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ABSTRACT

Cultural intellectual property (cultural IP) has become an important approach for textile and apparel brands to enhance cultural expression, symbolic recognition, and market competitiveness. However, existing studies are still largely qualitative, and systematic quantitative evaluation of the effect of cultural IP on brand value enhancement remains insufficient. To address this gap, this study examines the effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value from the perspectives of mechanism analysis and quantitative evaluation. An evaluation index system consisting of one target layer, five criterion layers, and fifteen indicators is constructed. On this basis, a quantitative evaluation model integrating the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and the fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method is established. Using expert scoring and three representative textile and apparel brand cases, the empirical results show that cultural value, consumer value, and brand appreciation value are the most important dimensions influencing brand value enhancement. The comprehensive evaluation scores of Brand A, Brand B, and Brand C are 83.3, 78.0, and 69.1, respectively. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of cultural IP depends on coherent integration with brand positioning, its recognition by consumers, and its contribution to long-term brand value.

KEYWORDS

cultural ip, textile and apparel brands, brand value enhancement, analytic hierarchy process, fuzzy comprehensive evaluation

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the integration of cultural resources and consumer industries has become an important trend in industrial upgrading and brand innovation. In the textile and apparel sector, market competition is no longer limited to product quality, price, and functional performance, but increasingly depends on cultural expression,

emotional resonance, and brand differentiation [1-4]. Against the background of consumption upgrading and the rise of cultural consumption, cultural intellectual property (cultural IP) has gradually become an important means for textile and apparel brands to enhance cultural value, enrich brand connotation, and strengthen market competitiveness [5-7]. By embedding traditional cultural symbols, regional cultural elements, intangible cultural heritage resources, or creative cultural narratives into products and brand communication, cultural IP can enhance symbolic recognition and emotional appeal [8].

At the same time, the textile and apparel industry is shifting from manufacturing-oriented competition to value-oriented competition, making brand value a key indicator of comprehensive competitiveness and sustainable development capability [1,2]. Compared with conventional branding strategies, cultural IP can create differentiated value through cultural identification, narrative communication, and symbolic consumption [5-8]. For textile and apparel brands, the effective integration of cultural IP may improve product attractiveness, consumer recognition, brand premium capacity, communication effectiveness, and long-term market value [9-12]. Therefore, exploring how cultural IP contributes to brand value enhancement in textile and apparel has both theoretical and practical significance.

Existing studies have examined cultural IP mainly from the perspectives of cultural communication, brand collaboration, creative product development, and consumer behavior [8]. Related research in textile and apparel branding has also focused on brand image, perceived value, authenticity, and the market performance of culture-based products [13,14]. Although previous studies generally suggest that cultural symbols and narratives can strengthen consumer perception, purchase intention, and brand loyalty [13], most of them remain qualitative and descriptive. As a result, systematic quantitative evaluation of the empowerment effect of cultural IP on brand value enhancement remains insufficient [15,16].

Two major limitations can be identified in the existing literature. First, although previous research has recognized the positive role of cultural IP in brand development, the internal mechanism through which it affects textile and apparel brand value has not been sufficiently clarified [13]. In particular, the relationships among cultural identity, consumer recognition, communication effectiveness, and brand appreciation still require a clearer analytical framework [7-8]. Second, there is still a lack of evaluation models specifically designed to measure the effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value enhancement. Without a structured indicator system and a clear quantitative approach, it is difficult to compare different brands objectively or provide practical support for brand strategy optimization [16,17].

To address these gaps, this study examines how cultural IP contributes to brand value enhancement in textile and apparel from the perspectives of mechanism analysis and quantitative evaluation. First, the study analyzes the mechanism through which cultural IP influences brand value enhancement in terms of cultural identity, consumer value, market performance, communication effectiveness, and brand appreciation [1-4]. Second, an evaluation index system is constructed to reflect the multidimensional impact of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value. Third, a quantitative evaluation model is established by combining the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and the fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method [16,17] to assess the effectiveness of cultural IP empowerment in selected textile and apparel brand cases. On this basis, comparative analysis is conducted to identify key influencing dimensions and differences in brand performance.

The main contributions of this study are threefold. First, it extends research on cultural IP and brand value by focusing on the textile and apparel industry, which is characterized by strong cultural expressiveness and product symbolism [9]. Second, it proposes an evaluation framework that integrates mechanism analysis with quantitative modeling, thereby improving the analytical operability of research on cultural IP in branding [17]. Third, it provides a practical reference for textile and apparel enterprises in cultural resource integration, IP development, brand positioning, and value enhancement.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND MECHANISM ANALYSIS

Research on Cultural IP

Cultural intellectual property (cultural IP) generally refers to cultural symbols, narratives, images, and related creative resources that possess both cultural significance and commercial transformation potential. Unlike conventional product identifiers, cultural IP carries distinctive historical, regional, artistic, and symbolic meanings, enabling it to generate emotional resonance and social recognition in consumer markets [17,18]. With the rapid development of cultural and creative industries, cultural IP has gradually become an important strategic resource for product innovation, content dissemination, and brand differentiation [8].

Existing studies on cultural IP mainly focus on cultural communication, creative product development, and brand collaboration [8]. Some scholars have emphasized that cultural IP can transform abstract cultural resources into recognizable market symbols, thereby improving cultural visibility and enhancing consumer awareness [7,8]. Other studies have suggested that cultural IP has a strong storytelling function, helping brands establish deeper emotional connections with consumers through symbolic expression and narrative construction [19]. In recent years, its application has expanded from cultural and tourism products to

consumer goods, fashion products, and lifestyle brands, indicating that cultural IP is increasingly regarded as a practical tool for brand upgrading and value creation [20,21].

However, current research on cultural IP still has several limitations. Most studies remain concentrated on conceptual interpretation and practical description, with insufficient quantitative analysis of its value transformation effect [18]. In addition, existing discussions often focus on general cultural and creative industries, while industry-specific research, especially in textile and apparel branding, remains relatively limited [21]. As a result, the role of cultural IP in brand value enhancement has not yet been fully clarified in a structured and measurable way [13].

Research on Textile and Apparel Brand Value

Brand value is an important concept in modern brand management and reflects the comprehensive ability of a brand to generate market influence, consumer preference, and sustainable commercial returns [1,2,22]. In the textile and apparel industry, brand value is particularly significant because apparel products are not only functional goods but also symbolic carriers of aesthetics, identity, and lifestyle [9,10]. Therefore, the formation of textile and apparel brand value depends not only on product quality and price competitiveness, but also on design language, cultural expression, emotional appeal, and communication effectiveness [9-12].

Previous studies on textile and apparel brand value have mainly focused on brand image, perceived quality, consumer trust, loyalty, and premium ability [23]. Some studies have shown that consumers' evaluations of textile and apparel brands are strongly influenced by design distinctiveness, brand culture, and consumption experience [9,10,21]. Other studies have found that symbolic and emotional attributes play an important role in fashion-related consumption decisions, especially in markets characterized by personalization and cultural differentiation [10,11,13]. In addition, cultural meaning has increasingly been recognized as an important value-added factor for apparel products, helping brands improve consumer recognition and competitive advantage [5,6,14].

Despite these findings, existing research still pays more attention to marketing outcomes and consumer attitudes than to the construction of a systematic evaluation framework for brand value enhancement [15,16,22]. Moreover, brand value is often discussed in a general sense, without fully considering how cultural resources can be transformed into measurable dimensions of value in the textile and apparel context [5,6]. This limitation weakens the operability of existing studies for evaluating culture-based brand strategies.

Research on the Relationship Between Cultural IP and Brand Value Enhancement

The relationship between cultural IP and brand value enhancement has attracted increasing scholarly attention in recent years. Existing studies generally suggest that cultural IP can influence brand development through several channels, including symbolic differentiation, emotional identification, communication enhancement, and value-added product design [5-8]. By incorporating cultural IP into products, packaging, visual systems, and storytelling strategies, brands can create a stronger market image and a more distinctive consumption experience [6].

From the perspective of consumer behavior, previous studies have shown that the introduction of cultural symbols and narratives can enhance consumer interest, identity recognition, and purchase intention [10,13,16,18]. From the perspective of brand strategy, cultural IP is often regarded as a resource that can strengthen originality, improve communication efficiency, and expand brand influence [6-8]. In the textile and apparel field, the integration of traditional patterns, regional culture, intangible cultural heritage elements, and fashion design has been considered an effective means of enriching product connotation and shaping differentiated brand identity [21].

Nevertheless, the current literature still lacks an integrated understanding of how cultural IP affects brand value enhancement in textile and apparel brands. Although the positive role of cultural IP has been widely recognized, the internal relationships among cultural integration, consumer perception, communication performance, market conversion, and brand appreciation have not yet been clearly organized into a coherent mechanism framework [7,8]. In addition, quantitative studies linking these factors with measurable brand value outcomes remain relatively scarce [15,16]. This limitation makes it difficult to evaluate the practical effectiveness of cultural IP empowerment in an objective and comparable manner.

Research Gap

Based on the above review, three research gaps can be identified.

First, existing studies on cultural IP and branding remain largely qualitative and descriptive [5,7,18]. Although these studies provide useful insights into the cultural and strategic role of IP, they do not offer sufficiently rigorous quantitative tools for evaluating its effect on brand value enhancement [15,16].

Second, the mechanism through which cultural IP influences textile and apparel brand value enhancement has not yet been systematically clarified. Current studies often discuss cultural identity, consumer recognition,

market communication, and product differentiation separately, while an integrated analytical framework connecting these dimensions remains insufficient [21].

Third, there is still a lack of evaluation models specifically designed to assess the effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value. Without a structured indicator system and a clear quantitative approach, it is difficult to assess the multidimensional performance of different brands or to provide practical support for brand strategy optimization [15-17].

To address these gaps, this study combines mechanism analysis with evaluation modeling. By constructing a multidimensional indicator system and applying quantitative evaluation methods, the study provides a more systematic and operational framework for examining the contribution of cultural IP to textile and apparel brand value enhancement.

Mechanism Analysis of Cultural IP Empowering Brand Value Enhancement

Cultural IP does not enhance textile and apparel brand value through a single direct channel. Rather, its effect is reflected in a multidimensional mechanism involving cultural identity strengthening, consumer response, communication effectiveness, market-related value, and brand appreciation. Compared with ordinary product design elements, cultural IP carries stronger symbolic meaning, emotional content, and narrative potential. When effectively integrated into textile and apparel products and brand strategies, it can influence brand value through several interconnected dimensions.

First, cultural IP can strengthen brand cultural identity. In the textile and apparel industry, products are not only material goods but also carriers of cultural symbols and aesthetic concepts. By incorporating cultural IP into apparel design, packaging, visual systems, and brand storytelling, brands can transform abstract cultural resources into recognizable symbolic expressions [5,6]. Traditional motifs, regional patterns, intangible cultural heritage elements, and historical narratives can help brands establish clearer cultural attributes and a more distinctive identity in the market [6,17]. When the selected IP is consistent with brand positioning, design language, and target consumer expectations, the brand is more likely to form a coherent cultural image [7,18]. Therefore, cultural identity is an important dimension of brand value enhancement.

Second, cultural IP can enhance consumer response. Consumer decisions in the textile and apparel market are influenced not only by functionality and price, but also by symbolic value, aesthetic preference, and emotional attachment [3,4]. When cultural IP is integrated into textile and apparel products, consumers may perceive the brand as more meaningful, expressive, and culturally attractive, thereby strengthening emotional

closeness and identification with the brand [19,21]. This effect can further increase purchase intention, brand preference, repurchase tendency, and tolerance toward price premiums [10,11]. In this sense, consumer is an important dimension through which cultural IP contributes to brand value.

Third, cultural IP can improve communication effectiveness and market-related performance. Because cultural IP has stronger narrative capacity and dissemination potential than ordinary visual decoration or promotional language, it can provide brands with richer content for storytelling, public communication, and social media interaction [6,8]. In the contemporary textile and apparel market, communication performance has become an important component of brand competitiveness. Cultural IP can increase topic visibility, enrich communication content, and improve consumer interaction during the communication process [10,18]. At the same time, stronger communication may also support market attention, product differentiation, and value perception.

Finally, cultural IP can contribute to brand appreciation. In textile and apparel branding, value enhancement is reflected not only in short-term exposure or consumer interest, but also in premium ability, market competitiveness, and long-term brand strength. By adding symbolic depth, emotional significance, and differentiated experience to products, cultural IP can make textile and apparel goods appear more original, meaningful, and aesthetically valuable [5]. This perceived differentiation supports stronger market positioning and helps brands avoid homogeneous competition [14,17]. At the brand level, the continuous application of cultural IP can accumulate symbolic assets, improve brand originality, and strengthen long-term competitiveness [7,18]. Based on the above analysis, the effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value enhancement can be understood as a multidimensional and interrelated framework. In this study, cultural value, consumer value, market value, communication value, and brand appreciation value are treated as parallel but connected analytical dimensions for evaluation, rather than as strictly sequential stages in a causal progression. This framework provides the theoretical basis for the construction of the evaluation index system in the next section.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE EVALUATION INDEX SYSTEM

Principles for Index Selection

To quantitatively evaluate the effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value enhancement, it is necessary to construct a scientific and operable evaluation index system. Since the empowerment effect of cultural IP is reflected in multiple dimensions rather than a single outcome, the selection of indicators in

this study followed five principles: scientificity, systematicity, operability, representativeness, and industry relevance.

Scientificity requires that each indicator should have a clear conceptual meaning and theoretical basis. Systematicity means that the indicator system should cover the major dimensions involved in the value enhancement process, including cultural, consumer, market, communication, and brand-related aspects. Operability requires the indicators to be specific, understandable, and suitable for expert evaluation. Representativeness means the selected indicators should capture the key characteristics of cultural IP empowerment while minimizing redundancy. Industry relevance emphasizes that the indicators should reflect the symbolic, aesthetic, experiential, and market characteristics of textile and apparel brands rather than directly adopting overly general enterprise evaluation indicators.

Overall Structure of the Evaluation System

Based on the mechanism analysis in the previous section, this study constructs an evaluation index system composed of one target layer, five criterion layers, and fifteen indicator layers.

The target layer is defined as the enhancement effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value. The criterion layer consists of five dimensions: cultural value, consumer value, market value, communication value, and brand appreciation value. These dimensions correspond to the major interrelated aspects through which cultural IP influences brand value enhancement.

Among them, cultural value reflects the extent to which cultural IP improves the cultural expression, symbolic recognition, and identity coherence of textile and apparel brands. Consumer value represents its influence on consumer recognition, purchase willingness, and continued preference. Market value focuses on product differentiation, market responsiveness, and sales support. Communication value measures the role of cultural IP in enhancing brand visibility, social interaction, and dissemination capability. Brand appreciation value reflects its long-term contribution to premium ability, competitive positioning, and brand equity accumulation.

Overall, this structure reflects the logic that cultural IP influences brand value enhancement through multiple interconnected dimensions, including cultural expression, consumer response, market performance, communication effectiveness, and brand appreciation. These dimensions are analytically distinguished for evaluation purposes, but they are not assumed to operate in a strictly temporal or causal sequence.

Criterion-Layer and Indicator-Layer Design

According to the above framework, fifteen specific indicators are established under the five criterion-layer dimensions.

Cultural Value

Cultural value describes the extent to which cultural IP strengthens the cultural expression and symbolic identity of the brand. It includes three indicators: B1 cultural connotation integration, referring to the degree to which cultural IP is effectively integrated into product design, brand narrative, and visual presentation; B2 cultural symbol recognition, referring to the recognizability and distinctiveness of the cultural symbols embedded in the brand; and B3 consistency between IP and brand tone, referring to the extent to which the selected cultural IP matches the brand's positioning, design language, and target consumer image.

Consumer Value

Consumer value reflects the influence of cultural IP on consumer cognition, attitude, and behavioral intention. It includes B4 consumer identity, referring to the degree of recognition and psychological acceptance consumers show toward the brand after the integration of cultural IP; B5 purchase intention, referring to the extent to which cultural IP stimulates consumers' willingness to purchase the brand's products; and B6 repurchase tendency, referring to the extent to which consumers are willing to continue purchasing products from the brand in the future.

Market Value

Market value reflects the practical market effect of cultural IP in supporting brand differentiation and commercialization. It includes B7 product differentiation performance, referring to the degree to which cultural IP helps the brand form unique product characteristics and avoid homogeneous competition; B8 market response ability, referring to the ability of the brand to attract market attention and generate positive response after introducing cultural IP elements; and B9 sales conversion support, referring to the extent to which cultural IP helps transform brand attention and consumer preference into actual sales support.

Communication Value

Communication value reflects the role of cultural IP in enhancing communication effectiveness and dissemination capability. It includes B10 brand exposure level, referring to the extent to which cultural IP increases the visibility and public presence of the brand; B11 social communication activity, referring to the degree of user interaction, discussion, sharing, and participation triggered by cultural-IP-related brand content on social and

digital media; and B12 topic dissemination ability, referring to the ability of cultural-IP-related brand content to extend beyond initial interactions and generate sustained cross-platform visibility, wider public reach, and continued communication effectiveness.

Brand Appreciation Value

Brand appreciation value reflects the long-term contribution of cultural IP to brand strengthening and value accumulation. It includes B13 brand premium ability, referring to the extent to which cultural IP enhances consumers' willingness to accept higher prices for the brand's products; B14 brand competitiveness enhancement, referring to the degree to which cultural IP improves the brand's differentiated competitive position relative to comparable brands in the market; and B15 brand equity accumulation, referring to the extent to which cultural IP contributes to the accumulation of long-term brand equity through reputation building, symbolic asset formation, and sustained brand recognition.

Hierarchical Structure of the Evaluation Index System

According to the above design, the evaluation system can be organized into three levels: the target layer, the criterion layer, and the indicator layer. The target layer is defined as the enhancement effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value. The criterion layer includes five dimensions, namely cultural value, consumer value, market value, communication value, and brand appreciation value. Under these five dimensions, fifteen specific indicators are established to reflect the multidimensional effect of cultural IP on brand value enhancement.

Based on this hierarchical structure, the criterion layer is used to determine the relative importance of the five major dimensions, while the indicator layer is used for detailed expert scoring and quantitative synthesis in the subsequent empirical analysis. The complete hierarchical structure of the evaluation index system is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Evaluation index system for the effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value enhancement

Target layer	Criterion layer	Indicator layer
Enhancement effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value	A1 Cultural value	B1 Cultural connotation integration B2 Cultural symbol recognition B3 Consistency between IP and brand tone
	A2 Consumer value	B4 Consumer identity B5 Purchase intention B6 Repurchase tendency

Table 1. Evaluation index system for the effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value enhancement

Target layer	Criterion layer	Indicator layer
	A3 Market value	B7 Product differentiation performance B8 Market response ability B9 Sales conversion support
	A4 Communication value	B10 Brand exposure level B11 Social communication activity B12 Topic dissemination ability
	A5 Brand appreciation value	B13 Brand premium ability B14 Brand competitiveness enhancement B15 Brand equity accumulation

In summary, the evaluation index system constructed in this section translates the abstract concept of cultural IP empowerment into a structured and measurable framework. It provides the basis for the subsequent application of the Analytic Hierarchy Process and fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method, and also links the theoretical mechanism analysis with the empirical assessment of case brands.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND EXPERT SCORING

To quantitatively evaluate the effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value enhancement, this study adopts a research design that combines expert scoring with a structured evaluation model. This design is appropriate because the research object involves multiple dimensions, including cultural expression, consumer response, market performance, communication effectiveness, and long-term brand appreciation, many of which cannot be measured directly with a single objective indicator. Compared with a large-scale consumer questionnaire, expert evaluation is more suitable for this study because it better reflects professional judgments on cultural consistency, symbolic recognition, communication effectiveness, and brand appreciation, while remaining practical given the limited number of case brands.

The overall research process is as follows. First, based on the literature review and mechanism analysis, an evaluation index system is constructed, including one target layer, five criterion layers, and fifteen indicators. Second, expert judgments are collected to determine the relative importance of each criterion and indicator. Third, the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is applied to calculate indicator weights. Fourth, the selected textile and apparel brand cases are evaluated under each indicator, and the fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method is used to synthesize the expert judgments into quantitative results. Finally, the comprehensive scores of the case brands are compared and interpreted.

The expert panel consists of specialists in textile and apparel design, brand management and marketing, cultural and creative industries, and enterprise practice. To ensure both professional diversity and evaluation

reliability, 12 experts were invited to participate in the assessment. Each expert completed two tasks: comparing the relative importance of the evaluation indicators for AHP weight calculation, and evaluating the selected case brands under each indicator in the fuzzy evaluation stage. The composition of the expert panel is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Composition of the expert panel

Expert category	Number	Proportion (%)
Textile and apparel design specialists	3	25.0
Brand management and marketing specialists	3	25.0
Cultural and creative industry specialists	4	33.3
Enterprise practitioners	2	16.7
Total	12	100.0

In the AHP stage, the experts made pairwise comparisons of criteria and indicators according to the Saaty nine-point scale. In the fuzzy evaluation stage, they assessed the performance of each case brand under each indicator according to the predefined evaluation grades. The resulting data provided the basis for the quantitative evaluation model.

Weight Determination by AHP

The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) was used to determine the relative importance of the five criterion-layer dimensions and the fifteen indicator-layer variables. Since the effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value enhancement is multidimensional, equal weighting of all indicators would not be appropriate. AHP provides a structured method for identifying the priority relationships among different dimensions.

The hierarchical structure of the evaluation system includes one target layer, five criterion layers, and fifteen indicator-layer variables. On this basis, judgment matrices were established through pairwise comparisons made by the experts according to the relative importance of the factors. For a judgment matrix of order n , the matrix can be expressed as:

$$A = (a_{ij})_{n \times n} \quad (1)$$

where a_{ij} represents the relative importance of factor i compared with factor j , and $a_{ji} = 1/a_{ij}$.

The third step is to calculate the weight vector. After constructing the judgment matrix, the normalized eigenvector is used to obtain the relative weight of each factor. The weight vector is expressed as:

$$W = (w_1, w_2, \dots, w_n)^T \quad (2)$$

where w_i is the weight of the i -th factor, and the normalized weights satisfy:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n w_i = 1 \quad (3)$$

The fourth step is to test the consistency of the judgment matrix. Since the pairwise comparison results are based on expert cognition, consistency testing is necessary to verify whether the matrix is logically acceptable.

The consistency index is calculated as:

$$CI = \frac{\lambda_{\max} - n}{n - 1} \quad (4)$$

where λ_{\max} is the maximum eigenvalue of the judgment matrix, and n is the order of the matrix.

Then the consistency ratio is calculated by:

$$CR = \frac{CI}{RI} \quad (5)$$

where RI is the random consistency index.

When $CR < 0.1$, the judgment matrix is considered to have acceptable consistency. If the consistency ratio exceeds 0.1, the matrix should be adjusted until the consistency requirement is satisfied.

Through this procedure, the weights of the five criterion-layer dimensions and the fifteen indicator-layer variables can be obtained. These weights provide the basis for the subsequent fuzzy comprehensive evaluation and make it possible to reflect the relative contribution of different dimensions to brand value enhancement. The consistency test results of the criterion-layer and indicator-layer judgment matrices are presented in Table 3. All matrices satisfied the requirement of $CR < 0.1$, indicating that the expert comparison results were logically acceptable and could be used for weight calculation.

Table 3. Consistency test results of the AHP judgment matrices

Matrix level	Number of indicators	λ_{max}	CI	RI	CR	Result
Criterion layer	5	5.094	0.0235	1.12	0.021	Acceptable
Cultural value	3	3.038	0.0190	0.58	0.033	Acceptable
Consumer value	3	3.031	0.0155	0.58	0.027	Acceptable
Market value	3	3.044	0.0220	0.58	0.038	Acceptable
Communication value	3	3.052	0.0260	0.58	0.045	Acceptable
Brand appreciation value	3	3.035	0.0175	0.58	0.030	Acceptable

Fuzzy Comprehensive Evaluation Model

After the weights are determined by AHP, the fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method is used to assess the performance of each textile and apparel brand case. This method is particularly suitable for the present study because many indicators, such as cultural connotation integration and topic dissemination ability, involve qualitative judgments with ambiguous boundaries rather than direct numerical measurement. The fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method allows such judgments to be converted into quantitative results while preserving their ambiguity. Unlike simple weighted averaging, the fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method captures the ambiguity of expert judgments expressed in evaluation grades and preserves their distribution across evaluation levels. This makes it more suitable for handling subjective indicators where precise numerical ratings are difficult to define.

The first step is to define the factor set. According to the evaluation index system, the factor set can be expressed as:

$$U = \{U_1, U_2, U_3, U_4, U_5\} \quad (6)$$

where U_1 , U_2 , U_3 , U_4 , and U_5 represent cultural value, consumer value, market value, communication value, and brand appreciation value, respectively.

Each criterion layer further contains a corresponding sub-factor set. For example, the cultural value dimension is expressed as:

$$U_1 = \{B_1, B_2, B_3\} \quad (7)$$

and the other criterion layers are defined in the same way.

The second step is to define the evaluation set. To improve the transparency of the evaluation process, a five-level expert scoring rule was adopted in this study. The experts assessed the performance of each case brand under each indicator according to the five predefined evaluation grades of very high, high, medium, low, and very low. The proportion of expert judgments falling into each grade was then converted into the corresponding membership degree for the construction of the fuzzy evaluation matrix. In this way, qualitative evaluations were converted into quantitative results for subsequent synthesis. In this study, the evaluation grades are set as:

$$V = \{V_1, V_2, V_3, V_4, V_5\} \quad (8)$$

where V_1 , V_2 , V_3 , V_4 , and V_5 represent very high, high, medium, low, and very low, respectively.

The third step is to construct the fuzzy evaluation matrix. Based on the experts' judgments, the membership degree of each indicator to each evaluation grade is calculated. For each criterion layer, the fuzzy evaluation matrix is expressed as:

$$R_i = \begin{bmatrix} r_{i11} & r_{i12} & r_{i13} & r_{i14} & r_{i15} \\ r_{i21} & r_{i22} & r_{i23} & r_{i24} & r_{i25} \\ r_{i31} & r_{i32} & r_{i33} & r_{i34} & r_{i35} \end{bmatrix} \quad (9)$$

where r_{ijk} represents the membership degree of the j -th indicator under the i -th criterion layer to the k -th evaluation grade.

The fourth step is to perform single-layer fuzzy synthesis. For each criterion layer, the synthesis result is calculated by:

$$B_i = W_i \cdot R_i \quad (10)$$

where W_i is the weight vector of the corresponding indicator layer, and B_i is the fuzzy synthesis result of that criterion layer.

The fifth step is to carry out the overall fuzzy synthesis. After obtaining the synthesis results for all five criterion layers, the overall evaluation result of the target layer is calculated by:

$$B = W \cdot R \quad (11)$$

where W is the weight vector of the criterion layer, and R is the matrix composed of the criterion-layer synthesis results.

To make the results more intuitive, a score set is assigned to the evaluation grades:

$$S = \{100, 80, 60, 40, 20\} \quad (12)$$

Then the final comprehensive score is calculated as:

$$F = B \cdot S^T \quad (13)$$

where F is the overall evaluation score of the case brand. A higher score indicates that cultural IP has a stronger effect on enhancing the brand value of the evaluated textile and apparel brand.

Through this model, the study can compare the comprehensive performance of different case brands and also examine their strengths and weaknesses across different dimensions. Therefore, the combined AHP-fuzzy comprehensive evaluation model not only provides a quantitative tool for the current study, but also offers a practical framework for evaluating the empowerment effect of cultural IP in textile and apparel branding.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Case Selection and Data Source

To verify the applicability of the proposed evaluation model, this study selected representative textile and apparel brands with evident cultural IP characteristics for empirical analysis. Since the purpose of the study was to evaluate the effect of cultural IP on brand value enhancement, the selected cases were required to satisfy two basic conditions. First, the brands needed to demonstrate clear integration of cultural IP in product design, brand communication, or cultural narrative. Second, they needed to possess a certain degree of market visibility and representativeness so that their performance could provide practical value for comparative analysis.

Considering the feasibility of expert evaluation and the need for cross-case comparison, this study adopted a multiple-case design and selected three textile and apparel brands, denoted as Brand A, Brand B, and Brand C for anonymous comparison. To preserve commercial confidentiality, the case brands are presented anonymously. This anonymous treatment does not affect the comparative logic of the study, as all evaluations were conducted on the basis of observable public brand information. The three cases represent different levels and

modes of cultural IP application in textile and apparel branding. Among them, Brand A demonstrates relatively deep integration of traditional cultural resources and stronger overall communication performance. Brand B places greater emphasis on the fashionable reinterpretation of cultural symbols and shows relatively favorable performance in market conversion. Brand C has introduced cultural IP elements at a relatively early stage and shows comparatively weaker performance in communication effectiveness and value transformation. This case design helps reveal differences in the effect of cultural IP across brands.

The data used in this study mainly consist of expert scoring data, supplemented by publicly available brand information. The expert scoring data were used for both AHP weight determination and fuzzy comprehensive evaluation. Publicly available brand information, including brand profiles, official websites, promotional materials, media reports, product presentation, and communication-related content, was used to support expert judgment and improve the objectivity of the evaluation process. By combining expert knowledge with observable brand information, this study sought to reduce subjectivity in the scoring process.

The expert panel consisted of specialists in textile and apparel design, fashion branding, cultural and creative industries, and enterprise practice. To ensure evaluation reliability, 12 experts were invited to participate in the assessment. Before the formal evaluation, the experts were provided with the evaluation index system, the definition of each indicator, and relevant background materials for the three case brands. This process helped establish a consistent understanding of the evaluation criteria and improved the reliability of the scoring results.

The empirical evaluation was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the experts compared the relative importance of the criterion-layer and indicator-layer factors according to the Saaty nine-point scale, and the resulting pairwise comparison data were used to determine indicator weights through AHP. In the second stage, the experts evaluated the performance of Brand A, Brand B, and Brand C under each indicator according to the predefined evaluation grades of very high, high, medium, low, and very low. These results were then transformed into membership values for the construction of the fuzzy evaluation matrices.

On this basis, the study obtained both the relative importance of each evaluation dimension and the comprehensive performance of each case brand under cultural IP empowerment. This provided the empirical foundation for the subsequent analysis of indicator weights, comprehensive evaluation results, and comparative discussion among the selected brands.

Weight Results of Indicators

Based on the pairwise comparison judgments provided by the expert panel, the weights of the criterion-layer and indicator-layer variables were calculated using the Analytic Hierarchy Process. All judgment matrices satisfied the requirement of $CR < 0.1$, indicating acceptable consistency and supporting their use in the subsequent evaluation.

At the criterion-layer level, the results show that cultural value, consumer value, and brand appreciation value occupy relatively important positions in the evaluation system, whereas market value and communication value play supporting but still necessary roles. This does not mean that market value and communication value are unimportant. Rather, the weight structure suggests that, in the context of cultural IP, cultural coherence and consumer recognition function as foundational dimensions, while market and communication performance reflect subsequent value conversion and external manifestation. Therefore, lower weights for A3 and A4 should be interpreted as relatively supportive rather than negligible. As shown in Table 4, the weights of cultural value, consumer value, market value, communication value, and brand appreciation value are 0.268, 0.221, 0.163, 0.146, and 0.202, respectively. Among them, cultural value has the highest weight, followed by consumer value and brand appreciation value. This result suggests that the effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value depends primarily on cultural integration, consumer recognition, and the accumulation of long-term brand assets, rather than on short-term market performance alone.

Table 4. Weights of criterion-layer indicators

Criterion layer	Code	Weight	Rank
Cultural value	A1	0.268	1
Consumer value	A2	0.221	2
Market value	A3	0.163	4
Communication value	A4	0.146	5
Brand appreciation value	A5	0.202	3
Total		1.000	

At the indicator-layer level, the global weights further reveal the relative contribution of specific variables. As shown in Table 5, cultural connotation integration (B1), consumer identity (B4), and cultural symbol recognition (B2) are the three most important indicators, with global weights of 0.1046, 0.0873, and 0.0861, respectively. They are followed by consistency between IP and brand tone (B3), purchase intention (B5), and brand premium ability (B13), with weights of 0.0773, 0.0738, and 0.0725, respectively. By contrast, topic

dissemination ability (B12), sales conversion support (B9), and social communication activity (B11) receive relatively lower weights, although they remain meaningful components of the overall evaluation framework.

Table 5. Global weights of indicator-layer variables

Indicator	Code	Global weight	Rank
Cultural connotation integration	B1	0.1046	1
Consumer identity	B4	0.0873	2
Cultural symbol recognition	B2	0.0861	3
Consistency between IP and brand tone	B3	0.0773	4
Purchase intention	B5	0.0738	5
Brand premium ability	B13	0.0725	6
Brand equity accumulation	B15	0.0671	7
Brand competitiveness enhancement	B14	0.0624	8
Product differentiation performance	B7	0.0615	9
Repurchase tendency	B6	0.0599	10
Market response ability	B8	0.0542	11
Brand exposure level	B10	0.0537	12
Topic dissemination ability	B12	0.0486	13
Sales conversion support	B9	0.0473	14
Social communication activity	B11	0.0437	15

These results indicate that the enhancement effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value depends primarily on whether cultural resources are deeply embedded in the brand and whether consumers develop clear symbolic recognition and psychological identification with it. In other words, cultural IP can create stronger brand value only when it is effectively integrated into the brand's cultural expression and translated into consumer recognition and long-term brand appreciation. Communication- and market-related indicators remain important, but they function more as supporting dimensions than as core drivers.

Therefore, in the subsequent case evaluation, greater attention should be paid to whether a brand demonstrates substantial cultural coherence, consumer resonance, and long-term value transformation capacity, rather than relying mainly on short-term exposure or superficial symbolic presentation.

Comprehensive Evaluation Results of Case Brands

After determining the indicator weights, the fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method was applied to assess the performance of Brand A, Brand B, and Brand C. Based on expert judgments, fuzzy evaluation matrices

were constructed for each case brand, and the weighted synthesis results were calculated according to the established evaluation model.

The empirical results show clear differences among the three case brands in the overall effect of cultural IP on brand value enhancement. As shown in Table 6, Brand A obtained the highest comprehensive evaluation score of 83.3, followed by Brand B with 78.0 and Brand C with 69.1. According to the predefined evaluation scale, Brand A can be classified as high, Brand B as medium-high, and Brand C as medium. These results indicate that the effect of cultural IP varies across brands according to the coherence of cultural integration, communication effectiveness, and the ability to transform cultural resources into sustained brand value.

Table 6. Comprehensive evaluation results of case brands

Brand	Cultural value	Consumer value	Market value	Communication value	Brand appreciation value	Comprehensive score	Evaluation level	Rank
Brand A	86.9	82.7	79.4	80.8	84.1	83.3	High	1
Brand B	78.6	76.9	80.7	78.8	75.1	78.0	Med.-high	2
Brand C	71.4	69.8	67.6	65.9	70.2	69.1	Medium	3

More specifically, Brand A performed well in cultural value (86.9), consumer value (82.7), and brand appreciation value (84.1), suggesting that it had developed a comparatively coherent cultural expression, stronger consumer recognition, and better long-term brand value accumulation. Its performance in market value (79.4) and communication value (80.8) was also favorable, indicating a relatively balanced development across different dimensions of cultural IP empowerment.

Brand B ranked second overall, with a comprehensive score of 78.0. Its most notable strength lay in market value (80.7), while its performance in communication value (78.8) was also positive. This suggests that Brand B achieved a certain degree of effectiveness in attracting market attention and supporting market response through cultural IP. However, its score in brand appreciation value (75.1) was lower than that of Brand A, indicating that its cultural IP strategy may be more effective in supporting short- to medium-term market performance than in strengthening long-term symbolic accumulation and deeper brand value formation.

Brand C received the lowest comprehensive score of 69.1. Its scores in cultural value (71.4) and brand appreciation value (70.2) indicate that cultural elements had been incorporated into the brand, but the overall effect remained limited. In particular, its weaker performance in communication value (65.9) and market value (67.6) suggests insufficient effectiveness in expanding influence and converting cultural expression into

stronger market support. Compared with Brand A and Brand B, Brand C appears to be at an earlier stage of cultural IP application.

Overall, the results demonstrate that the proposed evaluation model can effectively distinguish the relative performance of different textile and apparel brands under cultural IP empowerment. More importantly, the findings suggest that brand value enhancement depends on whether cultural elements are integrated into a coherent strategy involving cultural expression, consumer recognition, market responsiveness, and long-term brand appreciation.

Comparative Discussion

The comparative results of the three case brands provide several important insights into the mechanism of cultural IP empowerment in textile and apparel branding.

First, coherent cultural integration is more effective than superficial symbolic use. Brand A achieved the highest comprehensive score and performed particularly well in cultural value, consumer value, and brand appreciation value. This finding suggests that cultural IP can generate stronger brand value only when it is coherently embedded in the brand's identity, product design, and value expression. By contrast, brands that merely incorporate cultural symbols at a visual or decorative level may attract temporary attention, but such strategies are less likely to support stable consumer recognition and long-term brand appreciation.

Second, consumer recognition plays a key mediating role in transforming cultural resources into brand value. Brand A performed better in consumer value and also achieved the strongest overall evaluation result. This indicates that cultural IP does not automatically enhance brand value simply by appearing in products or communication. Its effect depends largely on whether consumers perceive the cultural expression as meaningful and consistent with the brand image. In this sense, consumer identity, purchase intention, and continued preference function as important mediating dimensions linking cultural expression with actual brand value enhancement.

Third, market and communication performance are important but not sufficient on their own. Brand B performed well in market value and communication value, and its market value score was even slightly higher than that of Brand A. This shows that cultural IP can help brands improve visibility, generate market response, and support product differentiation. However, Brand B still ranked below Brand A in the overall evaluation because its performance in brand appreciation value was weaker. This suggests that stronger exposure or short-term market responsiveness does not necessarily translate into stronger long-term brand value.

If communication effectiveness is not accompanied by deeper cultural consistency and stronger consumer recognition, its contribution may remain limited.

Fourth, brand appreciation reflects the long-term outcome of cultural IP empowerment. Brand A's stronger performance in brand appreciation value indicates that the significance of cultural IP lies not only in communication expansion or short-term differentiation, but also in whether it contributes to premium ability, symbolic accumulation, and sustainable competitiveness. From this perspective, cultural IP should be regarded not merely as a promotional resource, but as a strategic asset for long-term brand building. Brand C's weaker performance further supports this point, as the introduction of cultural elements alone is insufficient when the brand lacks effective communication support and long-term value transformation capacity.

Overall, the empirical analysis confirms that cultural IP empowers textile and apparel brand value enhancement through multiple interconnected dimensions. Cultural identity, consumer recognition, market response, communication effectiveness, and brand appreciation are closely related in this process. A successful cultural IP strategy coordinates these dimensions and transforms cultural resources into sustained brand value rather than short-term symbolic exposure. These findings also provide practical implications for textile and apparel enterprises seeking to improve brand competitiveness through cultural creativity and IP-based branding.

Supplementary Validation Using Publicly Observable Indicators

To further examine the practical plausibility of the expert-based evaluation results, this study conducted a supplementary comparison using several publicly observable indicators, including social media visibility, media exposure, cultural-IP-related product promotion, and campaign dissemination intensity. Although these indicators were not directly incorporated into the AHP-fuzzy evaluation model, they were used as external reference information to assess whether the ranking pattern obtained from expert evaluation was broadly consistent with observable brand communication and market attention. The comparison showed that Brand A generally demonstrated stronger communication visibility and more active cultural-IP-related product promotion, while Brand B showed relatively favorable performance in campaign responsiveness and public attention. By contrast, Brand C displayed lower communication activity and weaker visibility of cultural-IP-related content. This pattern was broadly consistent with the comprehensive evaluation results, providing preliminary external support for the reliability of the proposed model.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effect of cultural IP on textile and apparel brand value enhancement from the dual perspectives of mechanism analysis and quantitative evaluation. Based on the literature review and the characteristics of textile and apparel branding, the study analyzed the multidimensional mechanism through which cultural IP influences brand value enhancement. The results indicate that cultural IP does not improve brand value through a single direct path, but through multiple interrelated dimensions involving cultural identity, consumer recognition, communication effectiveness, market response, and brand appreciation.

On this basis, a hierarchical evaluation index system was constructed, including one target layer, five criterion layers, and fifteen indicator layers covering cultural value, consumer value, market value, communication value, and brand appreciation value. The study further combined the Analytic Hierarchy Process and the fuzzy comprehensive evaluation method to establish a quantitative evaluation model, which was applied to selected textile and apparel brand cases through expert scoring and comparative analysis.

The empirical results show that the proposed model can effectively reflect the relative performance of different brands across multiple dimensions. Among the evaluated dimensions, cultural value, consumer value, and brand appreciation value emerged as the most important, indicating that the effect of cultural IP depends mainly on coherent cultural integration, consumer recognition, and the accumulation of long-term symbolic and competitive value. The comparative analysis further suggests that brands with stronger cultural connotation integration and better consistency between cultural IP and brand tone tend to achieve better overall evaluation results, whereas merely introducing cultural symbols or relying on short-term communication exposure is insufficient for sustained brand value enhancement.

The study contributes to the existing literature in three main respects. First, it extends the discussion of cultural IP from general cultural and creative contexts to the textile and apparel industry. Second, it provides a more systematic explanation of how cultural IP empowers brand value enhancement by integrating mechanism analysis with multidimensional evaluation. Third, the proposed AHP–fuzzy comprehensive evaluation framework offers a practical quantitative tool for assessing the effectiveness of cultural IP strategies in textile and apparel branding.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that textile and apparel brands should strengthen the coherence between cultural IP and overall brand positioning, enhance the integration of cultural connotation into product design and brand narrative, and focus on transforming cultural resources into long-term brand

assets rather than short-term promotional symbols. The value of cultural IP lies in increasing market visibility, strengthening consumer identification, improving premium ability, and supporting sustainable brand competitiveness.

This study still has several limitations. The empirical analysis is based mainly on expert scoring and therefore may contain a certain degree of subjectivity. In addition, the number of case brands is limited, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Although the evaluation model can reflect the comprehensive empowerment effect of cultural IP, it does not yet fully incorporate large-scale consumer data or dynamic market data. Future research may expand the number and types of textile and apparel brand cases, combine expert judgment with consumer survey data, and introduce more objective market performance indicators to improve the robustness of the evaluation model.

Availability of Data and Materials

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study were available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Author Contributions

Ling Zu designed, collected and analyzed the data, and drafted the manuscript. Ling Zu conducted the study, critically revised the manuscript for important intellectual content, and gave final approval of the version to be published. Ling Zu participated fully in the work, take public responsibility for appropriate portions of the content, and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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