Research article

Crafting a place-based souvenir for sustaining cultural heritage

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to investigate the souvenir-person-place bonding for sustaining cultural heritage. Previous studies acknowledge souvenirs could represent a place; however, how people perceive souvenirs as representative of the place still needs to be studied. This study comprehends the traditional craft by identifying the dimensions of place-based craft souvenirs and exploring the connections between souvenirs, craft, and place. A qualitative approach was employed. In-depth interviews, participant and non-participant observations were conducted in Jinan, China, a long-history city with many traditional crafts. Thirty documents were imported into ATLAS.ti software for analysis. The 'place-based craft souvenir', 'evaluation of souvenir', 'place meaning', and 'satisfaction' emerged as the four main themes of 'souvenir-person-place bonding'. These 'souvenir-people-place' bonding motivate individuals' understanding of traditional craft and place, contributing to the sustainability of the traditional craft.

1. Introduction

Souvenirs are vital for tourists to recall memorable experiences at a particular destination. However, many souvenirs are the standard type of products in which the producers print the name of the destination on T-shirts, keychains, etc., and assume that represents a place. These souvenirs might help the sellers generate more income; however, they might not be able to represent a place as they lack connotations of the place and are unable to preserve intangible cultural heritage such as traditional craftsmanship.

Traditional crafts and craftsmanship, the cultural heritage of a place, face many challenges. Firstly, globalization and technological change have brought severe impacts and threats to cultural heritage worldwide, as they have threatened tradition and created a commonplace unity [1]. Secondly, most crafts, such as pottery and clothes, were initially created to meet utilitarian needs in traditional societies [2]. However, with the changes in modern lifestyles, traditional craft products are facing unprecedented challenges as the craft is no longer the daily necessity [3,4]. Thirdly, there are also problems with inheritance, as young generations are not interested to learn about this traditional heritage [5]. These series of problems seriously affected the development of traditional craft and even led to its extinction. Consequently, actions should be taken to sustain traditional crafts and craftsmanship. Traditional crafts can only survive if there is a viable market [1]. The flourishing of tourism activities provides a transformation opportunity for traditional crafts and craftsmen as tourists are searching for something to be brought back. This is also confirmed by Peach [6] that tourism is a creator of jobs and opportunities for craft workers, and it gave a chance to sustain and revive craft production in Scotland during the 1970s, in which some craftsmen transformed their handicrafts into souvenirs based on tourists' expectations [2,7–10].

However, the transformation is not easy.

Souvenir has become one of the most prominent goals in tourism consumption, bringing billions of dollars of income to destinations worldwide every year [2,11–15]. It is an essential tourism component, and shopping for souvenirs is considered a common holiday activity [16,17]. Many tourists feel a trip is incomplete without purchasing souvenirs [18]. They often get tangible reminders of their specific time in the form of souvenirs and handicrafts, which serve as mementoes of the tourist destination and symbolize the tourism experience [19]. In addition to providing revenue for tourist attractions, souvenirs also help to enhance the satisfaction and loyalty of visitors [20]. Moreover, for heritage sites, to some extent, it may help avoid removing tangible heritage debris by providing other options for visitors, thus protecting the heritage site [2,21,22].

The uniqueness and authenticity have always been treated as significant attributes of souvenirs [23]. Many are not interested in purchasing unauthentic souvenirs, as they want something unique connected to a destination [18,23–26]. Both uniqueness and authenticity are place-bound concepts. There is a growing interest in purchasing local souvenirs, and people prefer souvenirs that only can be bought at a specific place or have some relationship with the place [27]. In other words, souvenirs should show the uniqueness of the place, representing a place and having a close relationship with a place. Souvenirs can be and have been used to reconstruct the destination image [2,17]. For example, the cultural and creative products designed based on the buildings or collections of the Forbidden City convey the impression of the Forbidden City.

However, how a souvenir represents a place remained unclear as souvenirs found in many places are just adding the place's name to similar products found elsewhere. Besides, the evolution from crafts to souvenirs has received a lot of criticism due to the change in form, meaning, function and symbolism [2]. For instance, souvenir production may have created a sustainable outlet for Scottish craft production. Still, it also seemed to sacrifice the products' integrity of quality and design for profitability. Thus, keeping the value of traditional crafts in souvenir-making is vital. Value is explored in heritage literature as a way of evaluating and guiding the preservation of heritage at heritage sites [28]. There are different craft values. Su et al. [29] stated that, from an inheritor perspective, craft values include economic value, social value, spiritual value, aesthetic value, historical value, and symbolic value. From a tourist's perspective, souvenirs also carry different values such as religious or spiritual values besides functional values [30,31]. Hence, Craftsmen need to understand the blend of authenticity, uniqueness and traditional craftsmanship, to make a souvenir unique and can only be found at that specific place. However, when craftsmen design craft souvenirs, how to emphasize these values and how to evaluate the results of the display is yet to be fully explored.

In summary, traditional craft and craftsmanship need to be preserved as it carries the cultural values of a society. One way to revive craft and craftsmanship is through tourism as shopping is an important and prevalent activity for tourists [32–38]. Tourists tend to purchase authentic souvenirs although the purposes of purchasing might differ, and this provides opportunities for the inheritance of traditional crafts if craftsmen can transform their crafts into souvenirs that can represent their place. However, on the one hand, the mass-produced souvenirs in the marketplace are not able to reflect a place-based value and are unable to reflect the cultural heritage values of a place. On the other hand, how might a traditional craft transform into a place-based souvenir is still challenging. In other words, how to create a place-based souvenir which integrates the craft's values is yet to be fully explored.

Hence, this study endeavors to understand the knowledge relating to place-based craft souvenirs and the place meaning that arises from the souvenir. It is driven by a desire to comprehend how souvenir-person-place bonding could contribute to sustaining the cultural heritage. In other words, this study explores the dimensions of place-based craft souvenirs and souvenir-person-place bonding to help activate the traditional craft. The research questions include: What are the dimensions of place-based craft souvenirs from the perspective of tourists and craftsmen? How do locals and tourists perceive the place-based craft souvenirs? How will the place-based craft souvenir represent a place?

2. Literature review

2.1. Characteristics of souvenirs

Olalere [39] states that the attributes of a product determine the choice of products since buyers are usually guided by the attributes they deem are important. Turner and Reisinger [40] claim the key domains, which are product value, product display characteristics, and product uniqueness, are the attributes people consider when they purchase. Many researchers agree with the importance of uniqueness. They acknowledge the uniqueness of an object, related to the place people visit, as a critical element of souvenir-purchasing [18,23,24]. Thus, the representative local products are the most favorable souvenirs tourists purchase [24,26,41], as they are considered local and unique. Furthermore, many studies acknowledge authenticity as one of the most significant attributes of souvenirs [23]. Soukhathammavong & Park [25] point out that authentic souvenirs consist of five features: (1) integrate culture and history to express place identity; (2) made in certain villages of local place; (3) handmade or handicraft; (4) have a unique and amazing appearance to attract people; (5) require local specific skills of local craftsmen or recognizable people for craftsmanship; and these features are associated with economic, symbolic and artisanal values. However, how these features-values interact in creating a 'person-place' bonding requires more studies. In other words, tourists are looking for an authentic souvenir with an attractive appearance and carries a connotation of 'person-place', which is vital in designing and producing an authentic place-based souvenir.

2.2. Craft and classification of craftwork

According to Adamson [42], craft applies knowledge based on materials and skills to relatively small-scale production. It combines the intangible dimensions with tangible ones to transform them into a craft. Tangible dimensions include materials, machines, tools,

natural resources, built workshops and workplaces, and the final product or craft articles is also tangible; the intangible dimensions are about the tradition, skill, dexterity and knowledge required for craft and cultural, economic and religious that identify the community [43]. Traditional craft is the reflection of ideology and culture, and the refinement of crafts shows a person's or community's identity [5].

'Craft' has multiple meanings, and the definition depends on cultural and social background [44,45]. This is consistent with the idea of Zhan & Walker [28] that craft is one of the most elusive concepts and cannot be entirely set in any particular definition. Kurlinkus [46] uses the archaeology of Foucauldian to regard crafts as crafting, products, and as a set of rights. Craft as crafting stresses the process of making craft products and value skill and technique more than mechanistic production [46]. Pöllänen [47] acknowledges that during craft-making, people interweave with the production process from raw materials, handicrafts, possibilities for personal development, sense of accomplishment, growth of physical and epistemic skills, physical and emotional control, and social and cultural aspects of craft, and believes that all the dimensions are the factors of crafts that promote well-being. Seeing craft as a product is for the reason that products made by craft have the Benjaminian 'aura' of originality that enables consumers to personalize, admire the tradition through consumption, conform to local values, and connect users and makers [46]. Kritzer [48] describes the characteristics of craftwork as consisting of external and internal dimensions, and its external features include consistency, utility and clientele (has an identifiable customer or clientele); the internal features are skill and techniques, problem-solving and esthetic. Zhan & Walker [28] classify the craftwork into traditional-decorative crafts, utilitarian craft-product, cultural-functional crafts, and art-craft works. Craft as a set of rights emphasizes the skill of workers and cultivates people to be unique and have pleasure and freedom in their work [46]. From the perspective of craft education, Pöllänen [49] sees the craft as product-making, design and problem-solving, skill and knowledge, and self-expression, while Kokko & Dillon [1] classify craft as cultural heritage.

Although craft has many connotations, in general, craft integrates various resources both in intangible and tangible form, connecting individuals and communities of a place and carrying different values. Craft has economic value, social value, aesthetic value, historical value and symbolic value, which are closely related to a place; on the other hand, souvenir also has values such as social value, functional value and spiritual or religious values connected to a place [29–31]. In other words, tourists are pursuing souvenirs produced locally, and the experience of tourism and travel is closely related to place [50,51]. Hence, it's important to study the local place. As Swanson & Timothy [2] characterized, a deeper examination of the object-person-place relationship of souvenirs needs to be studied, which supports the significance of the place.

2.3. Place

Place is defined as a locale, process, care, meaning and identity [52,53], and it is different from space in social construction and locality [54,55]. According to researchers, place is the spatial position endowed with meaning by human experience, and it is a part of the knowledge system and cultural characteristic of each nation's places [55–59]. In addition, place is described as the background and inspiration of human activities, which is related to individual memory and emotion [51,60–63].

However, the concept of place is ambiguous [64]. Social scientists and educators have proposed that place are difficult to conceptualize, research and quantify because of its multifaceted nature [65]. In the fields of environmental psychology and design, researchers did their work largely relied on a framework that concluded place as the conflux of conceptions, the physical environment, and behaviors [66]. Yet, the framework paid insufficient attention to the locational facet of places. In the geographical field, geographers conceive three aspects of places: materiality; location; and meaning (attachment, sense of place) [67]. Arefi and Triantafillou [64] propose the ontological construct of place in the planning and urban design, which consists of four dimensions: place as visual attributes, place as product, place as process and place as meaning. Place as visual attributes refer to the physical elements of place that can be observed; place as product to explain the different functions of place; place as process refers to the transformation of place over time [64]; considering place as meaning is subjective because among different interpreters, meaning is abstract and value-laden [52], it's more complex than other three dimensions.

2.4. Souvenir, craft and place

When craft is regarded as heritage articles, they carry aesthetics and tradition; when it is regarded as souvenirs, people associate them with their own memories of an event or place [43].

The materialization of culture and heritage is the essence of the souvenir business. Souvenirs are granted the privilege to commercialize local culture to bring profits to the tourism industry of the place [68]. Souvenirs link visitors to the cycle of craft, commercialization and collection through cultural differences [69–71]. Tourists pursue unique, authentic souvenirs. Place-based craft souvenir products not only activate the traditional crafts but also represent the place so that people can bring back their ideal souvenirs and promote the purchase and propaganda of these souvenirs. At the same time, it also provides a way for us to understand the traditional crafts of a place. The key to place-based craft souvenirs is to make unique and authentic souvenirs that integrate the dimensions of place, which have the value characteristics of craft, to activate and continue the cultural heritage. However, there is a lack of literature to illustrate how to create a place-based craft souvenir which can reflect the characteristics of place.

3. Study methods

3.1. The context of the study

Jinan is the capital city of Shandong Province, with rich historical, cultural, and natural resources [72]. There are a lot of traditional crafts in Jinan, such as Lu Embroidery, black pottery, dough figurines, shadow puppets and tin sculpture. Nevertheless, tourists or even local residents rarely know these traditional crafts. Further, Jinan is a second-tier city in China; thus, it may not be generally familiar to most residents in southern China and is also not a priority tourist destination [73]. Facing the above dilemma, the development of tourism and souvenir shopping provides opportunities for traditional crafts to be seen, understood and sustained, and it also can help in destination branding and marketing. Although handcraft items are increasingly overlooked in favor of mass-produced fashion products [74], a place-based craft souvenir might be what tourists value.

3.2. Research sample and procedure

A qualitative approach is to comprehend a phenomenon from a 'native' perspective, which emphasizes subjective meaning and experience [75]. The current study employed a qualitative approach to attain a rich and thoughtful understanding of tourists and craftsmen about traditional crafts, souvenirs, and place, respectively.

The in-depth interviews, participant and non-participant observations were conducted in Jinan, China, between November 2021 and July 2022. The interviews were conducted in attractions, respondents' offices, souvenir shops, coffee shops or other places that respondents prefer. Tourists and craftsmen were the target respondents. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before the interview. These respondents had been informed about the purpose of the interview and agreed to be interviewed.

Generally, the conversation with tourists starts by asking about their purpose of purchasing a souvenir, followed by the factors that attract them to buy the souvenirs, for instance, "What are your priorities when buying the souvenirs?" The respondent started sharing the features of a particular souvenir they like. Later they were asked about the features of the souvenir which might relate to the place

Table 1
Respondent's profile.

Document used for data analysis	
Document types	Respondent's profile/description of the document
I = interview transcript;	
N = newspaper/online article;	
V = video	
B = book	
I1	Female; 26-30 year-old; non-local; bank clerk
I2	Female; 25-30 year-old; non-local; government personnel
I3	Female; 30-35 year-old; non-local; community worker
I4	Male; 26-30 year-old; non-local; engineer
I5	Male; 36-40 year-old; local; lecturer
I6	Male; 26-30 year-old; non-local; engineer
I7	Female; 26-30 year-old; non-local; accountant
I8	Group interview; 1 female, 1male; 36-40 year-old; local; community worker/unemployed
I9	Female; 60-65 year-old; local; retired
I10	Female; 25-30 year-old; local; accountant
I11	Female; 36-45 year-old; non-local; craftsman
I12	Male; 36-45 year-old; local; craftsman
I13	Female; 55-60 year-old; local; craftsman
I14	Male; 36-45 year-old; local; craftsman
I15	Female; 26-30 year-old; non-local; teacher
Newspaper/online article	
N1	Newspaper about Lu embroidery and clothes
N2	Newspaper about intangible cultural heritage of Shan Dong
N3	Newspaper about black pottery
N4	Newspaper about black pottery
N5	Online article about Jinan Dough Figurines
N6	Newspaper about kites
N7	Newspaper about snuff bottle
N8	Online article about pottery Gui
N9	Newspaper about Rabbit King
Video	
V1	Video about Tin Sculpture
V2	Video about Wei Fang kites
Book/Brochure	
B1	Book about the prehistoric pottery Gui
B2	Book about Sinology Tourism
B3	Book about the long history of Chinese civilization
B4	Brochure about Jinan

or represent the place. If their answer was negative, questions such as, "What souvenirs you had ever purchased in some other places which you think could reflect the characteristics of the place?" Next, the respondents had been asked to think further about Jinan's souvenir, "What do you think about Jinan's souvenir?", "Do you think it is representative? If yes, please elaborate on how. If no, please also elaborate on why you say so." Most of the time, the respondents mentioned some other places they had visited before, questions such as "You have been to many other places, please share with us your point of view about the souvenirs at that place" or "What do you think about the souvenirs from these places? Can they represent the place? If yes, how? Please tell us more about it." These questions were asked to comprehend the relationship and connection between souvenirs and place.

The interview with craftsmen usually started with, "May you please tell me more about this traditional craft?" Later, the reasons and motivations for learning the craft were asked, "Why do you want to learn this traditional craft?", "How long have you been doing this craft?", "Why do you keep doing this?" etc.; these questions were to invite the respondents to share his/her thought about the traditional craft. Next, questions such as "Do you think these traditional crafts can represent Jinan?". Their answer might be positive, and they had been invited to elaborate further on how this craft can represent the place. If their response was 'not sure', they were encouraged to share their thoughts about the place and further elaborate their knowledge of the place and the relationship of their craft with the place.

Each interview took about 15 minutes to an hour, as the respondents were on vacation; hence, long interviews were avoided. In addition, the interview with craftsmen sometimes had to be paused or stopped, especially if the customer approached and asked for the details of the crafts they made. However, this gave the researchers a good opportunity to observe the situation.

Participant observations were conducted by participating in craft-making activities. Non-participant observations were conducted through observing the activities of craftsmen and tourists. Theoretical sampling was employed to determine which data sources could generate the richest and most relevant data and which cases drawn from these sources were most likely to provide empirical indicators needed for category development [76].

A total of 30 documents were imported into ATLAS.ti software for analysisincluded 15 in-depth interview transcripts, seven newspapers, two online articles, two videos and four books, as shown in Table 1. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. After the transcribed, all documents were read and analyzed one by one to attain an in-depth understanding.

The grounded theory method was employed in this study to create a theoretical model and assign conceptual labels to data explain data in the tourism fields [77]. To further safeguard the trustworthiness of this research, diverse forms of triangulation were employed [78–81]. First, data collected from primary and secondary data conforms to data triangulation; second, investigator triangulation allows data to be analyzed by different researchers; third, the perspective of environmental psychology, sociology and tourism meets the needs of theoretical triangulation.

4. Findings & discussion

Firstly, more than two hundred concepts emerged in the process of open coding; sixty-one concepts were reserved after being combined and refined due to the relevance of this study. Secondly, these sixty-one concepts were grouped under twenty-one sub-dimensions in axial coding. All concepts were simplified into a small set of categories by axial coding; each small category consisted of

Table 2
The elements of place-based craft souvenir.

Concepts	Sub-dimensions	Dimensions
Size & weight	Exterior	Sensuous appreciation
Color		
Image		
Shape		
Mode	Layout and design	
Painting		
Word character		
Ideology	Innovation	Craftsmanship
Expression		
Instrument		
Variety		
Time	Process	
Procedure		
Noumenon	Technique	
Decoration		
Culture	Local attributes	Place linkage
History		
Attractions		
Ethnic		
Celebrity		
Indigenous	Material	
Local sentiment		
Exclusive in local	Originality	
Franchise		
Imitator		

related concepts which reflect one particular property. Lastly, selective coding was used to excavate the core category to integrate a theoretical framework. In other words, the sub-dimensions generated in axial coding were concentrated to form new dimensions by selective coding.

4.1. Theme 1. Place-based craft souvenir

Twenty-five concepts emerged in the description of place-based craft souvenir and have been categorized under eight sub-dimensions: exterior, layout and design, innovation, process, technique, local attributes, material, and originality in axial coding. These sub-dimensions were later categorized under three dimensions (sensuous appreciation, craftsmanship, and place linkage) using selective coding, as shown in Table 2.

4.1.1. Sensuous appreciation

The first dimension – 'sensuous appreciation'- refers to 'the appreciation arose from souvenirs', consisting of 'exterior, layout & design'.

'Exterior' of souvenirs includes the 'size & weight, color, image, and shape', which can be observed from the exterior. For instance, small and light souvenirs are easier to carry and be considered more lovely and exquisite. The shape can be used to describe the appearance of a souvenir. Some are round, some are flat, and some are tubular. And the different shapes may be driven by the meaning behind them. The form of chopsticks in China is different from that in Korea. In China, the upper part of the chopsticks is a square column, and the lower part of the chopsticks is a round column. One end is square, and the other end is round. The square end represents the earth, and the circle end represents the heaven, symbolizing the philosophy of 'heaven is round and earth is square' in ancient China. At the same time, the round end is used for food, which also symbolizes the idea of food as the priority of the people. As for Korea, the shape of chopsticks is mainly determined by eating habits.

"And now actually a lot of stainless steel chopsticks are that kind of round, but in Korea, they are flat." (I10).

'Layout and design' refers to the different ways of designing souvenirs, which are mainly reflected in products mode, the integration of painting and word character in their design. For instance, the appearance of souvenirs can be enriched by painting.

"The kite of Yangjiabu is particularly famous. […] the painting is magnificent." (I3).

And regarding the appreciation of paintings, tourists may acquire some knowledge from the souvenirs, such as the various patterns of Buddhist murals in Dunhuang.

"For example, I have been to Dunhuang, and then I might buy some uh…because Dunhuang has many Buddhist murals. So I bought some bookmarks with flying apsaras." (I15).

4.1.2. Craftsmanship

'Craftsmanship' is the second dimension, which refers to the 'innovation, process and technique' in producing place-based craft souvenirs.

'Innovation' is reflected in the ideology, expression, instrument and variety of souvenirs, which attract the attention of tourists or craftsmen. 'Ideology' refers to the ideas or beliefs attributed to people. In China, the Five Elements which consists of gold, wood, water, fire, and earth, is an ancient ideology to know the world. It explains the generation of the universe and the laws of connection and change among all things and is widely used in philosophy, traditional Chinese medicine, divination, fortune telling, calendar, etc. It is also applied to souvenirs. For instance, 'Pei', the souvenirs designed for the Yellow Emperor ancestral worship ceremony held in the hometown of the Yellow Emperor. Henan province.

"There are four gods in China: Green Dragon, White Tiger, Rosefinch and Basalt. The north is Basalt, and the soil is black; In the south is Rosefinch, with red soil; The west is White tiger, and the soil is white; The East is a Green Dragon, and the soil is blue. With the Central Plains, the Central Plains soil is yellow. In this way, there is a land of five colors, corresponding to the five element culture. To this end, we took five soil colors, mixed it with water from the Yellow River and the Yangtze River, burned it into a pie shape pottery with dragon patterns, and then tied it with traditional Chinese knots." (B2).

'Process' includes the time and procedures spent making the craft. The procedures of traditional craft refer to each making step, which is exceedingly complex, as each procedure is interlinked and indispensable.

"Selecting soil, drying soil, soaking and filtering, precipitating and shrinking, mud making, blank making, blank drying, blank trimming, calendaring, engraving, firing, kiln carving... From a piece of loess on the ground to a work of art in the case room, the production of black pottery needs more than 20 manual processes." (N4).

'Technique' refers to the different skills used in noumenon and decoration. The technique applied in the noumenon is mainly to construct the structure of the product. In contrast to decoration, noumenon-related techniques directly constitute the product itself, rather than decoration based on an already existing product structure, such as the different skills used in Chinese paper-cutting.

"Paper cutting carving includes Yin and Yang carving, and the combination of Yin and Yang. The Yang carving focus on lines, retaining the lines of the shape and subtracting other parts. The lines of Yang carving are connected. The Yin carving focus on blocks, and the lines of the figure are subtracted. The lines of the Yin carving are broken. The Yin and Yang carving is a combination of both." (B3).

4.1.3. Place linkage

'Local attributes, material, and originality' were categorized under the third dimension: 'place linkage'. People pursue souvenirs with place linkage, either having some local attributes, made by materials from a local place or can only be found at their place of

origin.

‘Local attributes’ refer to the ‘culture, history, attractions, ethnic, and celebrity’ that only belongs to the place. Each place has its own tangible and intangible characteristics, which can be associated to the place. For instance, the information about the celebrity is emphasized by tourists, as well as craftsmen.

“The best… the best… the priority… the priority is the local historical figure like Qin Qiong you just said.” (I10).

“The black pottery products I have made have absorbed some historical celebrities from Jinan, such as…uh…Min Zi Qian, Li Pan Long and Li Qing Zhao.” (I11).

“The six works of <Confucius' Six Arts> represent Confucius in different periods. Each has its look and age. Each stage records the good times of Confucius. Each piece of Confucius is exquisitely carved without repetition. Each work can become an independent art.” (N3).

‘Materials’ are the product component, consisting of ‘indigenous and local sentiment material’. For indigenous materials, some tourists explained that some raw materials could not be produced in other regions. In contrast, others emphasized only local materials are the natural materials for making traditional crafts, or local materials are of higher value. Materials with local sentiment are those consistent with the national or local conditions but not necessarily indigenous. For instance, the hair embroidery in Lu must be made with hair. The hair is not necessarily the hair of the Jinan people; it is closely related to Jinan embroidery culture.

“The key characteristic of Lu embroidery is hair embroidery. This is the representative work of Lu embroidery and is unique from other types of embroidery. The human hair combines raw silk. Raw silk is a cylinder, like hair, so the combination of the two is called hair silk embroidery. It is suitable to embroider animals, human eyebrows and whiskers. Uh, hair embroidery is more realistic, vivid, just like this horse.” (I13).

‘Originality’ answers the questions of whether souvenirs are locally sourced, sold locally and whether they are the authentic thing. This dimension explains why tourists prefer to buy souvenirs locally rather than online shopping. ‘Exclusive in local, franchise; imitator’ were categorized under this sub-dimension. ‘Exclusive in local’ has two layers of meaning. The first layer is that this souvenir is made locally, only available locally and can only be purchased locally; the second layer is that people only want to buy locally. The same products may be purchased online, but people refuse to buy online.

“You can't buy it online, only can buy it in the attractions you visited, from the local place, or only sold in this place.” (I5).

Previous studies have discussed the factors that influence the purchase of souvenirs and acknowledged the authenticity of souvenirs should be related to a place and people of a certain place [18,23–25,82,83]. The finding of this study extends the literature on place-based craft souvenir by developing and reclassifying the elements of place-based craft souvenirs. Hu & Yu [83] point out that the criteria for individuals to choose craft souvenirs range from sensuous appreciation, craftsmanship, ease of handling, and cultural linkage. This study extends the literature by illustrating the concepts that reside under these dimensions and how these dimensions interact.

The first dimension – ‘sensuous appreciation’, mainly describes the surface level of the souvenir as a whole, without considering other values such as symbolism. This dimension highlights the essential features that tourists attach to souvenirs' exterior and design from its display, which aligns with the finding of Turner and Reisinger [40] and Soukhathammavong & Park [25].

‘Craftsmanship’ is the second dimension tourists pursue when purchasing [23,25,83,84]. This dimension highlights the ‘innovation, process, and technique’ of craftsmanship. The technique applied and the time involved had been identified as important criteria for tourists to purchase [83,85]. In addition, the procedure is also a key to increasing the value of souvenirs. This study extends the previous studies by figuring out the ‘innovation of craftsmanship’. According to Jigyasu [86], it is important to enhance the products for contemporary needs and maintain the integrity of their traditional knowledge. The ‘ideology, expression, instrument, and variety’ are found can be innovated in this study. Inheriting traditional craft does not mean being immutable and frozen. On the contrary, appropriate innovation to attract people can bring opportunities for people to understand the traditional craft.

‘Place linkage’ is the third dimension, which is not only the source of uniqueness but also the intrinsic reason why souvenirs can represent a place. This aspect discusses the various connections between souvenirs and places, including the ‘local attributes, the materials used, and the issues of originality’. The local attributes are discussed in past studies as the dimension of authenticity and uniqueness [18,23–25]. The material used for souvenirs is also regarded as a connection to the place. In the study of Soukha-thammavong & Park [25], suppliers pay more attention to the output, not the input. However, the input of souvenirs is also valuable in this study; both indigenous and local sentiment materials get the attention of tourists. Originality depicts the place where souvenirs are produced and sold, as well as the tourists' ideas about the channels of purchase and the authenticity of the products. The originality of souvenirs is extended to discuss the influence of online shopping. Tourists show their opposition to online shopping, mainly focusing on two points. First is the issue of trust. Souvenirs bought online may not be recognized or even will be regarded as imitator goods. Second, tourists think buying souvenirs from the internet is meaningless, as buying souvenirs locally helps reflect and remember tourists' in-place experience.

The dimensions discussed are not only the characteristics of souvenirs but also an explanation of why souvenirs represent places and why they are unique and authentic. Previous literature emphasizes the importance of souvenirs as a valuable tool for reinforcing the image of a destination [87,88]. The place-based craft souvenir with the elements aligned with the destination might be practical for designing and rebuilding a destination image, thus, contributing to destination branding and marketing [17]. In addition, these dimensions can potentially trigger the cognitive and affective evaluations of souvenirs.

4.2. Theme 2. Evaluation of souvenir

Twenty concepts have been categorized into eight sub-dimensions (convenience value, product quality, functional value, memorial

value, spiritual value, reputation, social value, and emotional value). Then the eight sub-dimensions have been categorized into two dimensions (cognitive, and affective), as shown in Table 3.

4.2.1. Cognitive

The first dimension – 'cognitive', refers to the rational and economic evaluation of the souvenirs, which consists of 'convenience value, product quality, functional value, memorial value, spiritual value, and reputation'.

The 'convenience value' is the effort tourists make to keep the souvenirs. It indicates the attributes of 'easy to carry, easy to keep' and the money people spent for the souvenirs, which is the 'price' of the souvenir.

Tourists spare no effort to emphasize product quality and mainly judge the quality of products from the perspective of materials and craftsmanship. They often link quality with price to obtain high-quality and low-price products.

The 'functional value' refers to the use of souvenirs. Tourists buy souvenirs as collections and gifts. Some souvenirs may be practical and good for health, and some can be used as indicators of human health or embodiment of culture and history.

The 'memorial value' means that souvenirs can help recall a 'good old time' or 'good old place' that relates to an experience or a place.

The 'spiritual value' refers to the souvenirs that bring good luck or ward off bad luck. It can be seen from the religious and non-religious perspective. Either religious or non-religious spiritual values, they are all rooted in the cultural context. Souvenirs with non-religious faith that bring good luck or ward off bad luck may be based on the homophonic, image or legend. For instance, fish is the symbol of prosperity. In China, the pronunciation of fish (yu) is the same as that of surplus, so fish means more surplus and wealth.

"Some people think, oh, my family is doing a business. Hence, I buy a fish (Lu embroidery). Uh, hanging at home, it means prosperity." (I13).

'Reputation' refers to the public perception of a souvenir, including recognition of its 'status and uniqueness'. It refers to the rational judgment of tourists, for instance, whether the souvenirs can represent the local place and whether it is unique.

4.2.2. Affective

'Affective' evaluation is the feelings or emotions generated from the souvenir, which include 'social value and emotional value'.

'Social value' is mainly embodied in sociability. Giving a souvenir as a gift and introducing it to others is the performance of sociability. Tourists often buy souvenirs for their family or friends to strengthen their relationship with them.

"In 2008, I went to Beijing, and then the 2008 Olympic Games, I bought the three things (the mascots of the Beijing Olympic Games) named 'welcomed you in Beijing'. Uh, it was also a special gift in Beijing at that time, and then I brought it back to my family." (I1).

In addition to enhancing the relationship between individuals and friends or family, some traditional craft souvenirs were also given to other regions and countries as national gifts to enhance the 'inter-regions' and international relationships.

"The black pottery is now becoming China's national gift. […] The black pottery products were sent to Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan." (I11).

'Emotional value' refers to the feelings or affective states generated by souvenirs. It includes the 'aesthetic feeling for souvenirs' and the 'affective states of people'. For instance, tourists consider some souvenirs are beautiful, lovely, fun and exquisite or are interested, impressed, impulsive and excited about the souvenirs.

The theory of perceived value has been widely used in tourism, but existing studies have not yet formed a unified system that integrates the specific dimensions of the perceived value of souvenirs [89]. This research advances the existing perceived value literature by identifying the cognitive and affective dimensions in the context of souvenir evaluation.

Table 3
The elements of evaluation of souvenir.

Concepts	Sub-dimensions	Dimensions
Easy to carry	Convenience value	Cognitive
Easy to keep		
Price		
Material	Product quality	
Craftsmanship		
As collection	Functional value	
As gift		
Practicality		
Good for health		
Indicator		
Embodiment		
Experience carrier	Memorial value	
Place carrier		
Religious faith	Spiritual value	
Non-religious faith		
Status	Reputation	
Uniqueness		
Sociability	Social value	Affective
Aesthetic of souvenirs	Emotional value	
Affective states of people		

The 'cognitive evaluation' of souvenirs include the 'convenience value, product quality, functional value, memorial value, spiritual value, and reputation'. 'Convenience value' mainly describes the simplicity, comfort, usability, ease of use, or speed of performing a task effectively and conveniently [90,91]. But in rural tourism, 'convenience value' is seen as a way to measure the sacrifice of tourists [92]. This study integrates both viewpoints to illustrate the convenience value of souvenirs, which include 'easy to carry, easy to keep, and 'price'. In addition, this study also develops the elements of other cognitive perceived values. For instance, product quality is illustrated by the material and craftsmanship. The 'functional value' of souvenirs can be categorized into six concepts – collection, gift, practicality, good for health, indicator, and embodiment'. The 'memorial value' of souvenirs can be seen from two aspects: firstly, it is the experience carrier to remind of an experience; secondly, it is the place carrier to remind a place. The 'spiritual value' of souvenirs is discussed from the religious and non-religious aspects; both are related to the belief or faith in being blessed. The 'reputation' reflects the recognition of souvenirs, which emphasizes 'status and uniqueness'.

The 'affective evaluation' comprises 'social value and emotional value'. 'Social value' is elaborated from 'sociability', while 'emotional value' is discussed from 'aesthetic of souvenirs' and 'affective states of people'.

Based on the findings, perceived value is divided into 'cognitive and affective', which is consistent with the proposition of Sánchez et al. [93]. In addition, this study devotes to extending the elements of each dimension of perceived value and identifying the relationship between place-based craft souvenirs and perceived value.

4.3. Theme 3. Place meaning

Ten concepts emerged and were categorized under four sub-dimension: 'inherent, instrumental, sociocultural and identity-expressive'. Later, the four sub-dimension were grouped under 'place meaning', the cognitive understanding of a place, as shown in Table 4.

'Attraction, climate, landform' were categorized under the first sub-dimension – 'inherent', which refers to the physical aspects of a place perceived by most people. For instance, the landform of a place might be known by individuals.

"Qingdao is on the seashore, although it is not the only city near the sea, it has some representative images of the seashore, such as the shell string, the little conch, or the handicraft made by the shell, the little turtle, etc." (I15).

The second sub-dimension – 'instrumental', is the functional meaning of place, consisting of the concepts of 'birthplace, industrial structure, contribution to people'. With its unique natural environment, the place breeds biological and abiotic resources and plays its economic role to benefit the people. It indirectly influences people's lives through the exchange of resources, such as the herbs in Yunnan picked from the mountains can be sold to tourists to get economic benefits to improve the lives of local people.

"There are some people… agents, introduce the herbs picked from Goodness Peak to us, and tell us the name of herbs and the effect of taking the herbs, such as cure hypertension and diabetes. A lot of people buy herbs. It is a kind of poverty alleviation, which can improve the local people's life, right?" (I9).

'Sociocultural' dimension refers to understanding place in the cultural and historical context. When the sociocultural meaning of a place is clearly understood, a place can be easily distinguished from other places. Learning about historical events or celebrities is often a way for tourists to learn about the history of a place. For instance, tourists elaborate on the story of the Longjing tea, a China's 'top ten' famous teas produced in the mountains around Longjing Village, West Lake, Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province.

"Longjing is both a spring name and a tea name. The West Lake of Hang Zhou's Longjing tea was praised by Qianlong, one of the Emperors of the Qing Dynasty. And, the eighteen Longjing trees in front of the Hu Gong Temple have conferred the title of imperial tea." (I6).

The last layer of place meaning is 'identity-expressive', which explains how individuals become attracted to and even attached to a place. With the involvement or experience of a place, people may gradually develop and affirm a sense of self. The identity-expressive meaning is illustrated from the perspective of individualistic memory and understanding. Souvenirs are seen as a medium for individuals' experience of a place. Through the experience, the place is not just a space or location; it becomes a part of an individual's memory.

"The most important thing is that the souvenir can remind me of the memory of this place in the future, the good memories, this is the most important." (I5).

Besides memory, people may also develop their individualistic understanding of 'why a place is such a place' during the trip. For

Table 4
The elements of place meaning.

Concepts	Sub-dimensions	Dimensions
Attractions	Inherent	Place meaning
Climate		
Landform		
Birthplace	Instrumental	
Industrial structure		
Contribution to people		
Cultural context	Sociocultural	
Historical context		
Memory	Identity- expressive	
Understanding		

example, tourists may construct relationships with a place from appreciating scenery and raw material. Throughout the journey, tourists may feel inseparability from the place and develop a deep mental connection with the place.

"I have been to the hometown of Van Gogh, […] when you look at the sky, you can understand the scenery from Van Gogh's eyes, and knowing why the sky is so exaggerated in Van Gogh's oil paintings […]; Or you can go to the black Tiger spring to drink the tea boiled with spring water. That should be the best souvenir of Jinan. Although the tea is not easy to take away, when you taste the tea, you know why Jinan is called a spring city." (I8).

'Place meaning' reflects tourists' interpretation of place, including the 'inherent meaning, instrumental meaning, sociocultural meaning, and identity-expressive meaning' [94]. Nevertheless, what resides under these layers is yet to be found. In addition, Swanson & Timothy [2] point out that there are lacunas about the conveyance of place meaning through souvenir production and consumption. This study not only excavates each layer of place meaning by identifying different concepts but also addresses the gap in the relationship between souvenirs and place meaning. The conveyance of place meaning through souvenirs is elaborated through the evaluations of souvenirs. When tourists get their cognitive or affective evaluations of the souvenirs, they may develop an understanding of the place. In other words, tourists develop place meaning after they evaluate or perceive the souvenirs. The relationship between place meaning and souvenirs also answers how or why souvenirs represent a place.

4.4. Theme 4. Satisfaction

Five concepts were categorized under two sub-dimensions: 'negative and positive'. Then, the two sub-dimension were grouped under the dimension of 'satisfaction'. 'Satisfaction' is the overall evaluation of the souvenirs. It may be driven by the value of souvenirs and their role in helping tourists understand the place meaning. Satisfaction is a one-dimensional construct that ranges from dissatisfaction to satisfaction, as shown in Table 5.

'Irrelevant; cheated' were categorized under the first sub-dimension: 'negative'. The opposing view of souvenirs mainly stems from the fact that souvenirs do not represent the place. Tourists may not satisfy with souvenirs that do not represent the place even if other aspects are excellent, and they might feel cheated due to the place-irrelevancy.

"I feel a little bit of being cheated. I don't think that thing represents the Putuo Mount of Zhejiang." (I6).

'Enjoy, feel good, relevant and appropriate' emerged and were categorized under the second sub-dimension: 'positive', which expresses the tourists' positive satisfaction with the souvenirs. Tourists may show enjoyment in souvenirs. Witf souvenirs, tourists may become more and more satisfied with them. The function or the pleasant appearance of souvenirs also can lead to tourists' satisfaction. Tourists state that souvenirs the tour guide recommends make them feel satisfied, especially when the souvenirs are relevant and appropriate.

"When you go for traveling, especially if you join a group tour, uh, most of them will recommend something at a certain place, and if I think it is relevant and appropriate, I will buy. […] The tour guide can be seen as a reliable source,; they show us the process of making silk quilt, the way they showed and introduced is meaningful, or practical, so this is what I think as appropriate." (I10).

After evaluating the souvenirs, the tourists feel satisfied or dissatisfied. This is consistent with the previous studies that link product value with satisfaction, as the perceived value of a product might meet the customer's needs [95,96]. Many studies tend to explain the causal relationship between perceived value and satisfaction [97,98]. This study elaborates further on how satisfaction comes from souvenirs by integrating place meaning. Tourists satisfy with the souvenirs that elicit place meaning. In contrast, they dissatisfied with the souvenirs that do not trigger the understanding of a place.

4.5. Relationship

Knowing the relationship between place-based craft souvenirs, evaluation of souvenir, place meaning, and satisfaction is beneficial for sustaining the cultural heritage of a place. The relationship between these themes is shown in Fig. 1.

4.5.1. Place-based craft souvenir and evaluation of souvenir

Tourists evaluated the souvenirs from both 'cognitive and affective' perspectives. The 'sensuous appreciation, craftsmanship and place linkage' can trigger the 'cognitive and affective' evaluations of tourists, as shown in Table 6.

'Sensuous appreciation' might affect the 'convenience value' of the 'cognitive' aspect and 'emotional value' from the 'affective' aspect. For instance, the small and exquisite puppet could lead to the cognitive understanding of convenience and make people feel fun. The cognitive and affective evaluations can also be stimulated by 'craftsmanship'. 'Technique' in crafting the snuff bottle is not only the guarantee of product quality but also the crystallization of ancient wisdom, and the souvenir that is based on traditional craft

Table 5
The elements of satisfaction.

Concepts	Sub-dimensions	Dimensions
Irrelevant	Negative	Satisfaction
Cheated		
Enjoy	Positive	
Feel good		
Relevant and appropriate		

Theme 1: Place-based craft souvenir   Theme 2: Evaluation of souvenir   Theme 3: Place meaning   Theme 4: Satisfaction
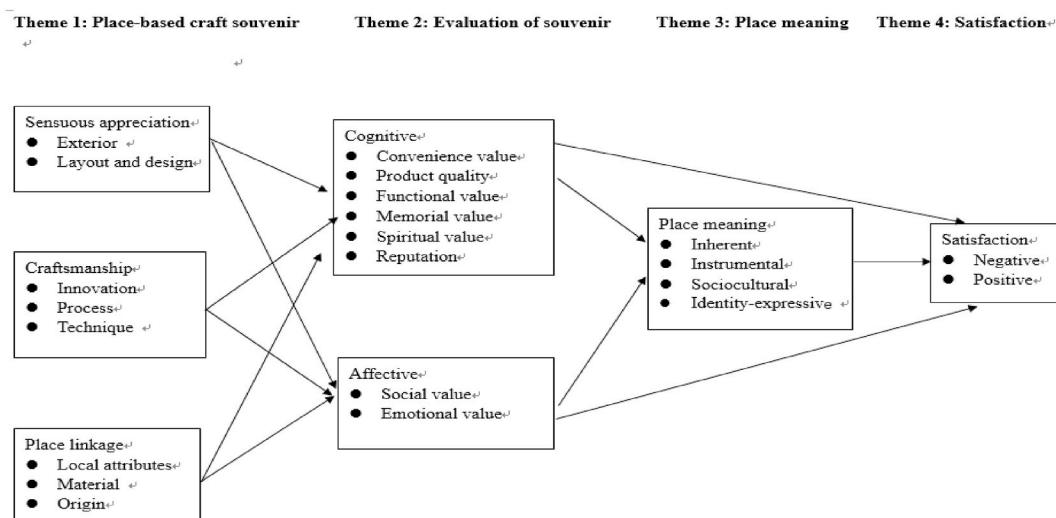

Fig.1. The relationship between place-based craft souvenir, evaluation, place meaning and satisfaction.

Table 6
The relationship between place-based craft souvenirs and evaluation of souvenirs.

Place-based craft souvenir	Evaluation	Extractions
● Sensuous appreciation (exterior)	● Cognitive (convenience value)/ Affective (emotional value)	● The shadows puppet that can be put in, or be pasted there as a specimen, it's exquisite and pretty neat. And I think it is convenient, easy to carry and not expensive, it was fun, so I bought it. (I2)
● Craftsmanship (technique)	● Cognitive (product quality, functional value)	● Blue and white, multicolored, carved porcelain, nesting, ingenious, internal painting and other techniques […], all show different levels of expression on the small snuff bottle. Every part of the snuff bottle embodies the wisdom, ingenuity, the beauty of life of the ancient time. (N7)
● Craftsmanship (technique)	● Affective (social value)	● Black pottery is becoming China's national gift. […] They were sent to Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan. (I11)
● Place linkage (local attributes)	● Cognitive (spiritual value)	● For example, I bought a prayer wheel in Tibet, and I think it represents the Tibetan culture. When they turn the prayer wheels, they have to recite the scripture to accumulate merit. For us, we just pray but certainly do not recite their scripture. But Tibetan Buddhists believe in these things. It is their belief. (I8)
● Place linkage (originality)	● Affective (emotional value)	● So if they are the same or similar, you can buy them here or some other places, but you probably don't want to buy them. You don't have that impulse to purchase. (I2)

is regarded as a national gift to enhance the relationships with regions and countries. 'Place linkage' could evoke tourists' cognition and evaluation of souvenirs. The place linkage of souvenirs might serve as a driver of spiritual value. Some religious cultures attach spiritual value to souvenirs, which are often believed to be blessed, such as the Buddhist prayer in Tibet. Further, the place linkage can be served as a stimulus of emotional value. The souvenirs that originated from the local place might trigger and evoke tourists' emotions, such as impulse and excitement.

4.5.2. Evaluation of souvenir and place meaning

After evaluating the 'place-based craft souvenir', tourists may develop insight into the 'place meaning' from 'inherent, instrumental, sociocultural, and identity-expressive' perspectives. Both 'cognitive and affective' evaluations might affect different aspects of 'place meaning', as shown in Table 7.

From a cognitive aspect, the product quality allows tourists to recognize the 'inherent meaning' of a place. The quality of the product is affected by the material, and the growth of the material is affected by the temperature of a place. Thus, when judging the quality of products, tourists may be informed about the local climate. The functional value could also affect the 'inherent, instrumental, sociocultural and identity-expressive' meaning of a place. For example, if a tourist buys a Chinese herbal product that grows in the mountains, she may be aware of the mountainous terrain of this place; or the folding fan with some specific characters can evoke the curiosity of tourists in understanding the culture and history of a place. The souvenirs embodied with the local culture will help strengthen the memory of the place; the tea made of spring water could help tourists feel, sense and understand the reason Jinan is

Table 7
The relationship between evaluation of souvenir and place meaning.

Evaluation	Place meaning	Extractions
● Cognitive (product quality)	● Place meaning (inherent, instrumental)	● It can't be the materials that are not planted locally. The mulberry silk produced in different places is different; that is to say, each place has its way of supporting its inhabitants. The mulberry tree, mulberry leaf, or silkworm in Suzhou differ from other places, right? The trees, the temperature difference, there are a lot of differences to say, so the local Suzhou embroidery is impressive; it is much better than others. (I9)
● Cognitive (functional value)	● Place meaning (inherent, instrumental)	● For example, when I went to Yunnan, the sachet they gave me was made by Chinese herbs, and I felt so good. It is very delicate and is beneficial to the body aspect. I think it's very good. Another is that Yunnan itself is a mountainous area. More than 97% of it is mountainous, so there are a lot of Chinese herbs in Yunnan. (I9)
● Cognitive (functional value)	● Place meaning (sociocultural)	● It is a drink that everyone in Tibet can't live without it. It is refined from sheep's milk, it is fresh, and it's not the same as ordinary milk tea. Another special one is the highland barley wine, all of them drink it, men and women, old and young. (I8)
● Cognitive (functional value)	● Place meaning (identity-expressive)	● Or you can go to the black Tiger spring to drink the tea boiled with spring water. That should be the best souvenir of Jinan. Although the tea is not easy to take away, but when you taste the tea, you may feel why Jinan is called spring city. (I8)
● Cognitive (memorial value)	● Place meaning (identity-expressive)	● Why do we want to buy this product? It's because the souvenir we bought will remind us something about the place. It carries the memory we walked through the place. (I2)
● Cognitive (spiritual value)	● Place meaning (sociocultural)	● In Chinese culture, having a son to carry on the family line is important. So we buy this quilt face. Because in Suzhou, uh… the quilt covers in Suzhou and Hangzhou are particularly valuable this symbolic thing. (I9)
● Cognitive (reputation)	● Place meaning (instrumental)	● People in Zhejiang plant mulberry trees and breed silkworms. The silk of Zhejiang is particularly famous. Well, Zhejiang is a part of Jiangnan (the south of the Yangtze River). Jiangnan is famous for its silk. (I9)
●Cognitive (reputation)	●Place meaning (sociocultural)	●Uh … for example, some local things, like, traditional handicrafts, are basically… uh…when you see these things, you can directly think about this place. This thing is, uh, representing the local. (I10)
●Affective (emotional value)	●Place meaning (instrumental)	●If you can buy it in other places, you probably don't want to buy it; you don't have that impulse to purchase. Unless you know, you can only buy it here. If I don't buy it today, I can't buy it anymore. (I2)

called a springs city. The memorial value of a souvenir can also affect the identity-expressive meaning of a place. By carrying the experience and local attributes of a place, the memory of a place is further strengthened. The spiritual value of souvenirs can potentially demonstrate a place's sociocultural meaning. Tourists may acknowledge the culture of a place based on the souvenirs' spiritual value. The reputation of souvenirs encourages tourists to realize the instrumental meaning of the place as well. The place serves as a birthplace of some well-known souvenirs, which may manifest the place's instrumental structure. For example, the Jiangnan area is famous for silk products, and has become China's most important silk production base since the Ming Dynasty. Tourists may equate souvenirs with the place, believing that souvenirs represent places under this sociocultural context, and they can identify the origin of the souvenir at a glance. In general, the traditional handicraft is considered as the reflection of the sociocultural meaning of a place, and it can help distinguish a place from another.

The affective perceived value also triggers the place meaning. Tourists might have the impulse to purchase souvenirs, believing they will never be able to buy them if they miss the place. Then, the instrumental meaning of place emerges.

Table 8
The relationship between evaluation of souvenir and satisfaction.

Evaluation	Satisfaction	Extraction
●Cognitive (product quality)	●Negative	●It can't represent Suzhou embroidery. Suzhou embroidery is still based on handwork, the one used machine, after all, a machine is a machine; it has no… it has no connotation, right? It lacksuh… spirituality; you can say there is no spirituality in the machine-made products because hand, is a part of the human body. It is spiritual. Uh…the handmade embroidery, it has its aura. (I9)
●Cognitive (convenience value, functional value) ●Affective (emotional value)	●Positive	●I have been to Yunnan before. The sachet they gave me was made of Chinese herbs, and I felt so good. It is very delicate and good for the body. (I9)
●Cognitive (functional value)	●Positive	●And then, actually, I'm used to it (flat chopsticks) now, and I enjoy it. (I10)

4.5.3. Evaluation of souvenir and satisfaction

Tourists' cognitive and affective evaluations might affect their satisfaction. The relationship between evaluation of souvenirs and satisfaction is shown in Table 8.

For instance, poor-quality souvenirs will cause negative feelings in tourists, which leads to dissatisfaction. In contrast, satisfaction may emerge due to the convenience value, functional value, or emotional appreciation.

4.5.4. Place meaning and satisfaction

The souvenirs that elicit the meaning of place might stimulate the satisfaction of tourists, as shown in Table 9.

5. Conclusion

This study aims to understand how souvenir-person-place bonding may contribute to the sustainability of cultural heritage. Firstly, the dimensions of place-based craft souvenirs were identified from the perspective of tourists and craftsmen. Secondly, perceived value is employed in the context of souvenirs' evaluation to explore the relationship between souvenirs and place meaning. Meanwhile, tourists' satisfaction generates throughout the discussion between souvenir and place meaning.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the literature of souvenirs by constructing a framework of place-based craft souvenirs that help to sustain the cultural heritage of a place. Previous studies acknowledged that souvenirs should represent a place or the environment of place [2,23–25,39–41,82,99]. However, the literature on how people perceive souvenirs as representative of the place remains understudied. This study extends the literature by illustrating how souvenirs can represent a place in this souvenir-person-place bonding. Most souvenir-person bonding is related to an experience reminder, an expression of a person's individuality and sense of self [2,16,23,39,41,100]. This study illustrates the souvenir-person relationship by filling the gap in conveying place meaning through souvenirs.

From a practical perspective, this study proposes some suggestions for craftmen to activate the traditional craft by making place-based craft souvenirs. This is critical as many craftsmen are self-employed and might need more support to stay and sustain their businesses [101,102]. Commercializing crafts as souvenirs might provide a way for the craftsman to sustain themselves and introduce and disseminate the traditional craft to the public. Moreover, generating place meaning and satisfaction through souvenirs also offers an idea for destination branding and marketing. First, each destination has images it hopes to disseminate to the outside world [2]. Craft souvenirs that absorb the characteristics of the place can help tourists to realize the place meaning by perceiving the value of the souvenirs to establish the impression of the place. For instance, a souvenir with elements consistent with destination identity can convey the 'image' of a place. For people who have never been to the place, receiving a souvenir like this can help them understand the place and even have the intention to visit the place. Second, based on the impact of tourist satisfaction on tourists' behavior, it is feasible to increase tourists' satisfaction by evaluating souvenirs and place meaning. This helps to promote tourists' recommendations, and the repeat visitations. In addition, the strong connection between place-based craft souvenirs and place might be able to build destination brands; the way people perceive place meaning also recommends the destination's stakeholders to build the destination brands collaboratively.

Finally, there are some limitations in this study. First, the age of the interviewees is mainly 25–40 years old, lacking the attitude of the interviewees in other age groups. Second, due to the Corona pandemic, the interviewees in this study are only from China, lack of international tourists. International tourists with different cultural backgrounds may perceive a place-based craft souvenir differently. Third, this study does not discuss the adverse effects of the evolution of craftsinto souvenirs. Further study is recommended to address these lacunas.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

Zi Yan Duan: Performed the experiments; analyzed and interpreted the data; wrote the paper.
Siow-Kian Tan: Conceived and designed the experiments; analyzed and interpreted the data.
Shay-Wei Choon: Analyzed and interpreted the data.
Meng Yao Zhang: Performed the experiments.

Data availability statement

Data will be made available on request.

Table 9
The relationship between place meaning and satisfaction.

Place meaning	Satisfaction	Extraction
● Place meaning (sociocultural)	●Negative	●I feel a little bit being cheated. I don't think that thing represents the Putuo Mount of Zhejiang. (I6)
●Place meaning (sociocultural)	●Positive	●What I like the most is the clay sculpture of the Jinan rabbit King. This clay sculpture has an adorable image and a unique shape, and culture, and it is the reflection of Jinan's culture (I3)
●Place meaning (sociocultural)	●Positive	●Some new varieties are very expressive, showing the local lifestyle and spirit. Uh…I think that's very good. (I3)

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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