the brand design.

**Table 1** Fengxian Yellow Peach Logo Design Ideas

Characteristics	Design methodology	Creative
Characteristics of nature 	Utilize natural, simple colors such as green and yellow, and simplify the design to maintain a rustic, organic feel that reflects the natural origin of the product.	
Ecological Green Features 	Incorporate natural features, emphasizing green and eco-friendly aspects. Visually connect with the brand's green and sustainable philosophy.	
Local Characteristics 	By carefully integrating these cultural elements with a modern design approach, the brand will not only stand out for its aesthetic appeal but also for the rich, culturally-infused story it tells, resonating deeply with both local and international consumers.	

### 3.3 Fengxian Yellow Peach Logo Design Concepts

#### 3.3.1 Nature and Green.

The logo adopts bright yellow, green, and brown colors to reflect the natural and green characteristics of Fengxian yellow peaches. The yellow color represents the sweetness of ripe yellow peaches, while the green color symbolizes health, environmental protection, and the natural ecological environment. The brown color represents the soil and the power of natural growth.

#### 3.3.2 Local Characteristics.

The logo design incorporates the image of Fengxian yellow peaches, and through anthropomorphic treatment, it gives the yellow peaches a lovely expression, making them more vivid and friendly, and reflecting local characteristics and humanistic care.

#### 3.3.3 Simple and modern.

The design style is simple and clear, in line with modern design aesthetics, and at the same time, through the cartoon expression, the brand is more easily accepted and loved by consumers of all ages.



**Figure 2** Fengxian Yellow Peach Logo (draft design)

The logo intuitively showcases the characteristics of Fengxian yellow peaches through color coordination and anthropomorphic image treatment. It conveys the brand's natural, green, and local attributes, balancing modernity with charm. This design aims to evoke positive emotional resonance among consumers, enhancing brand dissemination and promotion.

Implementing these strategies will increase the visibility of Fengxian District's rural industry brands locally and regionally, establish national influence, promote sustainable rural industry development, and contribute to achieving rural revitalization.

## Conclusions and Discussion

### 1. Conclusions

Brand building is the innovative path for rural industrial development and a necessary solution to the current predicament (Wang Yuewei, Tong Qing et al., 2019). In the context of a market economy, the market for traditional agricultural products is nearly fully competitive, resulting in intense competition. Agricultural product brands with comprehensive brand design planning are therefore at a relative advantage (Cen Caiyun, 2010). Optimizing rural industry brands can elevate the industrial energy level of the countryside, transforming it from a single agricultural product supplier to a provider of diverse and comprehensive products such as ecological services. This transformation further promotes rural culture and folk art within the realm of traditional culture, enhances the rural area's capacity to offer multifaceted products, and fosters the development of local rural culture's creativity and artistry. By innovating the development model of creative industries in rural areas, rural revitalization can be achieved.

Shanghai Fengxian District, with its rich ecological resources and developed rural industry, should analyze and summarize the current characteristics of its rural industry brand amid China's vigorous rural revitalization efforts. This analysis will enhance understanding of the study's specifics, provide policymakers with references for formulating relevant policies, prevent homogenization in rural construction, and offer ideas for subsequent research and brand design.

## **2. Discussion**

This study emphasizes the key role of branding in the development of rural industries, which is consistent with Wang Yuewei and Tong Qing's (2019) view that rural industry branding is an innovative path for rural industry development. This study, however, further enriches the practical path of branding through empirical analysis by proposing specific creative design strategies.

This study explores the importance of systematic brand design to enhance the competitiveness of rural industries. This is consistent with Cen Caiyun's (2010) view that agricultural product brands with holistic brand design planning are in a relatively advantageous position in the context of the market economy. In addition, this study complements the practical application part of Cen Caiyun's study by guiding at the practical level through specific design strategies for Fengxian yellow peach brands.

This study focuses on the importance of the deep excavation and inheritance of cultural resources, for rural branding. This is consistent with the study of Xu Huaying (2017), who explored the method of rural visual image design integrating regional culture from the relationship between regional culture and rural brand visual image, aiming to make rural brand visual image design more regional, unique, and standardized.

This study incorporates natural and green elements into the brand design of rural industries in Fengxian District, which fits the needs of modern consumers and verifies the viewpoint of Gao Ya Zhen (2022), who emphasizes the attractiveness of green and high-value design to consumers when exploring the brand image design of agricultural products. Meanwhile, this study demonstrates how to realize the combination of green and aesthetic design in practice through the specific design of Fengxian yellow peach brand.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the results of the study, this paper suggests that the brand-building of rural industry in Fengxian District should be strengthened in the following aspects:

Firstly, strengthen the synergistic cooperation among the government, enterprises, and the community, and jointly promote the innovative development of the rural brand through policy guidance, financial support, and resource integration.

Secondly, continue to enhance the brand's cultural connotation, and deepen Fengxian's historical, cultural, and ecological advantages by organizing local festivals and cultural exhibitions. Secondly, the cultural connotation of the brand will be improved continuously, and the historical, cultural, and ecological advantages of Fengxian will be deeply integrated into the brand construction by organizing local festivals and cultural exhibitions, to inject long-term vitality and competitiveness into the rural brand.

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