

# Chinese Philosophy of Aesthetics Under the Human Body Type and Clothing Accessories Style Matching Research

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# Abstract

This article integrates the yin-yang and five elements doctrine with the idea of harmony, and explores the aesthetic principles of human body type and clothing accessories style matching. Through the literature analysis method, it integrates the Eastern and Western body type classification systems with the traditional Chinese "unity of heaven and man" concept, and proposes that clothing matching should follow three major aesthetic principles of "yin-yang balance", "five elements generation and restriction", and "harmony of three talents". The research shows that different body types correspond to different yin-yang attributes, and visual balance needs to be achieved through the material and lines of accessories; the selection of accessory colors and materials should match the five elements generation concept; the unity of occasion, identity and natural environment of the "heaven, earth and man" determines the style threshold of accessories. Taking the Mianqipao skirt and Nuo ritual clothing as examples, the applicability of the philosophical principles in modern design is verified, providing a theoretical basis for establishing a localized clothing aesthetic system.

Keywords: Human body type; Clothing accessories; Chinese philosophy; Aesthetic principles; Style matching

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# 1. Introduction

In the development of human civilization, clothing, as an important external expression of culture, has long transcended its basic functions of warmth and body coverage, becoming a key vehicle for expressing aesthetic concepts and self cognition. Clothing accessories play an indispensable role in this expression. They are essential elements in perfecting the overall outfit and highlighting personal style, adding a sense of sophistication and uniqueness to the entire attire.

However, the rich diversity of human body types means that there is no one - size - fits - all standard for clothing and accessories selection. Each individual's unique body characteristics, such as height, weight, shoulder width, and hip circumference, significantly impact the suitable clothing style. This diversity requires us to fully consider individual body features when matching clothing to achieve harmony between clothing and the human body.

Chinese philosophy provides rich intellectual resources for this field of research. The aesthetic concepts it contains, such as harmony, balance, and living in harmony with nature, open up a unique path for exploring the aesthetic principles of human body type and clothing accessories style matching. These philosophical ideas emphasize not only the harmonious coexistence between humans and nature but also advocate seeking balance and unity in diversity and differences, offering profound insights for clothing matching practice.

### 2. Research Questions

- 1) Why integrate Chinese philosophical aesthetic concepts into the matching of human body types and clothing accessories styles?
- 2) What is the matching relationship between human body types and clothing accessories styles?
- 3) How to develop specific methods for matching human body types and clothing accessories styles based on Chinese philosophical aesthetic concepts?

# 3. Literature Review

In the field of clothing research, Western anthropomorphic has become a key focus. For instance, the FFIT® body type classification system established by Simmons provides precise data support for clothing design through detailed quantitative analysis of the human body (Simmons, K. K., et al., 2004). However, this system, while emphasizing data accuracy, overlooks the critical role of philosophical aesthetics in style matching. It is like building a beautiful bridge while focusing only on structural strength and ignoring harmony with the surrounding landscape.

Similarly, Sheldon's constitutional theory, which classifies human body types into endomorph, mesomorph, and ectomorph, offers a basic framework for understanding human body characteristics (Sheldon, W. H., 1940). Although significant in anthropomorphic and psychology, its application in clothing design lacks consideration of cultural and aesthetic factors, failing to meet contemporary consumers' demand for personalized and aesthetic clothing.

With the rapid development of technology, three - dimensional scanning technology has emerged, enabling more precise classification and analysis of human body types and opening

new avenues for customized and personalized clothing (Qian, X. N., & Yin, B., 2011). Yet, this classification method still pays insufficient attention to philosophical aesthetic factors. It is like a precise ruler that can measure body dimensions but cannot perceive people's inner pursuit of beauty.

In recent years, an increasing number of scholars have attempted to combine anthropomorphic with philosophical aesthetics to address the shortcomings of pure technical analysis. For example, Chen Chen and Xu Jun proposed that the traditional Chinese concept of "unity of heaven and man" offers a unique perspective for clothing design (Chen Chen & Xu Jun, 2025). This concept advocates respecting the natural form of the human body and achieving harmony between clothing and the body. Other scholars have pointed out that the concepts of "yin - yang balance" and "five elements generation and restriction" in Chinese philosophy also provide profound insights for clothing design. Yin - yang balance emphasizes harmony between clothing, the human body, and the environment in design, while five elements generation and restriction advocate following natural laws in color matching and material selection (Peng, 2004; Lin, 1997; Liu, 2009).

The concept of yin - yang balance can be reflected in clothing design through aspects such as style, color, and material. For example, individuals with a slim and tall body type (yin - type) can enhance their appearance of strength by choosing clothing made of rigid materials (yang) and featuring geometric lines (yang). In contrast, individuals with a robust body type (yang - type) may opt for curved earrings (yin) and soft materials (yin) to soften their visual impact (Kotb, 2015; He, 2016).

The five - element generation and restriction principles also offer unique guidance for clothing matching. Each body type can be linked to one of the five elements, and designers can select colors and materials based on these attributes. For a wood - type body (rectangular with lack of curves), designers can incorporate bamboo - woven or linen materials in green to add natural curves. For a fire - type body (slim and weak, requiring visual expansion), red leather or metallic materials can enhance visual tension. Earth - type bodies (round) can utilize terracotta - colored pottery or velvet materials to balance volume. Metal - type bodies (linear) can be paired with white or silver - colored metal or jade materials to highlight lines. Water - type bodies (angular) can be matched with black or dark - blue - colored tassels or silk materials to soften angles (Gong, 2010; Xinyan, 2013).

Additionally, the Chinese philosophical concept of harmony emphasizes the unity of "heaven, earth, and humanity". This idea also holds significant guiding importance in clothing matching. In terms of time, light - green shawls can be chosen in spring to echo the generating energy of the wood element. In summer, red - colored clothing can be selected to align with the fire element's intensity. Regarding place, formal occasions are suitable for jade accessories with ritual symbols, while casual settings can feature simple woven handbags. In terms of human harmony, different age and identity groups should choose different accessory styles. The elderly can wear soft - luster ed pearls, the young can experiment with resin - metal layering that combines yin and yang, and children can opt for cotton embroidered bags (Yu, 2024; Chen, 2017).

Copyright © ISRG Publishers. All rights Reserved. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15709959 In empirical research, case analyses of Ming - dynasty Mianqipao skirts and Nuo ritual costumes have verified the applicability of Chinese philosophical aesthetic principles in modern design. The Mianqipao skirt's planar cutting (yin) and woven gold - brocade patterns (yang) demonstrate the aesthetic concept of yin - yang balance. The red skirt (fire) and yellow - bordered (earth) design follow the five - element generation principle, while the green - patterned (wood) elements balance the red through the wood - overcomes - fire relationship. Nuo ritual costumes feature cloud - and - thunder - patterned copper bells (heaven), grass - rope belts (earth), and animal - bone necklaces (humanity), showcasing the pursuit of triad unity (Zhou, 2021; Xu, 2015).

Future research can further develop AI - based matching algorithms based on the five - element constitution, explore the application of Taoist "return to simplicity" ideas in sustainable design, and establish a quantified evaluation system for Chinese - philosophical aesthetics. This not only integrates traditional Chinese cultural wisdom into modern clothing design but also provides a unique cultural perspective and innovative impetus for the global fashion industry. As shown by the revival of Han - clothing culture, this is not only a return to form but also a creative transformation and innovative development of the "unity of heaven and man" philosophy in contemporary times (Wuhan University, 2016).

### 4. Research Methods

This study combines literature analysis and case study methods to explore the aesthetic principles of human body type and clothing accessories style matching. Representative clothing cases, such as Ming - dynasty Mianqipao skirts and Nuo ritual costumes, are selected to analyze their design elements, style features, and suitability for different body types. Modern design cases, such as Bohemian - style clothing and new - Chinese style handbags, are also examined to explore the integration of traditional philosophical aesthetics with modern design concepts, offering innovative and practical solutions for modern clothing design.

### 5. Research Cases

#### 5.1 The Harmony Aesthetics of Ming - Dynasty Mianqipao Skirts

 Table 1: The Cultural Connotations and Functional Roles of the

 Five - Element Colors in Mianqipao Skirts

| Name                                    | Accessory<br>Design Features                   | Cultural Connotations<br>and Functional Roles  |
|---|--|--|
| Ming -<br>dynasty<br>Mianqipao<br>skirt | Flat cut, simple<br>and unadorned              | Embodying the softness and<br>restraint of "yin," it contrasts<br>with complex three-<br>dimensional tailoring to<br>showcase natural beauty.                        |
|   | Weaving gold<br>brocade decorative<br>patterns | The gorgeous luster and<br>intricate patterns of the gold<br>thread embody the vigor and<br>exuberance of "yang,"<br>achieving a balance between<br>yin and yang and |

|                | highlighting the beauty of craftsmanship.  |
|----------------|--|
| Red skirt body | Symbolizes "fire",<br>representing passion and<br>vitality   |
|                | Strengthens the sense of splendor.   |
| Yellow border  | Symbolizes "earth", with the<br>earth - generates - fire<br>relationship in the five -<br>element theory |
|                | Enhances the harmony and richness of the overall color scheme.   |
| Green patterns | Symbolizes "wood", with the<br>wood - overcomes - fire<br>relationship in the five -<br>element theory   |
|                | Balances the excessive<br>brilliance of red, achieving<br>harmony between color and<br>meaning.          |

Source: Drawn by the researcher.

As an outstanding representative of traditional Chinese clothing, the Ming - dynasty Mianqipao skirt is rich in philosophical aesthetics. From the perspective of yin - yang expression, its planar cutting is simple and unadorned, reflecting the softness and introversion of "yin" and contrasting with the complex three - dimensional cutting of the time. Meanwhile, the brocade decoration on the skirt, with its brilliant gold - thread luster and complex patterns, displays the robustness and extroversion of "yang". The combination of planar cutting and brocade decoration achieves the unity of opposites between yin and yang, showcasing both the natural beauty of simplicity and the exquisite craftsmanship, and perfectly interpreting the philosophical concept of yin - yang balance for a visually harmonious effect (see Table 1).

Additionally, the common blue-green patterns on the Mianqipao skirt symbolize "wood," and wood overcomes fire. This relationship of mutual overcoming among the Five Elements is not a simple opposition but a subtle balance, avoiding the excessive intensity and boldness of red, thereby achieving a harmonious coexistence in both color and symbolism in the design of the horse-face skirt. This color scheme and pattern design, based on the interdependent and conflicting relationships of the Five Elements, not only reflects the wisdom of traditional Chinese philosophy but also endows the horse-face skirt with unique aesthetic value and cultural significance. (Zhou, 2021).

| Table 2: Attributes of Nuo Ritual Accessories    |   |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| Accessory Name                                   | Symbolic                                      | Material/Design Features                              | Cultural Connotations  | <b>Functional Roles</b>  |  |
|  | Meaning                                       |   |  |  |  |
| Copper bell with<br>cloud and thunder<br>pattern | The cyclical laws of heaven                   | Made of copper with cloud -<br>and - thunder patterns | Symbolizes heavenly<br>phenomena, conveys the<br>will of heaven, and<br>reminds people to follow<br>natural laws | Serves as a decorative item and a<br>medium for communicating with<br>heaven, enhancing the sacredness<br>and solemnity of the Nuo ritual      |  |
| Grass - Rope Belt                                | Earth worship                                 | Woven from plant fibers, simple and resilient         | Symbolizing the earth,<br>expressing reverence<br>and gratitude for the<br>earth                                 | Signifies a close connection with<br>the earth, draws strength and<br>wisdom from it, and reminds<br>people to maintain harmony with<br>nature |  |
| Animal - Bone<br>Necklace                        | Exorcising evil<br>and protecting the<br>body | Made of animal bones                                  | Symbolizing protection<br>and care, embodying<br>hopes for peace and<br>health                                   | Acts as an amulet, provides<br>psychological comfort and<br>spiritual support, and boosts the<br>wearer's confidence and courage               |  |

Source: Drawn by the researcher.

Among the various accessories of the Nuo ritual attire, the cloud-and-thunder patterned bronze bells, grass rope belts, and animal bone necklaces symbolize heaven, earth, and humanity respectively, embodying profound philosophical implications (see Table 2). The cloud-and-thunder patterned bronze bells represent the cyclical nature of the heavens. As a traditional motif, the cloud-and-thunder pattern is often seen as a symbol of celestial phenomena, its design resembling the ever-changing clouds and thunder in the sky, embodying the power and mystery of nature. In the Nuo ritual, the shaking of the bronze bells produces a clear and melodious sound, akin to the voice of heaven, conveying the will and messages of the heavens, reminding people to follow the ways of heaven and respect the laws of nature. It not only serves a decorative purpose but also acts as a medium for communicating with the heavens, reinforcing the sacredness and solemnity of the Nuo ritual.

The grass - rope belt symbolizes earth worship. Made from natural plant fibers, the grass - rope is simple yet resilient, reflecting the earth's simplicity and vitality. In the Nuo ritual, wearing a grass - rope belt signifies a close connection with the earth and expresses reverence and gratitude toward it. The earth, as the source of life, nourishes all things. The belt, worn close to the body, symbolizes people's roots in the earth, drawing strength and wisdom from it while reminding them to give back and maintain harmony with nature. The animal - bone necklace represents exorcising evil and protecting the body, reflecting care and protection for humanity. In ancient times, animal bones were believed to possess mysterious powers capable of warding off evil and protecting the wearer from harm. In the Nuo ritual, the animal - bone necklace is more than just an ornament; it is a symbolic amulet. It embodies people's hopes for safety and health, reflecting their self - protective awareness when facing the natural and unknown world. Wearing an animal - bone necklace provides psychological comfort and spiritual support, enhancing the wearer's confidence and courage during the ritual.

The three accessories of the Nuo ritual—the cloud-and-thunder patterned bronze bell, the grass rope belt, and the animal bone necklace—each represent the celestial, terrestrial, and human realms, respectively, showcasing the rich cultural significance and philosophical ideas of the Nuo ritual. These three elements are interconnected and interact with one another, forming an organic whole that embodies the concept of "unity of heaven and humanity" in traditional Chinese philosophy. In the Nuo ritual, these three accessories not only serve decorative and symbolic functions but more importantly convey a cultural spirit of harmonious coexistence with heaven and earth and the pursuit of mental and physical peace, providing valuable inspiration and cultural references for modern clothing design.

#### 5.3 Modern Design Implications

| Tuble 5. Munistream Crouning Treebsories Styles and Characteristics |  |   |  |  |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Style Type  | Design Elements                                    | Aesthetic Characteristics                   |  |  |
| minimalism  | Geometric cutouts, mirror effect, molded resin     | High-tech feel, clean lines                 |  |  |
| Bohemian Style  | Patchwork fabric, ethnic patterns, tasseled boots  | Freedom, retro, layered look                |  |  |
| Neo - Decadence   | Lace, embossed metal, patchwork brocade            | Luxurious, dramatic, deconstructivist       |  |  |
| Eco - Functionality   | Hemp-cotton blend, quilting technique, wooden base | Natural, sustainable, low saturation colors |  |  |

Table 3: Mainstream Clothing Accessories Styles and Characteristics

Source: Drawn by the researcher.

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the use of low-saturation colors (see Table 3). The The Bohemian style, a popular modern design style, is characterized by its free - spirited and eclectic nature, as well as its inclusiveness and fusion of different cultures. It profoundly embodies the aesthetic concept of yin - yang contrast. Bohemian - style clothing accessories often feature tassel elements. exqu Tassels, with their softness and fluidity, symbolize the gentleness and yin - like qualities of "water", while leather's rigidity and toughness represent the fierceness and yang - like qualities of "fire". In Bohemian design, the combination of

Tassels, with their softness and fluidity, symbolize the gentleness and yin - like qualities of "water", while leather's rigidity and toughness represent the fierceness and yang - like qualities of "fire". In Bohemian design, the combination of tassels and leather is not mere material patchwork but a clever use of their contrasting traits to create a unique visual tension. For example, tassel decorations on leather products not only add layers and dynamic beauty but also, through the interplay of yin and yang elements, showcase a spirit of freedom and unconventionality, highlighting the wearer's personality and unique charm (Kotb, 2015).

Mainstream fashion accessories exhibit a diverse range of styles.

Minimalist designs feature geometric cutouts, mirrored effects, and molded resin, exuding a strong sense of technology and

clean, sleek lines; Bohemian-inspired pieces incorporate

patchwork fabrics, ethnic patterns, and fringe boots, embodying freedom, retro charm, and rich layering; accessories in the new

decadent style often use lace, embossed metal, and patchwork

brocade, embodying luxurious, dramatic, and deconstructivist

aesthetic characteristics; while eco-functional style accessories

primarily utilize hemp-cotton blends, quilting techniques, and

wooden bases, emphasizing natural, sustainable elements and

New - Chinese - style handbags skillfully integrate traditional and modern elements, combining traditional Chinese craftsmanship with modern design concepts, and reflect the aesthetic concept of five - element restriction. New - Chinese style handbags often feature bamboo - weaving craftsmanship. The natural texture and pattern of bamboo - weaving symbolize the vitality and energy of "wood". The embedded green jade, with its smooth and hard qualities, represents "metal". In the five - element theory, "metal overcomes wood", indicating that metal can constrain and refine wood. The new Chinese-style handbag cleverly combines bamboo weaving and green jade, creating a contrast and balance in materials while showcasing a refined and elegant aesthetic appeal. The natural charm of bamboo weaving intertwines with the noble texture of green jade, preserving the charm of traditional craftsmanship while aligning with modern aesthetic preferences for simplicity and refinement. This design embodies the inheritance and innovation of Chinese traditional culture. (Xinyan, 2013).

# 6. Research Results and Findings

The Principle of Yin-Yang Balance: The principle of yin-yang balance is the core mechanism for correcting visual imbalances in body shape, achieved through the adjustment of accessory lines (straight or curved) and material properties (rigid or flexible). For example, individuals with an A - shaped body type, who have a relatively narrow upper body, can enhance their shoulder presence by adding shoulder accessories or choosing padded - shoulder designs, creating a yin - yang balanced visual effect with their wider hips (Peng, 2004). whereas individuals with a Y-shaped body type, can use accessories that emphasize the hip lines, such as belts or hip

decorations, to complement the broad shoulders, achieving balance between the upper and lower body.

The five - element generation and restriction system provides a semiotic basis for color and material selection and should be dynamically applied based on body - type attributes. For instance, individuals with a round face and earth - type constitution can, according to the five - element generation concept, choose yellow (representing earth) to enhance their complexion and add a sense of splendor. Light green clothing or accessories (representing wood) can modify a round face shape for a more coordinated overall appearance (Pan, 2009).

The harmony of the three - talent perspective requires accessory styles to match spatial and temporal contexts and identity ethics, reflecting the ultimate aesthetic of "unity of heaven and humanity". For example, in formal occasions such as business meetings or official events, it is appropriate to select simple and exquisite metal - based accessories. These not only adhere to the requirements of Confucian ritual etiquette but also highlight the wearer's professionalism and authority. In casual settings, such as park picnics or everyday shopping, natural-material accessories such as straw-woven handbags or cotton-linen scarves can be chosen. These accessories, which are close to nature, create a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, achieving harmony between humanity and nature (Gong, 2010).

# 7. Discussion

Expanding the sample scope: This study mainly focuses on traditional clothing cases such as Ming - dynasty Mianqipao skirts and Nuo ritual costumes. Although rich in cultural and historical value, these cases have limited application in modern fashion. Future research can incorporate more modern fashion elements, including different styles, brands, and types of clothing accessories, such as street - culture - related clothing and sportswear. This will verify the applicability of these aesthetic principles in a broader context and provide more practical guidance for modern clothing designers. For example, studying the performance of Bohemian styles and new - Chinese - style handbags in modern fashion and using extensive sample data to refine clothing - matching aesthetic principles.

Deeply exploring the application of the Taoist concept of "returning to simplicity" in sustainable design: The Taoist idea of "returning to simplicity" emphasizes returning to nature and pursuing an authentic lifestyle, aligning with today's sustainable - development concepts. In clothing design, research can focus on how to apply this concept by selecting Eco-friendly and recyclable materials and adopting low - energy - consumption and low - pollution production methods while maintaining clothing's aesthetic and functional appeal. For instance, using organic cotton and hemp as primary materials and combining them with simple yet distinctive design styles can create clothing that meets environmental standards and possesses unique charm. This promotes sustainable development in the clothing industry, guides consumers toward responsible consumption, and fosters harmony between humans and nature.

Developing AI - based matching algorithms based on the five element constitution: With the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence technology, its potential in clothing design and matching is significant. Future research can develop AI - based algorithms that accurately identify individual body - type attributes based on five - element theory. By analyzing users' body features, skin color, and body - type data across multiple dimensions and applying the five - element generation and restriction rules for color and material matching, these algorithms can offer personalized styling suggestions. For example, users can upload their photos and body data, and the AI algorithm can recommend suitable clothing colors, styles, and materials based on their body - type attributes, achieving "thousand - person - thousand - face" precise matching. This improves the efficiency and scientific nature of clothing coordination and enhances consumers' shopping experiences.

Understanding the impact of dynamic body shape changes on clothing coordination: Human body shapes are not static; for example, the body shapes of pregnant women and fitness enthusiasts undergo significant changes. Future research could focus on these dynamic changes to explore how to develop corresponding clothing coordination strategies based on the body shape characteristics of humans at different stages. For example, for pregnant women, designing comfortable and aesthetically pleasing clothing that accommodates abdominal protrusion and increased back strain, along with corresponding accessory coordination schemes. This not only provides more considerate clothing options for special groups but also makes the aesthetic principles of clothing coordination more inclusive and universally applicable.

Using modern technological tools to verify and apply aesthetic principles: Modern technological tools such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) can be used to further verify and refine the application of these aesthetic principles in different scenarios. By creating virtual fitting rooms and styling scenarios, consumers can visually assess how different clothing accessories match their body types and evaluate the visual impact of various styling options. Additionally, big - data analysis can collect consumer feedback and preference data on actual styling practices, continuously optimizing and updating aesthetic principles to better meet public aesthetic demands and market trends.

### 8. Conclusion

This study explores the aesthetic principles of human body type and clothing accessories style matching under the Chinese philosophy of aesthetics and confirms its significant value in both theory and practice. The principles of yin - yang balance, five - element generation and restriction, and three - talent harmony provide scientific and systematic guidance for clothing coordination, helping people achieve more scientific and rational clothing matching. This not only showcases individual beauty but also creates an overall harmonious rhythm. These principles have been fully verified in traditional clothing, such as Ming - dynasty Mianqipao skirts and Nuo ritual costumes, and have demonstrated strong applicability in modern fashion design, such as Bohemian styles and new - Chinese - style handbags. This provides strong support for establishing a localized Chinese clothing - aesthetics system.

In an era of diverse cultural integration, combining traditional Chinese philosophical ideas with modern clothing coordination not only helps inherit and promote China's excellent traditional culture but also injects new vitality into the global fashion field. Through this combination, designers can draw inspiration from rich cultural heritage to create clothing works that meet modern aesthetic demands and possess unique cultural charm. Additionally, this interdisciplinary research approach offers new ideas and methods for research in other fields, promoting further integration of culture, art, and science.

Furthermore, this study proposes future research directions, including expanding the sample scope, deeply exploring the application of the Taoist concept of "returning to simplicity" in sustainable design, and developing AI - based algorithms for five - element - constitution - based matching. These directions will further expand the depth and breadth of the application of Chinese philosophical aesthetics in the field of clothing design, promoting clothing culture toward a richer, more diverse, and harmonious direction. In summary, this study not only provides valuable theoretical resources for clothing design practice but also pioneers new paths for cultural inheritance and innovation.

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