

Feasibility Analysis of Adding Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft Programs in Application-Oriented Undergraduate Institutions: A Case Study of Guangzhou Huashang College

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Abstract: With the increasing demand for material and cultural goods, the jewelry industry is experiencing a period of rapid development, and the gap in the demand for Jewelry Design talent is growing. Higher education institutions need to cultivate professionals who are adaptable to the evolving jewelry industry. Establishing programs in Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft can produce Multi-Skilled Jewelry Professionals capable of engaging in various roles such as Jewelry Accessory Design, Jade Carving Design, Jewelry Live Marketing, Jewelry Brand Founder, Jewelry Business Manager, and Jewelry Sales Representative.

Keywords: Jewelry Design; Talent Development; Accessory Design

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1.The Context and Significance of Guangzhou Huashang College Establishing Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft Programs

1.1 Establishing Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft Programs Aligns with Cultivating Virtue and Nurturing Talent and Holistic Education

With the advancement of emerging technologies such as digitalization, informatization, and intelligence, the nation has developed and implemented grand strategies such as the Big Data Strategy and “Internet Plus” plan. The jewelry industry needs to align with the pace of these technological advancements, rationally allocate industry resources, and enhance the application capabilities of jewelry talent to generate greater market and economic benefits. Although talent development in the jewelry sector is currently reaching a mature stage, the increasing material and cultural demands of people present new opportunities and greater market needs for professionals in this field.

According to the “2023 China Jewelry Industry Development Report” released by the China Jewelry and Jadeite Industry Association, the total market scale of China’s jewelry industry surged to 820 billion RMB in 2023, a 14% increase from 719 billion RMB in 2022^[2]. The high-quality development of the jewelry industry is entering a stable and long-term new phase. Currently, China has 24 specialized jewelry industry bases and multiple industrial clusters, with nearly 60,000 jewelry enterprises and approximately 4 million employees nationwide. However, enterprises remain at the lower end of the global value chain, with overall development levels being low, management practices being crude, and product homogeneity being severe. There is still a significant gap between domestic brands and advanced international ones.

Currently, the professional level of talent in Chinese jewelry enterprises is relatively low, with a generally low level of education. Those with formal professional education make up less than 6% of the workforce. Many jewelry enterprises can only develop and build their talent teams through an eclectic approach, expending considerable effort in training and disseminating jewelry knowledge. For experienced professionals, the phenomenon of poaching between companies is common, and finding suitable talent in the market is rare. More often, companies rely on internal referrals to find suitable candidates. However, for inexperienced graduates, it is difficult to secure formal positions after joining, and they often end up as reserve staff. In response to this situation, establishing Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft Programs to train interdisciplinary, application-oriented professionals who meet the needs of the modern industry is both a social responsibility for higher education institutions and a response to the new demands of technological development in the modern era.

1.2 The Relationship Between Establishing Jewelry Design Programs and Regional Economic Development

1.2.1 Meeting the Development Needs of the Jewelry Industry in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

The jewelry processing industry in Guangdong began in 1986 and encompasses a range of activities including jewelry equipment manufacturing, diamond cutting, platinum jewelry, pure gold jewelry, setting jewelry, silverware manufacturing, precious craft production, and jewelry and watchmaking. Various types of enterprises related to jewelry processing have become an important component of Guangdong's economy. Statistics show that in 2021, there were 4.663 million registered jewelry-related enterprises nationwide, with nearly 405,000 of them located in Guangdong, including 18 of the top 50 jewelry companies in China^[1].

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is a renowned hub for the jewelry industry, featuring international brands such as Chow Tai Fook and Tse Sui Luen, as well as small and medium brands like Baitai and Yafu. The industry is transitioning from a "processing" model to a "branding" model, with new brands becoming increasingly youthful and personalized. Future markets will require more emerging designer brands. Applied undergraduate-level jewelry talent development integrates both theoretical and practical aspects from jewelry culture and design, appraisal, and marketing, making such talent highly competitive in the job market. Currently, only three undergraduate institutions in the province—Guangzhou City University of Science and Technology, Shenzhen Technology University, and Guangzhou Huashang College—offer Jewelry Design-related programs, training approximately 250 individuals annually. Therefore, establishing new programs and expanding enrollment is an effective way to address the shortage of such talent in Guangdong Province and across the nation.

1.2.2 A New Engine for Promoting Regional Economic Transformation and Upgrading

The integration and development of new technology clusters, such as digitalization, are driving the transformation of traditional jewelry industry paradigms. The jewelry industry in Guangdong Province is gradually upgrading, adopting a new path of digital and informational development. Modern digital technologies are being used to transform traditional jewelry industry production, lifestyle, and transaction methods, promoting changes in production, management, and marketing within the "digital tide." This involves the digitalization of product design and manufacturing, intelligent production process control, digital manufacturing equipment, and the networking of consulting services and marketing systems, thereby enhancing the international competitiveness of China's jewelry industry^[4]. To achieve these goals, a strong talent base is essential. Therefore, establishing jewelry-related programs to cultivate relevant professionals is a new driving force for regional economic transformation and development.

Guangzhou Huashang College's establishment of jewelry accessory design programs aligns with the economic development needs of South China and the direction of higher education development. With the favorable jewelry industry economic background in Guangzhou and the surrounding Si Hui City, the college provides a broad platform for cultivating technical talent in the jewelry field. This initiative is expected to receive widespread support and welcome from the jewelry industry, significantly advancing the development of the jewelry industry economy in Guangdong Province, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and the surrounding regions. Located in the economically developed Pearl River Delta region, Guangzhou Huashang College has a responsibility to contribute to the stable and healthy development of the local

economy by training jewelry accessory design and craftsmanship professionals, which has significant practical significance and a strong exemplary role.

2. Advantages of Establishing Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft Programs at Guangzhou Huashang College

2.1 Meeting Industry Talent Needs

Guangdong is a leading region in China's jewelry industry, with numerous industrial clusters, including notable areas such as Panyu in Guangzhou, Yangmei in Jieyang, Pingzhou in Nanhai, Si Hui in Zhaoqing, and Shui Bei in Shenzhen. However, with people's increasing aspirations for a better life, enhanced aesthetic tastes, and rapid technological advancements, the jewelry industry faces an urgent need for innovation, including in craftsmanship, culture, and supply chain management^[3]. The rise of numerous innovative jewelry enterprises signifies a substantial gap in the demand for design talents. Additionally, the current jewelry professionals require significant improvements in education, skills, and professional qualities. Therefore, the high-quality undergraduate talent cultivated by this program will have broad employment prospects and a strong market presence and industry competitiveness in the jewelry sector.

2.2 Prominent Geographical Advantages of the Institution

Guangzhou Huashang College, approved by the Ministry of Education in 2006, is a high-level application-oriented undergraduate institution with distinctive financial and economic characteristics, covering disciplines such as economics, management, literature, engineering, art, education, and medicine. The college is based in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, driven by reform and innovation, oriented towards serving local economic and social development, and supported by a modern university system. It continuously optimizes its discipline and program structure to improve educational quality and level, aiming to cultivate high-quality application-oriented talent. The college currently has two campuses, in Zengcheng, Guangzhou, and Si Hui, Zhaoqing, covering a total area of over 1,800 acres. In September 2021, the Si Hui campus was officially put into operation, making it the only undergraduate institution in Si Hui City. The Si Hui campus is located opposite the Si Hui Jade Culture Town, known as the "Hometown of Chinese Jade." The town covers approximately 9.2 square kilometers, with a planned total investment of around 22.86 billion yuan. The town focuses on the jade industry development in Si Hui, constructing five major industry chains including jade research and design, business exhibitions, trading, production and processing, and jade culture experience, forming a jade industry ecosystem that provides a convenient professional practice environment for students in the Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft program.

2.3 Clear School Development Plan

In October 2021, Guangzhou Huashang College, adhering to the Talent Development principles of "Cultivating Virtue and Nurturing Talent" and "Holistic Education," established the School of Jewelry based on the regional industry cluster advantages. The school includes institutions such as the Sanxin College, Industry College, and Jewelry Culture and Creative Writing Center, and initiated the planning and construction of the Jewelry School Building. Located on the left side of the entrance to the Si Hui campus, the Jewelry School Building will have nine floors and a total construction area of 30,000 square meters. According to the first five-year development plan of the Jewelry School, the building is intended to become a multifunctional teaching and experimental facility integrating jewelry culture, Jewelry Design and Craft, jewelry appraisal, marketing, display, and training.

2.4 Solid Foundation for School-Local Cooperation

In December 2021, during the opening ceremony of the 2021 China Jewelry and Jade Industry Association Emerald Culture Industry Development Annual Conference, Guangzhou Huashang College signed a strategic cooperation agreement with the Si Hui City government and held a "Government-School Cooperation Industry-Academia-Research Base" plaque unveiling ceremony. Subsequent visits to jewelry business sites and in-depth discussions with government officials, industry associations, enterprise representatives, and masters of craft were conducted.

3. Foundation for Guangzhou Huashang College's Application to Establish the Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft Program

3.1 Preliminary Program Development Based on the Product Design Major

The design discipline at Guangzhou Huashang College is a Class A key discipline and a focal point for the school's professional master's program development. The Product Design major has been enrolling students since 2009, offering specializations in cultural and creative design, fashion accessory design, and jewelry accessory design. These specializations have laid a solid foundation for the construction of the Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft program, with initial Talent Development results showing promise. Students from the Product Design major have won over a thousand domestic and international awards, including the international "Red Dot Award," "IF Award," and the first prize in the National College Student Industrial Design Competition. Additionally, some graduates have established their own design brands and studios.

3.2 Development of a Multidisciplinary Featured Program

The Jewelry School at Guangzhou Huashang College currently hosts the Guangdong Provincial Key Cultivation Discipline "Journalism and Communication," supported by an experimental teaching platform worth over 5 million yuan. This platform provides practical and simulated internships for students in journalism, communication, and design majors. The Jewelry School aims to break down disciplinary barriers, focusing on jewelry culture enlightenment and dissemination, Jewelry Design and Craft, and jewelry appraisal. Leveraging the strengths of the provincial key discipline in journalism and communication, the school actively develops unique programs in jewelry marketing (live streaming) and Belt and Road jewelry culture dissemination in the new media environment. Through the offering of general education courses across the school and the establishment of specialized teaching modules in various humanities departments, the school is committed to promoting and spreading jewelry culture, enhancing and driving the distinctive development of jewelry-related programs.

3.3 Faculty Conditions

The jewelry design and craft major at Guangzhou Huashang College has a highly qualified faculty with a well-structured mix of titles, combining experienced, middle-aged, and young teachers. The faculty consists of 27 full-time and part-time teachers, including 9 professors (33% of the total), 5 associate professors (18.5%), and 7 teachers with doctoral degrees (25.9%). The teaching staff includes professors from institutions such as China University of Geosciences, Jinan University, Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, and Guangdong University of Finance and Economics, as well as experts and masters with extensive practical experience in the jewelry industry. Their rich practical experience and academic contributions provide strong support for professional teaching.

3.4 Experimental and Practical Conditions**

Guangzhou Huashang College has 18 classrooms across 5 laboratories dedicated to practical teaching in the Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft program: Basic Drawing Laboratory, Model Making Laboratory, Computer-Aided Design Laboratory, Metalworking Laboratory, and Carving Laboratory. Each classroom can accommodate over 40 students, and each computer lab is equipped with various experimental software. All laboratories have internet access to facilitate interactive teaching, meeting the regular teaching and practical training needs of the Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft program students. The Jewelry School also has 15 student internship bases to support practical training requirements.

3.5 Research Foundation

In the past three years, faculty members of this program have secured over 20 provincial and departmental-level research projects, including one National Art Fund project for 2020 Artistic Talent Development and one Humanities and Social Sciences project from the Ministry of Education. Additionally, the faculty has developed a provincial-level first-class course. Team members have published over a hundred academic research papers in scholarly journals. Professor Zhu Xiaohong, the head of the program, has led three research projects with a total funding of 900,000 yuan. Many research topics and projects originate from teaching activities, and their results are applied back to teaching, yielding positive outcomes.

3.6 Teaching Support Conditions

The school's library holds 1.733 million books, including 30,821 volumes related to the Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft program, spanning 7,025 titles. It also offers access to 330,000 electronic books from the Superstar Digital Library and approximately 40 million articles from six CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) collections by Tsinghua Tongfang. The school maintains connections with major provincial educational and book institutions, allowing for timely

updates on new publications. Additionally, the school has invested nearly one million yuan to enhance the campus network, adequately meeting the literature needs of the Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft program.

4.Objectives and Market Employment for the Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft Program

4.1 Talent Development Objectives for the Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft Program at Guangzhou Huashang College

The establishment of the Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft program adheres to the Talent Development principle of “Cultivating Virtue and Nurturing Talent and Holistic Education.” The program aims to cultivate well-rounded individuals who develop morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and in labor skills, meeting the needs of national and regional economic development. Graduates will possess a sense of social responsibility and professional ethics, a solid foundation in Jewelry Design, and skills in jewelry modeling design, communication, and management. They will have strong learning, research, and innovation abilities, with a focus on both theoretical knowledge and practical skills related to jewelry accessory design. Graduates will understand material selection and craft processes for accessory creation, preparing them for roles such as Jewelry Accessory Designer, Jade Carving Designer, Jewelry Live Marketing Specialist, Jewelry Brand Founder, Jewelry Business Manager, and Jewelry Sales Representative, making them Multi-Skilled Jewelry Professionals^[5].

4.2 Employment Directions for Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft Professionals

Graduates from the Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft program can find employment across various stages of the jewelry industry in China, including processing, design, and sales. Key employment areas include:

4.2.1 Designers at Jewelry Companies in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

In 2021, there were 4.663 million jewelry-related enterprises registered nationwide, with Guangdong alone hosting nearly 405,000, including 18 of the top 50 jewelry companies in the country. These companies have a significant demand for designers to address the prevalent issue of product homogenization in the jewelry market.

4.2.2 Founders of Jewelry Design Brands

China’s jewelry market, valued at over 800 billion yuan, is expected to reach about 1 trillion yuan by 2025. The industry is transitioning from “processing” to “branding,” with new brands becoming younger and more personalized. Bachelor-level applied jewelry talent, combining theory and practice in jewelry culture, design, appraisal, and marketing, are well-suited to meet the needs for Jewelry Brand Founders, offering strong social competitiveness.

4.2.3 Jade Carving Designers with New Techniques

China’s jade culture, a traditional essence with oriental charm, integrates foreign cultural ideologies through unique expressions in jade carving. The shrinking talent pool in jade carving urgently needs new jade carving designers who possess a foundation in ethnic culture and artistic cultivation, master the integration of art and technology, and exhibit innovative capabilities. Such talents are in high demand within the jade carving industry.

4.2.4 Jewelry Marketing (Live Streaming) Personnel

With the advent of new media technologies, live streaming has become a direct purchasing method for the general public. Live streaming personnel with knowledge in jewelry culture, design, craft, and appraisal hold a significant advantage over regular online influencers.

4.2.5 Jewelry Business Managers

Graduates with a bachelor’s degree in Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft will be better equipped to take on roles as Jewelry Business Managers within jewelry enterprises.

In conclusion, the addition of the Jewelry Accessory Design and Craft program at Guangzhou Huashang College is a feasible choice, considering the school’s educational resources and the societal demand for professionals in this field.

Funding

University-level, The first project of Jewelry School of Guangzhou Huashang College “Development and Construction of Jewelry Design and Craft Specialty of Guangzhou Huashang College”

Conflict of Interests

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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