

Decoding Hakka Traditional Dwellings Decoration: A Semiotic Framework for Artistic Characteristics and Multidimensional Cultural Values

¹Zhen Wang, and ^{2*}Thirawut Bunyasakseri

**Corresponding author*

Faculty of Architecture, Art and Design, Naresuan University, Thailand

E-mail: ¹studyofart@163.com, ²tbunyasakseri@yahoo.com

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Abstract

This study explored the decorative art of Hakka traditional dwellings through a semiotic perspective to identify their artistic features and cultural significance. Rooted in the vernacular traditions of Hakka communities in northeastern Guangdong, western Fujian, and southern Jiangxi, these decorations reflected ecological adaptation, Confucian and Fengshui principles, and clan-based social systems. The research adopted qualitative methods, including literature review, fieldwork in representative villages, and expert interviews, and applied Peirce's triadic semiotic theory to classify decorative symbols into iconic, indexical, and symbolic types. A cultural value framework was also developed to reveal the historical, social, aesthetic, and spiritual dimensions of these decorations. The findings showed that Hakka decorations form a symbolic language that expresses cultural identity and collective memory. This study provided a reference for preserving intangible cultural heritage and offered practical insights for applying traditional motifs in contemporary design.

Keywords: Hakka traditional dwellings; Decorative elements; Artistic characteristics; Cultural values

Introduction

The cultural heritage of a region is deeply rooted in its art forms, reflecting the traditions, values, and social structure of the people in that region (Jokilehto, 2017). As an important representative of traditional Chinese residential decoration, Hakka traditional residential decoration art is rooted in the vernacular life of the Hakka community and has both unique artistic characteristics and diverse cultural values. This study explores the essence of traditional residential decoration in the core area of Hakka culture (especially the red area in Figure 1), examining its artistic attributes and contemporary cultural significance (Wu, 2008).

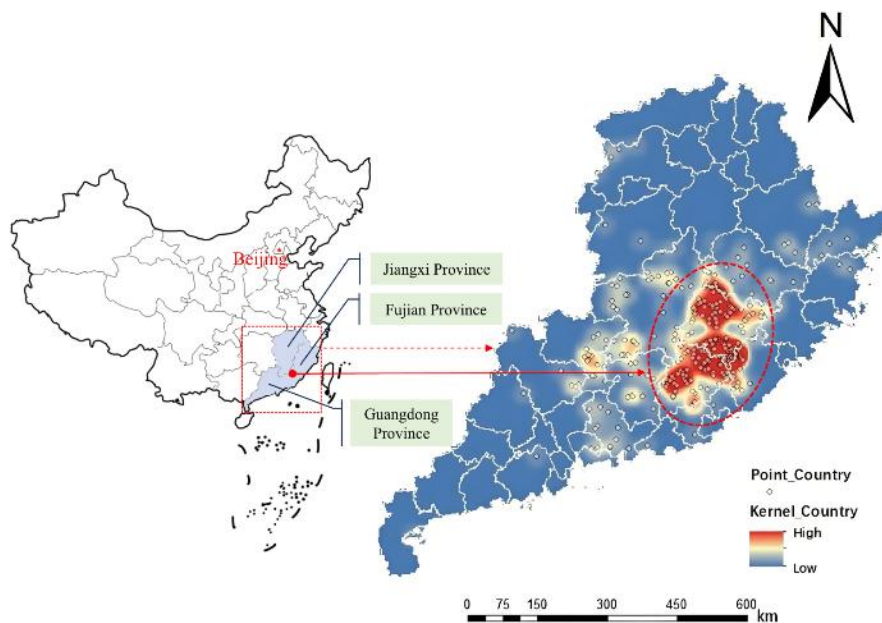


Figure 1 Schematic diagram of the core area of Hakka culture in the border area between southern Jiangxi, western Fujian and northeastern Guangdong.

Source: Xie et al. (2022)

The decorative art of Hakka traditional houses, also known as the decorative art of vernacular buildings, is an important part of Hakka traditional culture. It stems from the Hakka people's need for security against bandits, their adherence to the Central Plains culture, and their pursuit of an ideal life, and is reflected in a variety of decorative elements. These decorative elements include wood carvings, stone carvings, plaster sculptures, paintings, and murals, among other art forms. Hakka traditional houses and their decorations express the pursuit of harmony with the universe, yearning for immortality, promoting Confucian culture, fertility worship, and praying for good luck (Wu, 1998).

Despite its important cultural significance, the decorative art of Hakka traditional houses faces numerous challenges in modern society. With the advancement of industrialization and modernization, enthusiasm for constructing traditional Hakka houses has declined sharply since the 1980s, leading to a near halt in the production of vernacular architectural decorative art (Lin, 1995; Qin et al., 2025). In addition, as the younger generation shows less interest in traditional art and chooses other careers, the cultural heritage embodied in Hakka traditional houses is facing the risk of gradual damage or even disappearance. Therefore, it is necessary to undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of the artistic characteristics and cultural value of Hakka traditional house decoration to gain a deeper understanding of its cultural significance and explore its potential applications in modern design (Li et al., 2024).

As the younger generation moves to cities and pursues a modern lifestyle, the lack of inheritors and obstacles to the transmission of professional skills threaten the continuation and development of Hakka traditional residential decoration. In addition, limited attention—often centered on architecture (e.g., UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2008)—and a relative lack of research also highlights the conceptual limitations of existing studies on the decorative art of Hakka traditional residential buildings. Therefore, this study aims to use semiotic theory to identify the key artistic features that define Hakka traditional residential decoration and evaluate its cultural value in the dual context of cultural identity and cultural heritage (Olukoya, 2021).

The significance of this study lies in revealing the intrinsic value of the decorative art of Hakka traditional houses and its role in the design of cultural products. By comprehensively examining the decorative elements of Hakka traditional houses, including icons, indexes, and symbols, this study aims to highlight their symbolic and cultural significance. In addition, assessing cultural value will deepen the understanding of how decorative symbols contribute to community identity, self-identity, and the contemporary adaptation of traditional wisdom in design (Wang, 2023).

Understanding the cultural value of Hakka traditional residential decorative art is of great practical significance for cultural preservation and contemporary design adaptation. By recognizing the unique role of Hakka residential decorative elements in Hakka culture, stakeholders and policymakers can formulate effective policies to protect this valuable art form. In addition, the results of this study can enhance designers' appreciation and understanding to address the issue of insufficient regional characteristics and cultural depth in cultural element extraction.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the cultural context of Hakka traditional dwellings and their decorations, focusing on how ecological, ideological, and social structures shape symbolic expression.
2. To construct a triple classification system of decorative symbols—iconic, indexical, and symbolic—based on semiotic theory, and to analyze their formal characteristics and cultural meanings.
3. To develop a multidimensional cultural value framework that reveals the historical, social, aesthetic, and spiritual significance of Hakka decorative art.

Literature review

This section explores concepts and theories closely related to the research objective, which is to examine the origin of traditional residential decoration in the core area of Hakka culture in China and analyze its characteristics and cultural value.

1. Peirce's semiotic theory: Peirce's triadic semiotic theory includes icons, indices, and symbols, which convey meaning through similarity, direct association, and traditional association, respectively (Khalisha et al., 2024). This theory regards architecture and its decorative elements as a system of symbols, where forms and decorations carry philosophical and aesthetic values (Ireland, 2023). It also helps to understand the aesthetic, cultural, and technical dimensions of architectural expression (Matos et al., 2010) and deepens aesthetic understanding and interpretation. This theory lays the foundation for the classification and feature analysis of decorative elements in this study.

2. Cultural Value Theory: Cultural heritage not only encompasses historical relics but also embodies profound intangible values, which are crucial to identity and community cohesion. Its value continues to evolve through community interaction and religious customs (Balakrishnan & Narayana, 2024). Heritage sites serve as important carriers of cultural narratives, cultivating a sense of belonging and identity (Canaan, 2020). In the study of the decorative art of Hakka traditional houses, this theory reveals its historical, aesthetic/artistic, and social values and enhances the understanding of its cultural significance.

3. Anthropology of art: It uses anthropological methods to study fine arts, particularly field research. This interdisciplinary approach emphasizes the social and cultural context of art, revealing the deeper connections between art and human life (Davies, 2022). It views art as a product of cultural and social processes rather than merely an aesthetic object, highlighting its role

in shaping social norms and identities (Jia et al., 2024). This method is particularly important for this study, as it provides first-hand data and direct aesthetic perceptions of the research subjects.

4. Research Ideas: This study focuses on the decorative art of Hakka traditional houses. Based on research question, existing gaps, and objective, it first explores its production context, covering natural ecology, geog-crafts, Confucianism, cultural concepts, and clan organizations. It then examines its tripartite classification system and cultural value framework and investigates its bio-mimetic characteristics, contextual association mechanisms, multilayered coding system, and its historical, social, and aesthetic values. Finally, it explores its contemporary applications and development potential.

5. Research field and scope: This study involves interdisciplinary fields such as art and design, cultural heritage, and art anthropology. The geographical scope covers southern Jiangxi, western Fujian, and northeastern Guangdong, all of which are regions predominantly inhabited by Hakka communities. The time span extends from the late Ming Dynasty to the Republic of China era (1912–1949) (Luo, 1989). This study focuses on the decorative elements of Hakka vernacular architecture, including painted decorations, plaster sculptures, pottery sculptures, and wood or stone carvings, while excluding exterior architectural components and movable indoor furniture.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework constructed in this project aims to examine the features and cultural values of traditional residential decoration in the core area of Hakka culture, covering core dimensions such as artistic characteristics, cultural values, theoretical foundations and academic significance (Figure 2). This framework provides a structured approach for analyzing and understanding the expression and significance of Hakka residential decorative art within its cultural context.

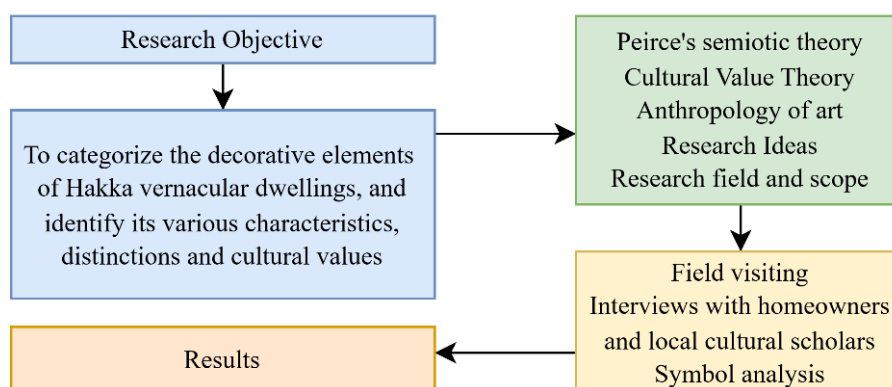


Figure 2 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research method to explore the context and characteristics of Hakka traditional residential decoration and evaluate its cultural value. Literature review, field visits, and expert interviews were used to collect data. The key steps of the research method are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 Methodological Steps for Examining the Decorative Art of Hakka Traditional Dwellings.

Steps	Description
1. Propose Research Question	Conduct a literature review on Hakka culture, vernacular architecture, and its decorative art by examining academic journals, county annals, visual arts conference proceedings, and art books to identify research gaps.
2. Data Collection	Conduct field visits and in-depth research in the core area of Hakka culture. Observe, document through photography and mapping, and record the decorative elements of local buildings. Conduct semi-structured interviews with experts to explore the connotation and cultural significance of decorative elements, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the research findings.
3. Data Analysis	Semiotic, thematic and document analyses were employed to qualitatively examine the data, covering the characteristics of iconic symbols, the associative mechanisms of indexical symbols, and the hierarchical encoding of symbolic signs.
4. Synthesis of Results	Conduct a comprehensive data analysis and literature review to critically examine the artistic characteristics of the decorative art of Hakka traditional dwellings, evaluate its cultural value, and identify key factors influencing its development and distinctive characteristics.
5. Interpretation of results	Analyze the research results, summarize the symbol types, symbol characteristics and cultural significance of Hakka traditional residential decoration, and ensure consistency with the research objective.
6. Suggestions	Provide specific and feasible recommendations in three areas: theoretical contributions, practical applications, and future research directions to enhance the academic impact and practical relevance of the study.

This study employs purposive sampling to select representative Hakka vernacular buildings and their decorative elements for field investigation and analysis. As a non-random sampling method, purposive sampling focuses on selecting cases that provide the most in-depth understanding and rich information relevant to the research question (Creswell, 2009). In this

study, it enables the identification of key architectural examples for examining decorative characteristics and cultural value. A total of 16 representative cases were selected from core Hakka cultural regions (Wu, 2008).

The selection includes six examples from northeastern Guangdong, such as Renhou Wengong Ancestral Hall, Qiu's Dafudi House, and Zhu's Jishanlou Building in Meixian District and Dabu County, known for integrating Chaoshan decorative elements; five cases from western Fujian, including iconic Tulou structures like Chengqilou and Zhenchenglou in Yongding District, which reflect southern Fujian craftsmanship; and five examples from southern Jiangxi, including Xu's Guanxi New Enclosure and Wushiwei Enclosure in Longnan County, which exhibit influences from Huizhou architectural traditions. Together, these cases provide a representative cross-section of Hakka traditional dwellings and their diverse decorative systems, serving as a solid empirical foundation for examining regional variations, symbolic classifications, and the embedded cultural values of Hakka residential decoration.

Research Results

Examine the cultural context of Hakka traditional dwellings and their decorations, focusing on how ecological, ideological, and social structures shape symbolic expression.

Natural Ecological Conditions and Geo-Craftsmanship

The natural ecosystem provides a stable foundation for the decorative art of traditional Hakka dwellings. The mountains and rivers at the intersection of Jiangxi, Fujian, and Guangdong provinces form a semi-enclosed environment, which facilitates the preservation and transmission of ancestral culture. The hilly terrain fostered the development of terraced farming and influenced settlement patterns (Figure 3 and 4). To adapt to the regional environment, Hakka architecture extensively incorporates local materials, such as "three-in-one soil" and fir, while also integrating wind and typhoon-resistant design features. The similarity of these ecological conditions results in shared characteristics in material selection and adaptive design among Hakka dwellings in southern Jiangxi, western Fujian, and northeastern Guangdong.

However, variations in regional craftsmanship result in distinct decorative styles. Traditional Hakka dwellings in southern Jiangxi are influenced by Huizhou architectural culture, whereas those in western Fujian exhibit craftsmanship characteristics of southern Fujian. Meanwhile, Hakka dwellings in Meizhou, northeastern Guangdong, incorporate Chaoshan

decorative techniques. In the Meizhou area, Hakka dwellings demonstrate an integration of Chaoshan aesthetics with local stylistic elements, particularly in ancestral wall decorations, gold-painted wooden lattice carvings, and beam-frame wood carvings.

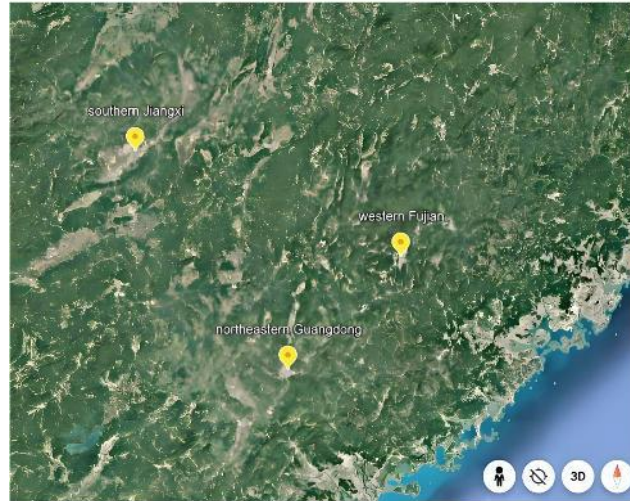


Figure 3 A satellite image showing southern Jiangxi, western Fujian, and northeastern Guangdong.

Source: Captured using Google Earth on March 21, 2025.



Figure 4 A distant view of Dafudi House, a Weilongwu-type dwelling in northeastern Guangdong.

Source: Photographed by the author

Confucianism and Feng-Shui Cultural Concepts

Confucianism plays a significant role in shaping the decorative elements of Hakka traditional dwellings. The Hakka emphasis on education is manifested in architectural decoration. In northeastern Guangdong, Hakka ancestral halls frequently incorporate decorative motifs symbolizing success in the imperial examination. Moreover, as shown in Figure 5, the half-moon-

shaped pond in front of the ancestral hall serves both functional and symbolic purposes, embodying the profound influence of Confucian thought on architectural design.



Figure 5 A half-moon-shaped pond in front of Dihua Ju house in northeastern Guangdong.

Source: Photographed by the author

Fengshui principles profoundly influence the location, orientation, and decorative elements of traditional Hakka dwellings. Rooted in the Five Elements theory, the "gold, wood, water, fire, and earth" gables were developed as architectural features. The intricately carved Five Elements gables, prevalent in northeastern Guangdong and western Fujian, embody this cultural concept, illustrating the symbolic significance of Fengshui in architectural ornamentation. These decorative forms exemplify the interplay between ideological systems and material culture.

Clan organization and social structure

The clan organization plays a crucial role in shaping the architectural layout and decorative style of Hakka dwellings. Since the mid-Ming Dynasty, ancestral halls and clan residences have been extensively constructed in northeastern Guangdong, creating a distinctive "clan-based settlement pattern" (Guangdong Provincial Local History Office, 2009). The decorative elements of Hakka dwellings are often arranged along the central axis, with the ancestral niche in the ancestral hall serving as the most visually and symbolically prominent feature (Figure 6). Ancestral niches frequently feature auspicious motifs such as pomegranates and fairy peaches, symbolizing fertility, lineage continuity, and familial prosperity, thereby embodying the cultural significance of clan identity.



Figure 6 The ancestral hall of Chengqilou Building, a Tulou-type dwelling in western Fujian.

Source: Photographed by the author

In addition, influenced by the clan social structure, Hakka traditional dwellings also incorporate defensive functions when dealing with social unrest. For example, Tulou buildings and Weilou buildings not only serve daily life, but also have the function of defending against banditry (see Figure 7). As the demand for defense weakened in the late Qing Dynasty, decoration gradually shifted from practicality to symbolism, but clan symbols still occupied an important position in decoration, highlighting the duality of symbolic meaning and social function of architecture.



Figure 7 A distant view of Xu's Guanxi New Enclosure, a Weilou-type dwelling in southern Jiangxi.

Source: Photographed by the author



Construct a triple classification system of decorative symbols—iconic, indexical, and symbolic—based on semiotic theory, and to analyze their formal characteristics and cultural meanings

Based on the theoretical framework of Peirce's semiotics, this study integrates field survey data of traditional dwellings in the core area of Hakka culture, revealing that the decorative symbol system presents the three–element structural characteristics of "icon–index–symbol", reflecting the cultural coding logic of the Hakka people for material space.

Concrete Bionic Features of Icon

The decorative elements in the core area of Hakka culture are expressed by simulating the forms of animals and plants. These elements function as direct signs, characterized by vivid expressions.

Table 2 Typical iconic signs in the core region of Hakka culture.

Elements	Description
	<p>The painted "melon-shaped column" of Guangludi House in the northeastern Guangdong support the dwarf column (Tongzhu in Chinese) upwards and connect to the horizontal beam downwards.</p>
	<p>The golden melon is paired with a chicken claw, creating the impression that the "claw" firmly grasps the beam, symbolizing auspiciousness and prosperity. In Wushiwei Enclosure, southern Jiangxi, the "curling grass pattern" on the bracket at the ancestral hall patio utilizes the curling form of vines as a metaphor for eternal life; the "Qilin Offering Auspiciousness" relief on the door pillow of Fuyulou Building in western Fujian conveys auspicious meanings through the combination of symbolic animals.</p>

Source: Photographed by the author

Contextual Association Mechanism of index

Indexical signs refer to specific cultural contexts through the spatial layout and craftsmanship of decorative elements, embodying the function of "indication" and "suggestion." (Table 3).

Table 3 Typical indexical signs in the core region of Hakka culture.

Elements	Description
	<p>From a spatial perspective, the circular stone sculpture of double lions in Guanxi New Enclosure, southern Jiangxi, employs auspicious beasts to signify the family's prestige.</p>
	<p>The Window lattice with “回” pattern of Kuijulou Building in western Fujian reinforces the concept of enduring lineage through the interlocking arrangement of geometric motifs, reflecting the metaphorical function of decorative elements.</p>
	<p>From a temporal perspective, the evolution of craftsmanship signifies cultural integration. The openwork window lattice (e.g., Kui dragon patterns) of Zhenchenglou Building in western Fujian, constructed during the Republic of China era (1912–1949), demonstrates technological advancements compared to the shallow relief carvings of the Ming Dynasty.</p>
	<p>Similarly, the Huizhou-style brick carvings on the gatehouse of Lansheng Hall in southern Jiangxi, featuring themes such as "qin, chess, calligraphy, and painting," reflect the mid-Qing Dynasty exchange of craftsmanship between Anhui and Jiangxi.</p>

Multi-layered Coding System of Symbolic Signs

The system of symbolic signs demonstrates the abstraction of meaning from concrete to conceptual levels. As a decorative form imbued with cultural significance, it is often used in conjunction with iconic signs on architectural elements such as walls.

The primary sign layer communicates value judgments and intuitive meanings through materials and tangible patterns. The nearly unadorned fir beams in the living space system signify "simplicity," the pumpkin-shaped column bases symbolize harvest, and the coin-patterned pebble paving denotes "wealth accumulation."

The secondary sign layer constructs meaning networks through associative relationships. Iconographic systems like the Four Arts (qin, chess, calligraphy, painting) and Four Gentlemen (plum, orchid, bamboo, chrysanthemum), along with auspicious motifs such as 'Immediate Ennoblement' (mashang fenghou) and 'Scholar Triumph' (zhuangyuan jidi), collectively form a literati cultural semiotic matrix. The nested patterns of swastika fretwork (卐), cash coin motifs, and key fret designs in window lattices materially reinforce the concept of cyclical prosperity. The ultimate sign layer embodies the spiritual essence of Hakka culture.

Develop a multidimensional cultural value framework that reveals the historical, social, aesthetic, and spiritual significance of Hakka decorative art.

The study found that the Hakka decorative system constitutes a complex value network encompassing historical accumulation, social interaction, aesthetic creation, and spiritual sublimation.

Historical Stratification of Decorative Motifs

The diachronic evolution of decorative motifs illustrates the trajectory of cultural integration. In the early period, the border regions of Fujian, Guangdong, and Jiangxi were characterized by abstract geometric patterns. After the mid-Qing Dynasty, narrative patterns became significantly more prevalent. This transformation closely aligns with the broader social transition of the Hakka people from immigrants as "guests" to local settlement.

Social Interaction Value

The decoration system plays a crucial role in shaping social organization mechanisms. Regarding spatial power distribution, particularly in hall spaces, the beams and frames of the ancestral hall in Guanxi New Enclosure, southern Jiangxi, are adorned with gold-painted wood carvings of flowers and auspicious beasts, which are restricted to the core ritual space. Similarly, the dragon and phoenix motifs in the ancestral halls of northeastern Guangdong reinforce clan authority.

In terms of cultural capital reproduction, calligraphic plaques such as Rulindi (Confucian Scholarly Estate) on the lintel of the Kuijulou ancestral hall in western Fujian and Daifudi (Literati-Official Residence) on the gate of Qiu's Dafudi house in northeastern Guangdong, along with iconographic elements such as the Four Arts, collectively establish the cultural discourse authority of the gentry class. Additionally, the public characteristics of decorative elements is particularly significant.

Aesthetic Creation of Value

The residential decoration system in the core region of Hakka culture demonstrates a distinctive aesthetic logic through visual rhetoric and material experimentation.

From a metaphorical perspective, the murals depicting the Four Gentlemen embody noble virtues, while plaques and calligraphic inscriptions serve as repositories of familial historical memories. The interwoven window lattice patterns, such as the "卍" and "回" motifs, employ geometric symbolism to signify perpetual cycles.

In terms of spatial narrative, the hemispherical flooring in the Huatai space of the Weilongwu houses metaphorically represents the maternal body, reinforcing themes of fertility and continuity.

Regarding material aesthetics, the colorful paintings and gold-leaf gilding wood carvings on the beams, the gray-relief sculptures on door walls, and the application of mineral-based pigments collectively demonstrate an active engagement with material and chromatic expressiveness (Figure 8).



Figure 8 Gilded wood-carved beams of Jishan Lou building.

Source: Photographed by the author

Discussion

Based on semiotic theory, this study examines the typology and cultural connotations of decorative symbols in Hakka traditional residences. The results indicate that Hakka traditional architectural decorative symbols not only exhibit exquisite craftsmanship but also constitute a sophisticated system of cultural expression. This section discusses the following three aspects:

The findings provide key insights into the origins of decorative elements in Hakka traditional residences. Among the multifaceted factors influencing the origins of Hakka traditional residential architecture and decoration, geographical craftsmanship and technological culture within the economic and technological framework, clan organization and lineage system within the social structure, and cultural ideologies, including Confucian traditions, Feng–Shui principles, and local customs, within the cultural framework, play a crucial role. These findings align with the theoretical perspective on cultural distinction within system theory (White, 1949) and corroborate the notion that the evolution of residential form and decoration results from the interplay between material and non–material culture (Rapoport, 1969).

In addition, this study systematically analyzes the thematic diversity and the complexity of value systems in Hakka traditional residential decoration through the construction of a ternary symbol classification system and a multidimensional cultural value framework. In contrast to the prevailing tendency in existing studies to focus solely on either a single symbol type or an isolated value dimension (such as Lv, 2014), this framework synthesizes formal classification (iconic, indexical, and symbolic) with functional associations (historical, artistic, social, and spiritual value), aligning with UNESCO's (1972, 2008) core concept of the composite value of cultural heritage.

In practice, the "symbol–value" correlation analysis in this study offers a methodological approach to the dynamic preservation of cultural heritage. Through the extraction of core decorative symbols (e.g., gourd–shaped, carved five–element gables, scroll–shaped murals, and plaques), it enables the development of cultural and creative products that integrate cultural identity with modern aesthetics. This approach aligns with the promotion of cultural heritage's social function while enhancing the appreciation and self–identification with Hakka culture (Wang, 2023).

New Knowledge

This study contributes new knowledge by establishing a semiotic–based framework that decodes the decorative system of Hakka traditional dwellings. It introduces a tripartite classification

of symbols—iconic, indexical, and symbolic—within the context of vernacular architecture, enriching both architectural semiotics and heritage studies. The proposed multidimensional cultural value model reveals how historical, social, aesthetic, and spiritual meanings are embedded in decorative art. These insights offer a theoretical foundation for understanding cultural identity transmission and serve as a practical guide for applying traditional motifs in contemporary design and heritage preservation.

Conclusion

This study systematically investigated the artistic characteristics and cultural meanings of Hakka traditional residential decorations through a semiotic and interdisciplinary approach. The findings demonstrate that decorative symbols form a tripartite system—iconic, indexical, and symbolic—closely tied to ecological settings, Confucian values, and clan-based social structures. The multidimensional value framework underscores their significance in historical continuity, social organization, aesthetic practice, and spiritual symbolism.

In addition to enriching the theoretical discourse on vernacular architecture and cultural heritage, the study offers practical implications. Specifically, heritage policy makers should consider incorporating regional decorative symbols into place-based education and community-led preservation projects. Embedding such elements in school curricula or local museums could enhance cultural awareness and engage younger generations in heritage transmission. Future research should further explore adaptive design strategies and cross-regional comparisons to sustain and revitalize this rich tradition.

Suggestions

Theoretical advancements should prioritize cross-regional comparisons (e.g., northeastern Guangdong, western Fujian, southern Jiangxi) to further clarify Hakka sub-cultural variations in decorative symbolism. Expanding interdisciplinary collaborations with Southeast Asian Chinese-style architecture research could contextualize Hakka traditions within global Hakka diaspora networks. Policymakers are advised to establish coordination frameworks integrating design expertise, management strategies, and technical support to address the multidisciplinary demands of heritage preservation and adaptive reuse.

For practical applications, future research could focus on adapting core Hakka decorative symbols into modern cultural products while addressing the following challenges: (1) Material

adaptation issues – Modern materials (ceramics, plastics, metals, etc.) may alter the original aesthetics despite structural improvements; (2) Cultural mismatch – Symbols tied to rituals (e.g., protective motifs) risk losing meaning when removed from their original context; (3) Evolving design compatibility – Historical patterns need flexible redesign to align with changing trends and user preferences. Cross-sector collaboration among designers, researchers and artisans is critical to maintain cultural authenticity while fostering innovation.

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