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# Formulating Culture Code and Brand Design of Chinese Brand 'Luxihe' for Singapore Market.

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## ABSTRACT

*In a modern society with increasingly fierce market competition, to successfully position a brand, it must gain society's attention and trust by applying and communicating Culture Codes understood and trusted by the target consumers. To promote the Chinese snack of mung bean cakes to Singaporean consumers, researchers analyze the brand strategy of Luxihe, the target consumer groups of Singapore, and the competitors in the Singapore market. Create and transmit cultural values that the Singapore target consumer could understand using the Culture Code Brand Design (CCBD) Model and shows the final Touchpoint Design. To identify the culture's features, the Visual Culture Codes are the visuals that assist and recognize.*

## KEY WORDS:

**Chinese Brand, CCBD, Brand Design, Culture Code, Chinese Culture Code**

## **INTRODUCTION**

All kinds of multinational brands are becoming more common in people's daily lives, and they also directly impact the market development of various countries. China has become a significant player in the global economy over the past decade. The promotion of products or brands with Chinese characteristics to the international market needs the assistance of brand design. How to help Chinese brands with Chinese characteristics be better accepted by local consumers through the redesign of brand image is of great research value.

This study aims to create a local brand and transmit cultural values that the Singapore target consumer could understand and help promote the Chinese snack of mung bean cakes from the Luxi River brand in Singapore by using The Culture Code Brand Design Methodology (CCBD).

## **BRAND DESCRIPTION**

Originating in Yingtan, Jiangxi province, and rooted in Nanjing's ancient capital, Luxihe peach cake is a traditional Chinese pastry brand handed down from generation to generation. With the instruction of "inheriting the ancient art and promoting the traditional pastry culture," the founder has made Luxihe, going through a tortuous journey, still maintain its craftsmanship and original taste, and its old traditional taste remains unchanged. Mung bean cake (mung bean cake) is one of the traditional cakes. It is a snack for relieving the summer heat. Legend has it that ancient Chinese people, to seek peace and health, the Dragon Boat Festival will eat mung bean cakes, salted duck eggs, these foods. Mung bean has sweet and cold characteristics, non-toxic, heat-clearing and detoxification, dispelling heat and thirst, benefiting water and swelling, brightening eyes, and beautifying skin. It is a good snack for relieving summer heat. Imported mung beans are selected from Luxihe mung bean cake, and the old master adopts the complete peeling process. The flavor is excellent and non-greasy. Luxihe green bean cake in the brand design fusion of traditional Chinese design elements through the cultural code, a design transfer through cultural marketing, dig the connotation of brand culture. In today's social trends, the target consumers' cultural influence raises brand culture's additional value. It enhances the brand value of goodwill degrees and the spin of the user's brand life cycle.



*Figure 1. Luxihe Mung Bean Cake and a store of Luxihe brand in China.*

## SINGAPORE TARGET DESCRIPTION

According to the brand characteristics of Luxihe and its dessert nature, researchers have identified two target consumer groups. The first group is people of generation Z, age 20s-30s, who have an individual income but may not yet have a home. And the other one is older women aged between the 30s and 40s, who belong to the middle class and have stable families. They will be referred to as Gen Z and Gen Y in the following paragraphs.

According to the latest population statistics data released by the government, the two groups make up about 9% of Singapore's population.

After the preliminary investigation, including some demographic statistics published by the Government of Singapore and some relevant groups' research data, combined with a marketing description method of AIO (Table 1), researchers deduced these two groups' lifestyles.

### 1) Gen Z Singapore Target

For the young consumers of generation Z, researchers found that according to the MTV Asia survey of young people in 26 countries and regions worldwide, Singapore ranked fourth, with 78% of young people finding life boring. So they like to socialize and party, like to travel on holidays and spend a lot of time on mobile phones.

Table 1. Measure Lifestyle Properties of Singapore Consumers with the method of AIO

	<b>A: Activities</b>	<b>I: Interests</b>	<b>O: Opinions</b>
Gen Z	Work, hobby, vacations, leisure: Schoolwork and office work, enjoy socializing and parties, enjoy travelling during vacations and spend a lot of time on mobile phones.	Recreation, fashion: Interested in entertainment and life, enjoy delicious food; Pay attention to their appearance a lot, keen to lose weight.	Pay attention to the appearance of the product packaging level, then consider the taste of the product. Some people avoid high sugar and fat. A good buying experience is paramount.
Gen Y	Work, hobby, vacations, leisure: Office work, enjoy baking and cooking, enjoy travelling with family during vacations and shopping on weekends.	Family, work, recreation: Plan to take more time out of their careers to care for others including the birth of a child, caring for children, parents or ageing relatives); But still being financially independent and pay attention to career development and skill acquisition. Being interested in getting information from various network platforms.	Focusing on family health and the improvement of their working skills and maintain financial independence; Prefer to collect a lot of information and evaluation through the Internet to buy good quality and cost-effective products for families.

Gen Z consumers' lifestyle can be concluded as follows: For college students and people who have just worked for a few years in their 20s-30s, they are interested in different kinds of fine food and entertainment. They pay attention to whether the product is healthy or not. It is imperative to have good packaging, and the price is not essential. The experience of the brand is Paramount.

2) Gen Y Singapore Target

The female generation Y consumers spend their time mainly on work, hobbies, vacations, and leisure. They usually have daily office work. They enjoy baking and cooking as hobbies; they also enjoy travelling with family during holidays and shopping on weekends. As for the interests, surveys show that Singapore female millennials are more financially independent than global peers. Hence, researchers think they are still financially independent and pay

attention to career development and working skills. They are also getting married late. Most women aged 30-40 are already married or recently married in Singapore, so they start to divert some of their energy to the family in addition to their career including the birth of a child, caring for children, parents, or ageing relatives). Millennials' most significant characteristic is that their lifestyle is integrated with information technology. They tend to gather information through various online platforms.

Gen Z consumers' lifestyle can be concluded as follows: Middle-class female consumers aged between 30-40s who are financially independent, fans of shopping but pay great attention to product quality and cost performance, willing to spend more time with their families in their spare time, willing to use the network platform.

Based on the above two lifestyles, researchers continue to analyze the motivation (Reasons to look for a brand) and preference (Factors of desire for brands learned by environmental and personal factors) of these two consumer groups when they buy Luxihe Mung bean cake in the hope of finding their final needs.

#### Motivation:

Gen Z: The mellow taste of the product with a variety of developed flavours, which is also very healthy and has some heat-clearing and detoxifying effects; The packaging is modern and attractive enough to be given as a gift to people of all ages.

Gen Y: Good quality with a moderate price; Mung bean cake is the kind of snack suitable for all ages and is ideal for travelling.

#### Preference:

The two consumer groups have the same Environmental factors because Singapore's population has a high proportion of Chinese and Ethnic Chinese. So, mung bean cake, a traditional Chinese snack, is more likely to be accepted and liked by people. Singapore is an ageing country, and the elderly may prefer traditional snacks. It's suitable to be bought as a gift to the elders; The climate is mainly tropical, and mung bean cake has certain heat-clearing and detoxifying effects.

#### Personal factors include:

Gen Z: Mung bean cakes satisfy the desire to eat sweets and are healthy;

Gen Y: The food health and taste; The cost performance of the product; Whether the

product is suitable for sharing, Whether the product has a fair evaluation.

In the end, researchers can conclude that our brand mainly satisfies the consumer's Fundamental needs and Practical needs, rather than Specific needs and Hedonistic needs.

The Specific Needs to be met are:

Gen Z: It can satisfy the Needs for dessert, and it's both healthy and delicious.

Gen Y: The main ingredients are nutritious. Good taste at a reasonable price.

## **SINGAPORE TARGET DESCRIPTION**

Researchers collected information related to market competitors by looking up information on the Internet and reading papers. The Luxe brand's competitors in Singapore fall into two main categories: popular snacks in Singapore and snacks similar to the Luxihe brand. They will be referred to as Popular Snacks and Similar Snacks in the following paragraphs.

Popular Snacks:

Popular products in Singapore are Kaya Toast, IRVINE Salted Egg, Bak Kwa, Curry puffs. Kaya Toast is paired with a cup of local "Kopi" (coffee) or "the" (tea). Char-grilled or casserole wrapped in cold buttered pieces and a generous dollop of coconut and eggs. Home-grown brand Irvins Salted Egg with crispy and addictive salted egg fish skin has become one of the most popular snacks among Singaporeans. Bak Kwa is barbecued sliced pork and is very popular in Singapore, especially during Chinese New Year. Curry puffs are a definite go-to snack for all Singaporeans. For more than six decades, Old Chang Kee's curry puff has won plenty of hearts and remains one of our most favorite (and sinful) snack brands.

Similar Snacks:

Like Luxihe brand snacks are Nyonya Kuih, Ang Ku Kueh, pandan chiffon cake, and Kueh tutu.

Nyonya Kuih is a generic term for a series of Niagara pastries. Ang Ku Kueh is a traditional Food popular in Singapore for different occasions such as Lunar New Year, baby's full moon, or birthday. Light, fluffy and moist — the classic pandan chiffon cake was once crowned as Singapore's national cake by CNN. Well-loved for its soft texture, Kueh tutu

is undeniably one of the most popular local snacks in Singapore, which are made of finely pounded rice flour and typically filled with grated coconut or grounded peanut.

#### Basic Design Elements:

Furthermore, researchers investigated the common design elements of the snack market in Singapore from many aspects, and found certain characteristics (Table 2).

*Table 2. Common design elements of the snacks from Singapore*

Elements	Basic Design Elements	Brand Name
Typeface	Use bold English fonts to highlight important information.	Cakes in Ntuc
Color	Mostly bright and high saturation color	A variety of snacks on supermarket shelves
Typography	Either traditional and crowded, or very simple.	Merlion cookies ;Sherry's Cake
Image	Prefer to print the physical image on the package	Thousand layer cake
Pattern	Some adopts cartoon illustration.	Snacky & Crisps
Texture	Most of them use plastic, paper and transparent packaging, sometimes iron boxes.	Lowvey tropical fields, Bee Cheng Hiang
Layout	Mostly normal, lack of bright spot.	A variety of snacks on supermarket shelves
Shape	Most of them use conventional shapes such as squares and circles. A few use polygons and hexagons.	Bengawansolo
Style	Prefer to use traditional style (combine pictures with words)	Chui Hiang



Through the investigation, researchers found that the competitor brands are more traditional in package design and lack novelty. Therefore, in the design practice below, designers tend to focus on a different style from the local package design that enables the local consumers to distinguish and identify the new brand by using the Culture Code Brand Design Methodology.

## **BRAND DESIGN STRATEGY: FORMULATING CULTURE CODE BRAND DESIGN (CCBD)**

Choi Albert Young (2018) describes CCBD as follows: "In brand development, the expected effects of the "Culture Code Brand Design Methodology" (CCBD), a method of applying culture codes and making culture codes, are to understand cultural elements and their relationships related to branding and brand design to enable the establishment of brand design strategies necessary to develop brand goods and services applied with culture codes; to develop various kinds of brands systematically." In view of the Luxihe brand with cross-cultural attributes, we analyze it from two aspects: China and Singapore.

Chinese consumers recognize mung bean cakes as a beautiful shape, with ornamental, a long history, and traditional cakes for the dragon boat festival. Because their raw materials mung beans are produced all over China, mung bean cakes are made in all parts of China, usually used as refreshments. In ancient times, there were also literary works and poems describing mung bean cakes.

Therefore, the General Culture Codes (GCc) for Luxihe brand target consumers in the Chinese market should include new style Chinese pastry, tasty snacks, innovation (in flavour), and celebrity snack brand. The Proposed Culture Codes (PCc) consist of unique Chinese pastry, delicious snacks, healthy snacks, traditional Chinese pastry-making skills, and innovation (in flavour). And its component of Culture Codes includes many aspects such as Art, Literature, tradition, Convention, Area, History, lifestyle, and other elements. (Table 3)


Brand design is a way to persuade consumers and gain trust and trust from consumers. For Singapore's target consumers, the General Culture Codes (GCc) should make persuasion and confidence-building possible. Therefore, it should include China, Delicious, Healthy, Heat relieving, summer dessert, Afternoon cake, Party snack, and Portable. Differentiation

can be established by the Proposed Culture Code (PCc), which should include China, Delicious, Healthy, Heat relieving, and Innovation (flavour). Among the list, the culture codes that are still applicable are the Art aspect (Beautiful shape, with ornamental pattern).

Combined with the pronunciation of Chinese and English and the relaxed feeling of mung bean, researchers renamed the Luxihe brand as CoolDoo so that the new brand pronunciation may form a culture code related to Language.

For consumers in Singapore, the product comes from China and may have an Area aspect culture code.

Table 3. Culture Code Analyses of Luxihe (CoolDoo) in China Market

Elements	Classifi-	Culture Code
Luxihe (CoolDoo) Mung Bean Cake	General Culture Codes (GCc):	New Style Chinese Pastry; Tasty Snacks; Innovation (in flavor); Celebrity Snack Brand
	Proposed Culture Code (PCc)	New Style Chinese Pastry; Tasty snacks; Healthy snacks; Traditional Chinese pas-try making skills; Innovation (flavor)
	<b>Components of Culture Code</b>	
	Art	Beautiful shape, with ornamental
	Literature	Many writers wrote in praise of mung bean cakes
	tradition	Traditional cakes for Dragon Boat Festival
	Convention	Holiday snacks, gifts to visit relatives and friends
	Area	Most parts of China
	History	It has been a traditional Chinese snack since ancient times

Finally, the study concludes that the most influential culture code is lifestyle. Based on the above analysis of consumer lifestyle, researchers believe that mung bean cake can become a snack for an afternoon tea, a party snack, a summer dessert, and a snack used to satisfy hunger during work (Table 4).

*Table 4. Culture Code Analyses of Luxihe (CoolDoo) in Singapore Market*

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Culture Code</b>
General Culture Codes (GCc):	China; Delicious; Healthy; Heat relieving; Summer dessert ; Afternoon cake; Party snack Portable
Proposed Culture Code (PCc)	China; Delicious, Healthy, Heat relieving, Innovation(flavor)
<b>Components of Culture Code</b>	
Art	Beautiful shape, with ornamental pattern
Language	CoolDoo sounds cute and memorable
Area	Foreign food from China
A lifestyle	A snack for an afternoon tea; Party snack; Summer dessert; A snack used to satisfy hunger during work.

With the guidance of the Culture Code Brand Design Methodology, the study defined the packaging design strategy that it’s better to focus on the Principle Functions (PF), which is Chinese Pastry, Delicious and healthy cakes, Heat relieving food (summer dessert), and Price more than the Derivative Functions (DF). The specific design strategy is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Basic Design Elements

Elements	Basic Design Elements
Typeface	Use bold and lively fonts to create a feeling of tasty and also make the packaging more interesting.
Color	Use low saturation color (highlight Chinese style) or bright color to suggest the delicious flavors.
Typography	Use proper or simple typography. (There is no need to repeat too much complicated information. Just arrange the main information of the product such as title, name, type, taste and so on.)
Image	Use mainly illustrations or graphics, which are more suitable for our target consumer group than the actual pictures.
Typeface	Use bold and lively fonts to create a feeling of tasty and also make the packaging more interesting.
Color	Use low saturation color (highlight Chinese style) or bright color to suggest the delicious flavors.
Typography	Use proper or simple typography. (There is no need to repeat too much complicated information. Just arrange the main information of the product such as title, name, type, taste and so on.)
Image	Use mainly illustrations or graphics, which are more suitable for our target consumer group than the actual pictures.
Pattern	Mainly in the way of illustration to show mung bean cake, mung beans and plants and other elements. Highlight the feeling of health without adding unhealthy stuffs. Use colors or scenes suitable for summer and maybe properly integrated with traditional Chinese elements (Chinese elements is not the key element in our package design).
Texture	Use cartons as the outer packaging and plastic for the inner packaging, which can not only present a beautiful appearance but also be more portable.
Layout	Elements are presented in a middle axial symmetry (a typical Chinese layout). Or use a free layout and focus on white space to make it looks good.
Shape	Mainly square and rectangle.
Style	Mainly use lively and relaxed casual style, or classic low-key modern Chinese style.

## DESIGN PROCESS: SKETCHES, ROUGH PROTOTYPE, DIGITAL PROTOTYPE, AND NATIVE PROTOTYPE

Package Design:

### 1. Sketches

By analyzing General Culture Codes and Proposed Culture Codes with the PF design strategies, the designers did a lot of sketching and brainstorming and ultimately concluded that Sketch #8 is more suitable for the strategy.

As a medium of the rapidly changing media communication, visual design awakens the strong impression and potential. It is also the most required means of today's communication as it effectively conveys information in a short period of time. For having strong enough impact to be remembered is important, conference texts with such traits have a wide range of application, and therefore considered as a medium.

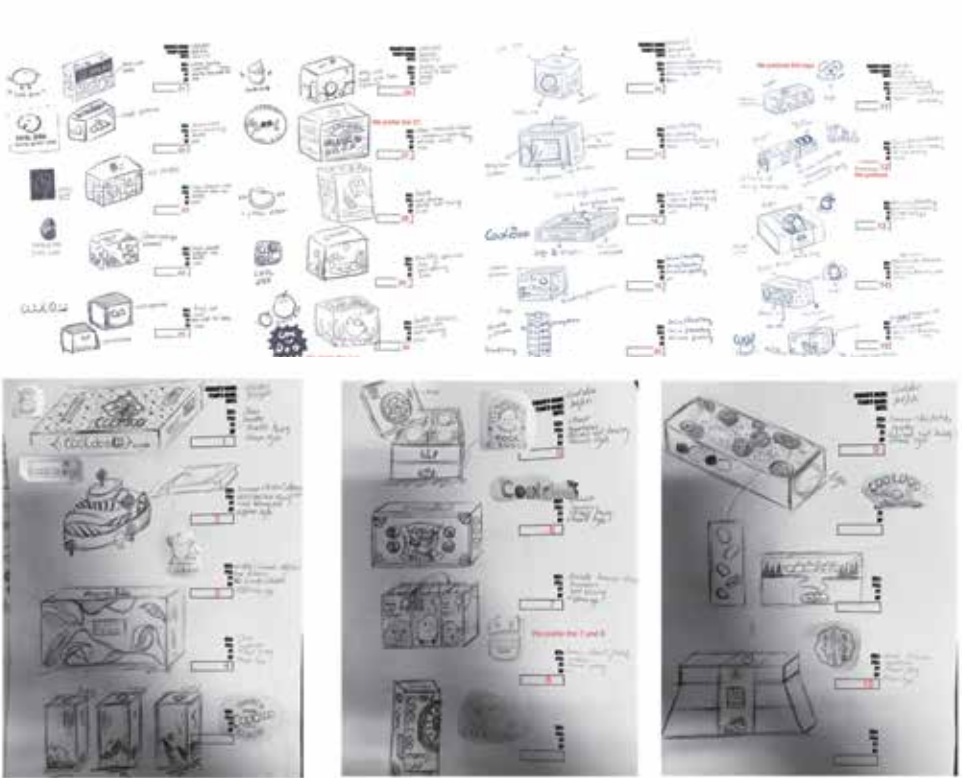


Figure 2-3. Sketches

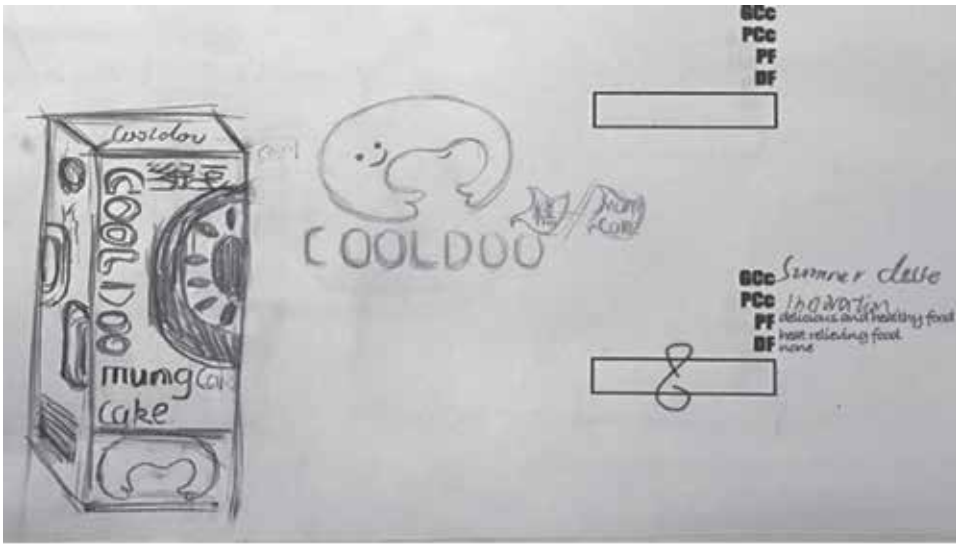


Figure 4. Sketches #8

Designers present the strategy through several design elements:

1) Logo design: The logo design for CoolDoo shows a big mung bean hug a small mung bean, which is cute and interesting. Help brands to be quickly remembered by consumers.

2) Use bold and lively fonts to Indicate the product content which is Chinese Pastry (PF) and highlight a feeling of tasty (PF) and interesting.

3) Use mainly illustrations or graphics, which are more suitable for our target consumer group than the actual pictures. To create a fashionable and good-looking style, which can be distinguished from the popular snack product packaging in Singapore, and can also better attract the attention of Gen Z and Gen Y.

4) Some of the food ingredients are placed in the main position of the package in the form of illustration. Highlight the feeling of health without adding unhealthy staff (PF: Delicious and healthy cakes). It also embodies the innovation of taste.

5)Adopts the more common square shape for the product packaging which can also save the cost.

6) Use bright colors to suggest that it's a Heat relieving food (summer dessert) (PF). Use contrast color to enhance visual expression.

## 2. Digital Prototype & Native Prototype:

At this stage, designers gradually improved and adjusted the design to make the packaging design apply the culture codes that consumers understand and trust through all this process.

The designers found the following issues and then made adjustments:

1) The black “COOLDOO” stands out too much, obscuring the more important message of “mung bean cake”.

2) Cartoon illustrations cannot accurately tell consumers what the product is, so designers should consider adding a picture of a mung bean cake to remind the product contains more intuitively and better fit the Principle Functions.

3) The blue color looks dark and heavy, which does not fit the positioning of “Heat-relieving food”. The color of the two flavours is also a little jarring together.



*Figure 5. Digital Prototype of the first Version*



*Figure 6. Native Prototype of the First Version*

### Promotional Video

Compared with packaging design, promotional videos can help consumers learn about new products in more detail and faster. Therefore, designers also make promotional videos for products, which are divided into a long version (last for 1 min.) and a short version (last for 15 sec.).

Promotional videos of different lengths can be used on different occasions. The 1-minute version will be a more comprehensive display of products, suitable for TV, web pages and other advertisements. The 15-second version of the video is more suitable for occasions that need to attract consumers within a short period of time, such as playing on the Tik Tok platform and at the sales scene. At the same time, due to the short time, it is necessary to highlight key issues and try to attract people's attention in terms of screen performance.

By drawing the storyboard sketch determined a rough idea of the general content of the video. And then designers made the digital prototype. By arranging the main images, it helps designers further clarify the information that should be told to the customers in the video, which are as follow:

1-minute version: 1) The logo and the name of the brand; 2) Package Design; 3) It's made from mung beans, and it's sugar-free, healthy, and natural; 4) It has two flavours which are all very tasty; 5) It's a good summer cake; 6) Consumers can drink it with tea; 7) Where to buy it; 8) The slogan of the brand.

15-second version: Main idea of the long version.



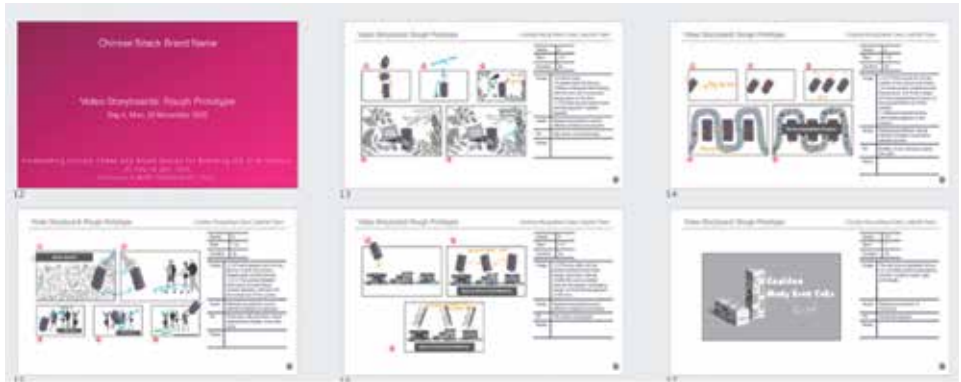


Figure 7. Rough Prototype of Promotional Video

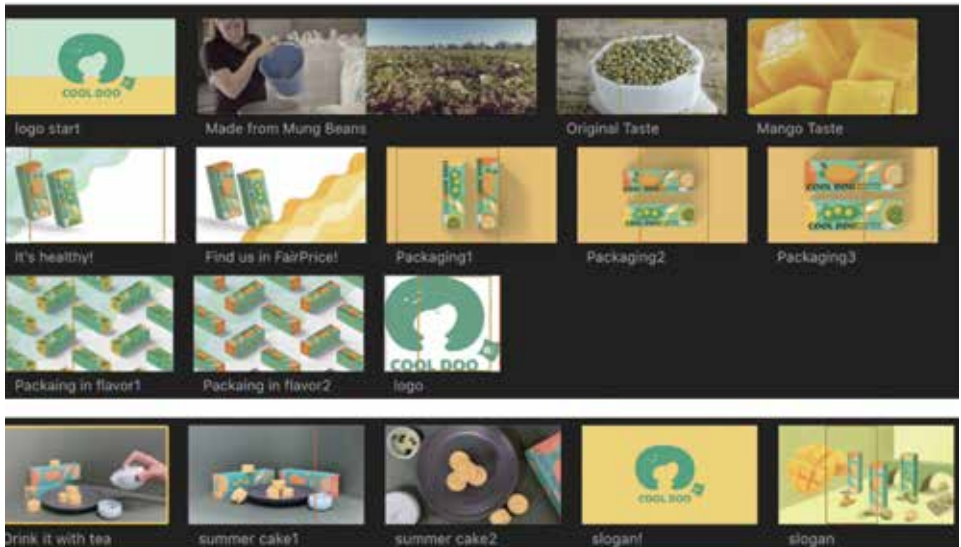


Figure 8. Digital Prototype of Promotional Video

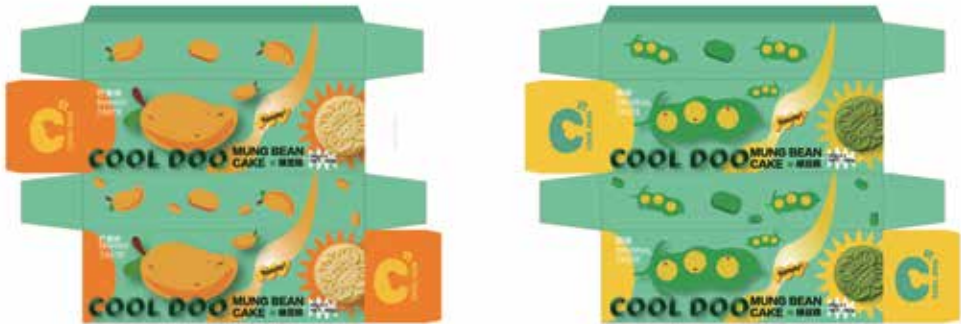
## TOUCHPOINT DESIGNS: PACKAGE DESIGN AND PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

Final Package Design:

After adjusting the above problems, designers finally determined the packaging design of the product as follow:

On the package design:

The brand name of the product is shown in bold font. The background color of the package reflects the health attribute of the mung bean cake. The picture of mung bean cake is used to make consumers perceive the product. The illustration elements first show the product's taste and then make the product livelier and more delicious.



*Figure 9. Final Package Design*



*Figure 10. Final Package Design*

Promotional Video:

According to the design strategy, designers use video clips of mung bean farms and fresh food to enable viewers to connect the product with health and delicacy (PF: Delicious and healthy cakes). The screen color selection is consistent with the dominant color of the package design. Every transition effect in the video is inspired by the form of a spray, trying to create a cool and refreshing feeling, implying the characteristics of the product in relieving the summer heat, but also fit the positioning of “summer snacks” (PF: Heat relieving food/ summer dessert). Designers use key information phrases and continue to show the packaging appearance, hoping that through the video to let the audience quickly understand and remember the product characteristics and design strategy, and finally play the promotion role.



*Figure 11-12. Screenshots of Promotional Video*

## CONCLUSIONS

To gain consumer interest and trust, brands need to apply culture codes that consumers understand and trust. Setting up a brand design strategy to gain the attention and confidence of target consumers by organizing the formulas of General and Proposed Culture Codes is a problem designers need to think about when designing. The use of The Culture Code Brand Design Methodology can contribute to brand vividness and excitement. In the design, formulating the appropriate brand strategy, determining the target consumer groups, analyzing the competitors in the market, and exploring the design touchpoint, will help build the brand culture and establish the brand value system. Based on a profound analysis of the above process, Cool Doo integrates innovative elements, implants cultural code, interprets brand characteristics through video, and finally creates a brand-new brand.

## LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

There are several directions for future research, however, several limitations became evident while creating the new brand. We realize that our results did not being tested on-site. It would be interesting for future to conduct on-site design research for the target consumers.

Furthermore, the original product packaging of Luxihe brand can be compared with the product packaging after being culturally coded, to verify whether the designers have accurately formulated the cultural code.

Following this, Through research, we can further verify the use of The Culture Code Brand Design Methodology could also influence brand image and even consumers' perceived innovative in a brand.

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