

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**EXPLORING CULTURAL  
IDENTITY THROUGH EMOTIONAL  
DESIGN: YOUTH PERCEPTION OF  
JINNAN FOLK CLOTH ART, CHINA**

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## ABSTRACT

Although existing studies on traditional crafts, including Jinnan folk cloth art, have explored aspects of preservation, documentation, and design adaptation, few have approached these topics from the perspective of emotional design. Jinnan folk cloth art, an important component of the intangible cultural heritage in the Yellow River basin, carries profound historical, emotional, and cultural significance. However, modernization and globalization in design have challenged the intergenerational transmission of such crafts, particularly in sustaining youth participation. This study investigates the relationship between emotional design and cultural identity among youth in the context of Jinnan folk cloth art, aiming to develop a framework that integrates traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design strategies to enhance cultural recognition, cultural value, and engagement. A qualitative methodology is employed, incorporating in-depth interviews, literature and image collection, and thematic, textual, and visual analysis to examine youth emotional experiences and cultural perceptions. The participants include artisans, youth, and emotional design experts, providing a comprehensive perspective on how Jinnan folk cloth art elicits emotional responses and fosters cultural identity. The theoretical foundation draws on Norman's three-level emotional design theory (visceral, behavioural, and reflective) and is extended by a three-layer youth engagement model (concern, experience, and appraisal). Findings reveal that Jinnan folk cloth art engages users through high-saturation colours, symbolic patterns, and exaggerated forms that generate immediate visual and affective responses (visceral level); its integration in festivals, home decoration, and personal accessories strengthens emotional interaction and everyday user experience (behavioural level); and its cultural symbols, craftsmanship, and intergenerational values promote cultural reflection and identity formation (reflective level). Youth participants show a strong preference for modernized and "Guochao" (China-chic) adaptations, reflecting evolving interpretations of traditional symbols. This research proposes a dual-dimensional, three-level emotional design framework, offering theoretical and practical insights into bridging traditional crafts and contemporary design. It underscores the role of digital interaction and contextual reinterpretation in revitalizing folk crafts for younger audiences while preserving cultural authenticity. The findings contribute to emotional design theory, cultural heritage preservation, and the creative industries, suggesting new pathways for sustaining cultural value in modern contexts. Future research should consider quantitative validation and explore cross-cultural applications to enhance global appreciation of Jinnan folk cloth art. Keywords: Jinnan folk cloth art; emotional design framework; cultural value; cultural identity; youth engagement; qualitative research.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter lays the foundation for the research by introducing the background, research questions, objectives, and their significance. It also clarifies the scope, delimitations, and definitions of key terms and provides an overview of the structure of the dissertation.

This study focuses on the relationship between emotional design and cultural identity among youth, with Jinnan folk cloth art (JFCA) as the research subject. With the rapid development of modernisation and globalisation, the transmission of traditional culture faces severe challenges (Cheng, 2022; Wang, 2021). As an important part of Chinese traditional culture, JFCA not only carries profound historical and cultural significance but also reflects unique artistic value (Chen, 2007; Zhang, 2016). JFCA buyers are mostly elderly for traditions, while users include families; yet, young consumers show low participation, and their cultural identity is gradually weakening(Li, 2015).

Therefore, investigating how to stimulate the youth's interest and cultural identity in JFCA products through emotional design is of great significance for the protection and transmission of traditional culture.

This study begins by analysing the research background, elucidating the dual value of JFCA in cultural preservation and modern design, and identifying key issues to be addressed, including research gaps and the construction of a conceptual framework. Although previous studies have examined the cultural significance and aesthetic value of traditional cloth art, research on the emotional experience and cultural identity of youth