

Research on External Communication of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Zhoukou under the Background of In-depth Integration of Culture and Tourism

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Abstract: The in-depth integration of culture and tourism offers new opportunities for the external dissemination and innovative inheritance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). As a key birthplace of Central Plains civilization, Zhoukou City owns abundant distinctive ICH resources rooted in local farming and ancestor-worship culture, featuring high historical, artistic and tourism value. However, constrained by imperfect publicity mechanisms and backward communication concepts, Zhoukou's ICH faces typical dilemmas including homogeneous publicity content, shallow cultural-tourism integration, fragmented communication channels and weak brand influence, failing to convert rich resource advantages into external cultural competitiveness. Taking Zhoukou's typical ICH projects as research subjects, this paper systematically explores the current situation and practical problems of local ICH external communication. It proposes targeted optimization strategies covering content innovation, scenario upgrading, channel integration, brand shaping and institutional improvement. This study helps Zhoukou's ICH break geographical communication restrictions and achieve sustainable external development, providing practical references for ICH external publicity and living inheritance in similar inland cultural cities.

Keywords: culture and tourism integration; Zhoukou intangible cultural heritage; external communication; cultural publicity; living cultural inheritance

1. Introduction

With the continuous upgrading of China's cultural tourism consumption market and the comprehensive promotion of cultural power construction, the functional positioning of intangible cultural heritage has undergone profound changes. Traditional heritage protection mainly focuses on textual sorting, skill inheritance and local cultural preservation, while the current cultural development environment requires regional ICH to realize outward diffusion and value reconstruction through tourism integration and media communication. In-depth integration of culture and tourism provides new scenarios, new carriers and new market spaces for the external communication of local intangible cultural heritage. Tourist experience, cultural exhibitions, festival activities and digital communication jointly build a diversified dissemination system, enabling traditional folk culture to break geographical restrictions and gain recognition from broader external audiences.

As an important birthplace of Central Plains civilization, Zhoukou has formed a unique cultural system centered on ancestral root culture and traditional farming culture in the long-term historical development process. The city has a complete hierarchical intangible cultural heritage system including national, provincial and municipal levels. Representative heritage projects such as Taihao Fuxi Ancestor Worship Ceremony, Huaiyang Clay Dog folk craft, Zhoukou acrobatics art and Taikang Daoqing Opera fully reflect the simple folk customs and unique artistic aesthetics of the Central Plains region. These heritage resources are not only important symbols of local cultural identity, but also core advantageous resources for creating urban cultural brands and developing characteristic cultural tourism industries.

In recent years, guided by national and provincial cultural tourism policies, Zhoukou has

continuously promoted the docking and integration of intangible cultural heritage resources and tourism industries. Local cultural and tourism departments have actively carried out offline cultural exhibitions, folk art exchange activities and online new media publicity, which have improved the external visibility of local intangible cultural heritage to a certain extent. Nevertheless, in the actual investigation and sorting process, it is found that Zhoukou's ICH external communication work is still in the exploratory stage compared with the mature external publicity system of first-tier cultural tourism cities. The overall development presents the characteristics of "rich resources but weak output, many projects but scattered influence". Most heritage projects lack systematic external publicity planning, professional cultural narrative design and stable long-term communication mechanisms. The integration of heritage resources and tourism scenarios remains superficial, failing to form a continuous and influential external communication effect.

At present, how to effectively utilize the cultural and tourism integration system to reshape the external communication mode of local intangible cultural heritage, solve the practical dilemmas such as homogeneous content, single channel and insufficient brand influence, and realize the transformation from local inheritance to external dissemination has become an important practical problem to be solved urgently in the development of Zhoukou's cultural tourism cause. Based on this, this paper systematically combs the current situation and problems of Zhoukou ICH external communication under the background of cultural and tourism integration, analyzes the deep causes of communication difficulties, and constructs targeted optimization strategies, so as to provide practical path support for the innovative external dissemination of regional intangible cultural heritage.

2. Current Situation of External Communication of Zhoukou's Intangible Cultural Heritage

2.1 Achievements of Current External Communication Practice

In recent years, with the continuous investment in cultural tourism construction in Zhoukou, the external communication of local intangible cultural heritage has achieved phased results in offline exchange, festival dissemination and digital publicity, laying a certain foundation for further external cultural output.

First, offline cultural exhibition and cross-regional exchange have been continuously expanded. Local cultural and tourism authorities take the initiative to organize typical intangible cultural heritage projects such as Huaiyang Clay Dog, Zhoukou woodblock New Year paintings and traditional folk opera to participate in high-standard cultural and tourism exhibitions inside and outside the province. By displaying traditional craftsmanship, folk art works and on-site inheritance performances at major cultural expos, Zhoukou's folk culture has successfully stepped out of the local region and gained display opportunities on national professional cultural platforms. This kind of offline face-to-face communication enables external audiences to intuitively understand the artistic charm of Zhoukou's intangible cultural heritage, effectively breaking the closed state of traditional local inheritance.

Second, cultural tourism festivals and scenario-based experience activities have formed regular external communication carriers. Relying on the annual Fuxi Cultural Tourism Festival and a series of folk custom experience activities, Zhoukou integrates intangible cultural heritage performance, craft experience and cultural display into tourism consumption scenarios. Large-scale cultural activities attract a large number of foreign tourists, photography enthusiasts and cultural researchers every year, forming a stable crowd communication channel. Among them, Zhoukou acrobatics, as a well-known local characteristic heritage project, has won many honors in national and international acrobatics competitions. Its special theatrical performances have been broadcast through mainstream television stations and new media platforms, accumulating high topic exposure and effectively improving the external popularity of Zhoukou's characteristic folk culture.

Third, new media online communication has initially formed a digital publicity matrix. In response to the general trend of digital cultural communication, Zhoukou's official cultural and tourism platforms and local self-media creators have continuously launched short video works, heritage popular science content and inheritor interview programs on Douyin, Kuaishou and other platforms. At the same time, relying on the external communication channels of central media, local characteristic cultural resources such as Fuxi root culture and Laozi cultural thought have been made into bilingual short videos and disseminated on overseas social platforms, realizing the initial breakthrough of local intangible cultural heritage in international communication.

Fourth, the construction of cultural tourism supporting scenarios has been gradually improved. In recent years, Zhoukou has built a number of intangible cultural heritage experience workshops, folk custom exhibition halls and characteristic cultural and tourism blocks. Core scenic spots, high-speed railway stations and urban public spaces have set up special display areas for intangible cultural heritage. The improvement of offline experience scenarios enables external tourists to realize immersive cultural perception in the tourism process, forming subtle and lasting offline communication effects.

2.2 Existing Problems in External Communication of Zhoukou's Intangible Cultural Heritage

Although Zhoukou has made some progress in ICH external communication, the overall publicity system is still imperfect, and many restrictive problems remain in content creation, channel operation, industry integration and brand building, which hinder the high-quality external dissemination of local heritage culture.

In terms of communication content, homogenization and superficiality are prominent. At present, most of the external publicity content of Zhoukou's intangible cultural heritage stays in the simple display of heritage appearance and skill demonstration. The unique cultural connotation behind folk customs, traditional crafts and operas has not been deeply explored and interpreted. Most publicity works adopt unified and generalized expression modes, lacking localized cultural stories and exclusive cultural symbols. The lack of in-depth cultural narrative makes it difficult for external audiences to form effective memory points and cultural identity, resulting in low communication differentiation.

In terms of cultural and tourism integration, the integration level is relatively shallow, lacking in-depth industrial docking. At this stage, the combination of Zhoukou's intangible cultural heritage and tourism is mostly simple resource superposition. The setting of heritage experience projects in scenic spots is single and rigid, lacking personalized, immersive and interactive experience products. The integration of intangible cultural heritage with research tourism, night economy, cultural and creative industries is not sufficient, and there are few derivative products with local cultural characteristics. The insufficient industrial carrying capacity makes it difficult to form sustainable external communication vitality.

In terms of communication channels, the overall layout is scattered and systematic operation is lacking. Zhoukou's ICH external communication relies excessively on government-led offline exhibitions and regular festival activities. The new media communication is mostly spontaneous and scattered release, lacking unified topic planning, continuous content update and matrix linkage operation. In addition, the current external communication focus is mainly on domestic cross-regional publicity, and the layout of international communication channels is insufficient. The lack of professional cross-cultural translation and international publicity talents makes it difficult for local folk culture to adapt to overseas audience aesthetics and communication habits, resulting in extremely limited global influence.

In terms of brand building, the overall awareness is weak and the regional IP system is missing. Up to now, Zhoukou has not formed a unified overall positioning and brand image for local intangible cultural heritage. Various heritage projects operate independently and lack integrated resource

integration and joint publicity. Although individual projects such as Huaiyang Clay Dog and Zhoukou Acrobatics have certain popularity, they have not formed a synergistic regional cultural brand effect. The overall external recognition and market competitiveness of Zhoukou's intangible cultural heritage are significantly weaker than those of characteristic cultural brands in surrounding provinces and cities.

In terms of communication subjects and guarantee mechanisms, the participation of social forces is insufficient and professional talents are scarce. The current external publicity work is mainly promoted by government departments. Heritage inheritors, cultural and tourism enterprises, social organizations and local citizens have low participation initiative, failing to form a diversified collaborative communication pattern. At the same time, there is a serious shortage of compound talents who are familiar with local traditional culture, master modern new media operation skills and have cross-cultural communication capabilities. The lack of long-term talent training mechanisms and special publicity funds also restricts the continuous optimization and upgrading of external communication work.

3. Optimization Strategies for External Communication of Zhoukou's Intangible Cultural Heritage

3.1 Deepening Cultural Narrative and Creating Differentiated Publicity Content

Content quality determines the core effect of external cultural communication. To get rid of the dilemma of homogeneous and superficial publicity, Zhoukou needs to take localized cultural connotation as the core to build a unique ICH narrative system. First of all, it is necessary to systematically sort out the cultural origin, historical evolution and folk connotation of typical heritage projects such as Fuxi worship custom, Pangu mythology, Huaiyang Clay Dog craftsmanship and Zhoukou acrobatics, and refine exclusive cultural stories that conform to regional characteristics. By transforming abstract cultural genes into vivid and understandable narrative content, external audiences can better understand the cultural value behind traditional skills and folk customs. Secondly, differentiated content positioning should be carried out for different types of intangible cultural heritage. Folk custom heritage focuses on spreading regional cultural spirit, traditional craft heritage focuses on displaying artistic aesthetics, and opera and acrobatic heritage focuses on highlighting folk vitality, so as to form a rich and hierarchical publicity content system. In addition, on the premise of adhering to the authenticity of heritage inheritance, appropriate modern creative transformation should be carried out to integrate contemporary aesthetic elements and life scenarios into traditional cultural expression, enhance the attractiveness and dissemination of publicity content, and realize the effective connection between traditional folk culture and modern public aesthetic needs.

3.2 Deepening Cultural-Tourism Integration and Enriching Scene-based Communication Carriers

Tourism scenario is the most important offline carrier for external communication of intangible cultural heritage. Zhoukou needs to break the simple resource superposition mode and realize in-depth industrial integration and scenario innovation. First, the government can plan and design characteristic ICH boutique tourism routes, integrate scenic sightseeing, inheritor hands-on teaching, heritage exhibition and folk performance, and create all-round immersive cultural tourism experience projects, so that external tourists can fully perceive the charm of local intangible cultural heritage in the tourism process. Second, the city should actively expand diversified integration formats such as "ICH + research tourism", "ICH + night tourism" and "ICH + cultural creativity". It is feasible to build standardized intangible cultural heritage research and education bases and folk custom experience blocks, and develop daily cultural and creative products, cultural ornaments and creative gifts with local heritage elements, so as to realize long-term cultural dissemination through product circulation and scene experience. Third, make full use of urban public spaces such as high-speed railway stations, urban scenic spots and cultural parks to set up long-term heritage exhibition and display areas, forming normalized offline

external communication positions.

3.3 Integrating Multiple Channels and Building a Full-dimensional Publicity Matrix

Scientific and systematic channel layout is the key to expanding the external influence of intangible cultural heritage. Zhoukou needs to integrate online and offline resources to build a three-dimensional external communication system. In terms of new media communication, it is necessary to integrate official platforms, institutional accounts and local self-media resources, implement unified topic planning and regular content updates, and launch serial columns such as inheritor interviews, heritage skill popularization and folk custom story sharing to form continuous online communication heat. In terms of offline communication, continue to expand cultural exchange channels, actively participate in national and international cultural and tourism expos and folk art exchange conferences, and promote more local heritage projects to go out of the province and overseas. In terms of international communication, rely on the communication advantages of central media and overseas social platforms, launch English bilingual content suitable for foreign audiences, complete the cross-cultural translation and interpretation of local folk culture, gradually open up international communication channels, and enhance the global influence of Zhoukou's Central Plains folk culture.

3.4 Integrating Brand Resources and Shaping Regional Cultural IP Image

Brand building is an important way to solve the problem of scattered communication and improve external recognition. Zhoukou should carry out overall planning and integrated shaping of local intangible cultural heritage resources. Centering on the core cultural positioning of "Central Plains Root Culture and Folk Heritage", the city integrates advantageous resources such as Fuxi folk custom, Huaiyang folk craft and Zhoukou acrobatics to create a unified regional ICH brand image and exclusive publicity slogan, forming a concentrated and distinctive external cultural symbol. On this basis, enrich the derivation of cultural and creative industries, take local characteristic heritage elements as the core to develop serialized cultural and creative products, and change the single publicity mode of traditional display. At the same time, carry out brand marketing activities such as ICH cultural creation competitions and folk art exhibitions, increase media exposure and public topic discussion, continuously accumulate brand popularity, and enhance the overall external competitiveness of Zhoukou's intangible cultural heritage.

3.5 Diversifying Communication Subjects and Improving Long-term Guarantee System

To realize the sustainable external communication of intangible cultural heritage, it is necessary to build a multi-subject collaborative operation mechanism. The government should strengthen top-level design, formulate special plans for ICH external publicity, increase financial investment and policy support, and standardize the overall development direction of external communication work. At the same time, fully activate the main role of heritage inheritors, encourage inheritors to participate in media shooting, cultural exchange and public teaching activities, and improve the professionalism and authenticity of communication content. Guide cultural and tourism enterprises, social organizations and university teams to participate in heritage cultural creation, scene operation and public opinion promotion, and form a joint communication force. In addition, strengthen the introduction and training of compound talents in new media operation and cross-cultural communication, establish a regular communication effect evaluation mechanism, dynamically adjust publicity strategies according to audience feedback and communication data, and ensure the long-term and stable development of Zhoukou's ICH external communication work.

4. Conclusion

Under the background of in-depth integration of culture and tourism, external communication has become an essential link in the innovative inheritance and sustainable development of

regional intangible cultural heritage. As an important cultural city in the Central Plains, Zhoukou has abundant and unique ICH resources, which contain profound historical connotation and folk cultural value. In recent years, through offline cultural exhibitions, festival scenario communication and new media online promotion, local intangible cultural heritage has achieved certain external publicity results, and the basic framework of external cultural communication has initially taken shape. However, affected by insufficient content depth, single communication carrier, scattered channel layout, weak brand awareness and single communication subject, Zhoukou's ICH external communication still has obvious shortcomings. The cultural and tourism integration is not deep enough, the external narrative system is incomplete, and it is difficult to form continuous and influential cross-regional communication effects, resulting in the long-term dilemma of "rich resources but weak influence".

Combined with the actual development environment of Zhoukou's cultural tourism industry and the current situation of heritage inheritance, this paper constructs a set of targeted external communication optimization strategies from five aspects: content narrative innovation, tourism scenario expansion, channel matrix integration, regional brand shaping and multi-subject mechanism improvement. By digging deep into localized cultural connotations, enriching immersive tourism experience carriers, building three-dimensional online and offline communication channels, creating exclusive regional cultural brands and improving long-term talent and institutional guarantees, Zhoukou's intangible cultural heritage can effectively break geographical communication barriers. It can realize the effective transformation from cultural resource advantages to external communication advantages, and significantly enhance the external popularity and market competitiveness of Zhoukou folk culture and Central Plains root culture.

In the future, with the continuous development of digital cultural tourism and the deepening of cross-regional and international cultural exchanges, the external communication of Zhoukou's intangible cultural heritage still has huge room for innovation and improvement. It is necessary to further optimize cross-cultural translation strategies, strengthen digital IP operation and new media matrix construction, continuously enrich external communication paths, and inject lasting vitality into the living inheritance and external dissemination of local intangible cultural heritage.

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