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Article

# Research on International Layout and Regional Brand IP Construction of China's Ceramic Industry under the RCEP Framework

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**Abstract:** The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) creates unprecedented opportunities for China's ceramic industry to expand its global presence and strengthen regional brand influence within an integrated Asia-Pacific market. However, intensified market competition, heterogeneous consumer preferences, cultural differences, and persistent challenges in intellectual property protection continue to constrain strategic internationalisation. This paper examines how the RCEP framework can support China's ceramic industry in designing an effective international layout and constructing distinctive regional brand intellectual property (IP). By integrating trade policy analysis, market positioning strategies, and brand IP management, the study develops a comprehensive analytical framework to guide enterprises and industrial clusters in leveraging tariff reductions, rules of origin, and trade facilitation measures. Case studies of representative ceramic clusters, including Jingdezhen and Foshan, are used to illustrate how institutional advantages, cultural branding, design innovation, and IP protection mechanisms jointly contribute to competitive positioning and value upgrading. The research further discusses the coordination between industrial policy, regional cooperation, and enterprise-level branding strategies under RCEP. The findings highlight the synergy between international trade liberalisation and cultural brand building in enhancing the global competitiveness, value chain status, and sustainable development capacity of China's ceramic industry, and provide policy and managerial implications for other traditional manufacturing sectors seeking regional brand IP construction.

**Keywords:** rcep; ceramic industry; international trade; brand management; intellectual property; regional development

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Research Background and Significance

China's ceramic industry, with a history spanning thousands of years, represents a significant cultural heritage and a vital economic sector with considerable export potential. Within the framework of regional economic agreements, China is presented with unique opportunities to enhance trade within the Asia-Pacific region. These opportunities arise from reduced tariffs, improved customs procedures, and strengthened regional economic collaboration. However, the process of internationalising ceramic enterprises extends beyond merely entering new markets; it also involves fostering sustainable brand influence on a global scale. A critical strategy in this context is the development of regional brand intellectual property, which seamlessly integrates elements such as cultural heritage, innovative design, and robust trademark protection [1]. This research delves into how regional economic frameworks can serve as a guiding mechanism for China's ceramic

industry, enabling it to achieve global expansion while simultaneously cultivating distinctive regional brands that reflect its rich cultural and artistic legacy [2].

### *1.2. Research Status at Home and Abroad*

Internationally, research on industrial clusters, brand intellectual property, and cultural export strategies highlights the significance of aligning economic policies with cultural identity to achieve sustainable development [1]. Several countries have demonstrated success in leveraging cultural branding to enhance the global competitiveness of traditional crafts, showcasing the potential of integrating cultural heritage into economic frameworks. Domestically, studies on China's ceramic industry have predominantly focused on aspects such as cluster development, technological advancements, and export performance. However, there remains a notable lack of comprehensive analysis addressing the creation and development of brand intellectual property within the context of evolving trade agreements, such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. This underscores the need for a multidisciplinary approach that combines insights from trade policy, cultural branding methodologies, and intellectual property strategies to foster innovation and global competitiveness.

### *1.3. Research Content and Methods*

This study establishes a comprehensive framework aimed at enhancing the international positioning and brand intellectual property (IP) development of China's ceramic industry within the context of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). The framework integrates a multifaceted approach, combining trade policy analysis, strategic brand modelling, and in-depth case study evaluations. To ensure the framework's robustness and practical relevance, mixed research methods are employed. These include a detailed examination of policy documents, on-site investigations of ceramic production clusters, structured interviews with industry experts, and a focused analysis of brand IP strategies. Additionally, the study conducts a comparative evaluation of successful cultural branding cases to extract key insights, identify best practices, and address potential challenges faced by the industry [2].

## **2. Theoretical Foundations and Framework for International Layout and Brand IP**

### *2.1. Characteristics of China's Ceramic Industry*

China's ceramic industry is distinguished by its profound cultural heritage, dense cluster-based production, and strong orientation towards global markets [3]. Ceramics in China are not merely functional artefacts; they embody centuries of cultural accumulation and artistic expression, representing an important element of the nation's intangible cultural heritage. Their symbolic value extends beyond aesthetics, reflecting philosophical ideas, historical memory, and regional identity. Geographically, China's ceramic production is characterised by highly specialised clusters such as Jingdezhen in Jiangxi Province, Foshan in Guangdong Province, and Dehua in Fujian Province. These clusters have evolved into comprehensive ecosystems where skilled craftsmanship, specialised suppliers, design innovation, and cultural tourism converge, forming a robust industrial foundation. This cluster-based structure not only enhances production efficiency but also strengthens regional brands and cultural influence. On the global stage, Chinese ceramics enjoy significant competitiveness, serving as major export commodities with stable demand in high-value markets such as Europe, North America, and parts of Asia. This competitiveness is driven by the combination of cultural depth, high-quality craftsmanship, and diverse product ranges. However, the industry faces pressing challenges. Rising production costs, driven by labour and raw material price increases, have squeezed profit margins, while product homogenisation has weakened differentiation in both domestic and international markets. Additionally, the absence of strong, globally recognised brand intellectual property protection undermines long-term competitiveness. In this context, strategic brand building and a coherent international

layout are essential for fostering sustainable development and enhancing the global standing of China's ceramic industry. To address these challenges, the industry must prioritise innovation, invest in advanced technologies, and develop unique product designs that resonate with diverse consumer preferences [4]. Strengthening intellectual property frameworks and promoting cultural narratives can further elevate the global appeal of Chinese ceramics.

### *2.2. RCEP and International Industrial Layout*

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) represents a significant trade agreement aimed at fostering deeper economic integration across the Asia-Pacific region by reducing barriers to trade in goods, services, and investment. For China's ceramic industry, this agreement offers a critical opportunity to optimise export channels, lower tariffs, and enhance competitiveness within member markets. By reducing trade costs and harmonising regulatory standards, RCEP facilitates more efficient access to new markets, particularly in Southeast Asia, Oceania, and East Asia [5, 6]. This creates a conducive environment for diversifying export destinations and strengthening the resilience of international trade within the industry. The concept of international industrial layout becomes increasingly important in this context. It involves strategically positioning production facilities, marketing channels, and distribution networks in locations that maximise comparative advantages [7]. These advantages may include proximity to abundant raw materials, access to advanced technologies, cost efficiencies, and leveraging cultural capital to align with local market preferences. For Chinese ceramic enterprises, this could entail establishing manufacturing and design hubs in RCEP member states, integrating into regional supply chains, and crafting marketing strategies tailored to the cultural and economic characteristics of target markets. By adopting such strategic measures, the industry can not only enhance its regional presence but also build a diversified and robust international footprint, ensuring long-term sustainability and competitiveness in the global market.

### *2.3. Framework for Brand IP Construction*

A comprehensive framework for regional brand intellectual property (IP) construction must incorporate multiple interconnected dimensions to ensure long-term competitiveness. First, cultural identity should be deeply integrated into brand narratives, leveraging the rich heritage of local ceramic craftsmanship and traditions. This entails crafting compelling stories that highlight the cultural symbolism, historical evolution, and artistic distinctiveness of ceramic production, thereby establishing a unique position in the global market. Second, continuous innovation in design is essential to harmonize traditional craftsmanship with modern aesthetics, enhancing both the cultural resonance and commercial appeal of ceramic products. Third, intellectual property protection must be rigorously implemented, including trademark registration, geographical indication certification, copyright enforcement, and legal safeguards at both domestic and international levels. Robust IP protection not only secures commercial rights but also fortifies the brand's credibility and reputation. Finally, market communication strategies should embrace contemporary approaches such as digital marketing, immersive storytelling rooted in cultural themes, and the utilization of cross-border e-commerce platforms. These methods can significantly boost brand visibility, foster emotional connections with consumers, and ensure sustainable brand recognition across diverse markets. Collectively, these dimensions create a holistic pathway for developing strong regional brand IP, enabling China's ceramic industry to transform its cultural heritage into a distinctive competitive edge in the global marketplace.

### 3. Core Strategies and Implementation

#### 3.1. Trade Policy Utilisation under RCEP

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) introduces transformative changes to the trade landscape for China's ceramic industry by reducing tariffs, harmonising standards, and simplifying customs clearance procedures. These adjustments create significant cost advantages, enhancing the global competitiveness of Chinese ceramic exports. Lower tariffs reduce price barriers, facilitating easier entry into foreign markets, while streamlined customs processes accelerate delivery times and improve supply chain efficiency. These factors collectively increase the appeal of Chinese ceramics in highly competitive international markets. To fully capitalise on these benefits, enterprises must adopt strategic approaches to market entry and expansion. For instance, leveraging preferential trade rules can enable access to emerging markets within the RCEP region, particularly in Southeast Asia, Oceania, and East Asia. These regions offer favourable conditions for growth due to cultural similarities and rising consumer demand. Effective utilisation of trade policies requires comprehensive analysis to inform precise strategies, such as establishing regional distribution centres. These centres can optimise logistics, reduce operational costs, and enhance responsiveness to local market needs. Additionally, participation in regional trade fairs, exhibitions, and cultural exchange events is essential. Such platforms not only increase product visibility but also foster intercultural communication, which strengthens brand influence and consumer trust. By proactively engaging with RCEP trade policies and aligning operational strategies with regional dynamics, ceramic enterprises can secure a competitive advantage and expand their presence in strategically important markets. This approach ensures long-term growth and resilience in an increasingly interconnected global economy.

#### 3.2. Regional Brand IP Development

The development of brand intellectual property (IP) in China's ceramic industry must prioritize cultural authenticity and be supported by robust legal frameworks. Cultural authenticity forms the cornerstone of brand identity, ensuring that products genuinely reflect heritage and craftsmanship rather than superficial replication. A notable example is the geographical indication (GI) protection of Jingdezhen porcelain, which not only preserves the distinctiveness of the product but also enhances its market reputation and brand value. Legal protections such as these play a crucial role in preventing unauthorized imitation, thereby enabling consumers to confidently associate high-quality ceramics with their authentic origins. In addition to legal measures, the creation of compelling brand narratives is essential for fostering enduring consumer engagement. These narratives should intricately combine the historical significance of ceramic craftsmanship with modern design innovations, creating a bridge between tradition and contemporary aesthetics. By emphasizing the dedication of artisans, the cultural symbolism inherent in ceramic designs, and the innovative approaches that integrate heritage with modernity, such narratives can evoke a strong emotional connection with consumers. This transformation of products into cultural symbols allows enterprises to build stronger brand loyalty, enhance perceived value, and achieve differentiation in the competitive global market. A well-executed brand strategy thus becomes a vital tool for elevating the status and appeal of China's ceramic industry on the international stage [8, 9].

#### 3.3. Digital Platforms and Cross-Border Marketing

Digital platforms and e-commerce ecosystems have emerged as essential tools for the global promotion of ceramic brands, particularly within the framework of regional economic partnerships. The advancement of digitalisation enables businesses to transcend traditional limitations related to geography and operational scale, allowing for precise targeting of diverse consumer demographics. The application of AI-driven market analysis enhances the ability of brands to interpret consumption patterns, forecast

emerging trends, and customise product offerings to align with specific regional preferences. Digital branding strategies, such as immersive storytelling, interactive content, and visually engaging presentations, significantly boost brand visibility and foster emotional connections with consumers. Social media marketing plays a pivotal role in strengthening consumer engagement by facilitating direct communication, encouraging user-generated content, and fostering community development. Cross-border e-commerce platforms, including major players such as Alibaba, Shopee, and Lazada, provide critical infrastructure for trade facilitation, logistics optimisation, and the expansion of brand presence across international markets. These platforms also enable data-driven marketing approaches, allowing ceramic enterprises to refine their strategies based on real-time analytics and consumer insights. By strategically leveraging digital tools and cross-border marketing initiatives, Chinese ceramic brands can effectively transform their rich cultural heritage into a globally recognised presence, seamlessly integrating tradition with innovation to capture and sustain international market opportunities.

#### **4. Case Study: Jingdezhen Ceramic Cluster under RCEP**

##### *4.1. International Layout Strategies*

Jingdezhen, widely recognized as the "Porcelain Capital" of the world, has effectively capitalized on the trade liberalization opportunities presented by the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) to enhance its global footprint. By utilizing preferential trade agreements, the city has significantly expanded its ceramic exports, with a particular focus on high-growth markets in Southeast Asia and Australia. A pivotal aspect of this international expansion strategy involves the development of overseas distribution networks. These networks are designed to minimize logistics costs and improve delivery efficiency, ensuring that Jingdezhen's ceramic products reach international consumers in a timely and reliable manner. Such networks are often established through strategic collaborations with local logistics providers, warehousing facilities, and retail partners, which collectively streamline supply chains and bolster market responsiveness. Beyond logistical improvements, Jingdezhen has actively pursued partnerships with regional design studios and cultural organizations. This collaborative approach has enabled the integration of traditional ceramic craftsmanship with diverse regional aesthetic preferences, resulting in products that resonate more deeply with international consumers. By blending its rich ceramic heritage with localized designs, Jingdezhen has successfully enhanced the appeal of its products in foreign markets. These comprehensive international strategies not only bolster the city's commercial competitiveness but also amplify its cultural influence across the RCEP region and on a global scale, positioning Jingdezhen as a leader in the global ceramic industry.

##### *4.2. Brand IP Construction Practices*

Jingdezhen's strategy for constructing brand intellectual property (IP) exemplifies the seamless integration of cultural heritage, legal safeguards, and innovative design principles [10–12]. A cornerstone of this strategy is the registration of geographical indications (GIs) for its porcelain products, which serves to protect the authenticity of these goods in the global marketplace while simultaneously fostering consumer trust by guaranteeing cultural and quality standards. In addition to legal measures, Jingdezhen has actively pursued collaborative design initiatives involving contemporary artists, designers, and cultural innovators. These partnerships result in product lines that harmoniously blend traditional craftsmanship with modern design elements, offering consumers a unique combination of cultural richness and contemporary appeal. This approach not only broadens the scope of product offerings but also enhances the distinctiveness of Jingdezhen brands, enabling them to stand out in competitive international markets. Furthermore, these practices contribute to the development of a compelling brand narrative rooted in authenticity, skilled craftsmanship, and forward-

thinking innovation. By cultivating such a narrative, Jingdezhen has successfully established a resilient and recognizable brand IP that commands respect and loyalty on a global scale, ensuring its continued relevance and competitiveness in the evolving marketplace.

#### *4.3. Cultural Communication and Digital Engagement*

Cultural communication and digital engagement play a pivotal role in Jingdezhen's strategy to maintain its competitive edge within the framework of regional economic partnerships. By leveraging the transformative potential of digital platforms, Jingdezhen has adopted a comprehensive approach to promoting its ceramics through innovative storytelling and interactive experiences. Dedicated brand websites, online exhibitions, and dynamic social media campaigns enable the city to share the rich history and artistic significance of its porcelain with a global audience in captivating ways. Augmented reality exhibitions further enhance this digital strategy by offering immersive experiences that combine visual appeal, interactivity, and cultural education. These virtual spaces allow consumers to explore the intricate heritage of ceramic craftsmanship in a highly engaging manner. Additionally, online cultural initiatives such as virtual workshops, live-streamed artisan demonstrations, and cross-border e-commerce events foster deeper consumer engagement and build lasting brand loyalty. These efforts not only enhance the visibility and recognition of Jingdezhen's ceramics but also serve as powerful tools for cultural dissemination, projecting the city's artistic heritage and values to international markets [13–15]. This integration of economic goals with cultural communication aligns harmoniously with broader objectives of fostering regional collaboration, cultural exchange, and mutual prosperity, thereby reinforcing Jingdezhen's position as a global leader in ceramic artistry.

### **5. Challenges and Future Directions**

#### *5.1. Policy and Regulatory Challenges*

While the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) provides significant opportunities for expanding trade and fostering economic integration, it also presents notable challenges, particularly in the realm of intellectual property (IP) and regulatory alignment [16]. Variations in intellectual property laws, product standards, and enforcement mechanisms among member states can complicate efforts to protect brands effectively. These discrepancies may hinder the seamless flow of goods and services, creating obstacles for businesses seeking to establish a consistent market presence. To address these challenges, it is essential to pursue greater harmonisation of regulations within the RCEP framework. This includes fostering enhanced cooperation among member states on IP enforcement, developing unified mechanisms for the mutual recognition of quality standards, and establishing streamlined certification systems. Such initiatives would not only safeguard brand integrity and cultural authenticity but also bolster the global competitiveness of industries such as China's ceramic sector, ensuring sustainable growth and resilience in international markets.

#### *5.2. Brand Differentiation and Cultural Authenticity*

Maintaining cultural authenticity while fostering innovation presents a significant and ongoing challenge for the ceramic industry [8, 17]. The over-commercialisation of traditional ceramics or an excessive focus on adapting to market trends can undermine the intrinsic cultural value that defines these products. Such practices risk diminishing the unique characteristics that form the foundation of a brand's identity. To effectively address this issue, it is crucial to engage in continuous design research and foster active collaboration among artisans, designers, cultural scholars, and local communities. This multidisciplinary approach ensures that innovation aligns with heritage preservation while simultaneously catering to the evolving preferences of modern consumers. By

achieving this balance, brands can safeguard cultural authenticity, enhance their distinctiveness, and strengthen their competitive position in the global marketplace.

### 5.3. Digitalisation and Capacity Building

Although digital platforms are becoming increasingly significant, numerous small and medium-sized ceramic enterprises encounter challenges related to limited digital capabilities, insufficient brand-building resources, and a lack of expertise in cross-border marketing. Addressing these gaps requires targeted initiatives aimed at enhancing capacity, such as comprehensive digital skills training, access to advanced marketing and design tools, and strategic support for developing effective cross-border e-commerce approaches. Collaborative efforts involving government support, industry alliances, and public-private partnerships are essential in providing the necessary resources, training programs, and policy incentives to empower these enterprises. By fostering improved digital proficiency and brand-building capabilities, ceramic enterprises can not only strengthen their participation in international trade under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) framework but also achieve sustainable growth in brand recognition and cultural influence over the long term [5]. These measures are critical for ensuring their competitiveness in the evolving global marketplace.

## 6. Conclusion

Under the RCEP framework, China's ceramic industry encounters a dynamic landscape of opportunities and challenges in its pursuit of international expansion and brand development. By strategically aligning its global presence with a focus on robust brand IP construction, the industry can significantly enhance its competitiveness while promoting cultural heritage on a broader scale. This research provides a comprehensive framework that integrates trade policy, cultural branding, and intellectual property strategies, offering actionable insights for ceramic enterprises aiming to thrive in the global market. Future research should delve deeper into fostering cross-cluster collaboration, evaluating long-term brand equity, and harmonizing policies to ensure sustainable growth and resilience of China's ceramic industry in both regional and international contexts.

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