

Research on the Cultural Brand Image Shaping of Regong Art, a Intangible Cultural Heritage Based on CIS Theory

Kehua Li^{1, *}

¹School of History and Culture, Shandong University, Jinan, Shandong, 250100, China

*Corresponding author's e-mail: LeeKeHua@outlook.com

Abstract: This paper examines and delves into the cultural resource characteristics of the intangible cultural heritage of Regong art through analysis. It integrates the distinctive features of Regong culture with brand image construction. Based on the Corporate Identity System (CIS), the study employs a model for brand image construction. This model is founded upon the systems of Mind Identity System (MIS), Behavior Identity System (BIS), and Visual Identity System (VIS) to propose corresponding recommendations for shaping the cultural brand image of Regong art. Regong art, as one of China's highly significant and representative forms of intangible cultural heritage, embodies the importance of shaping its cultural brand image. This endeavor is crucial for delving into the historical and cultural significance, ensuring the continuity, preservation, and development of historical and cultural heritage, promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of outstanding traditional culture, and driving the comprehensive protection, inheritance, and high-quality sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage projects across China.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage, Regong Art, CIS System, Cultural Brand, Image Construction.

1. Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage, as a significant component of human civilization, encompasses cultural, scientific, historical, aesthetic, economic, and social values [1]. On October 17, 2003, during the 32nd session of the General Conference of UNESCO, the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* was adopted. Article 2 of the Convention defines intangible cultural heritage as 'the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts, and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups, and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.' To better protect global intangible cultural heritage, UNESCO established the *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*, the *List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding*, and the *Register of Good Safeguarding Practice*. Regong art, as one of the earliest forms of folk craft art in China, was included in the first batch of National-level Intangible Heritage List in 2006. In 2009, it was inscribed on UNESCO's *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* under the field of traditional craftsmanship within the Convention, possessing significant historical, cultural, and artistic value.

Currently, China's cultural heritage preservation and utilization efforts have shifted from a focus solely on preservation to embracing diverse revitalization strategies. The guiding principles for strengthening the productive protection of intangible cultural heritage by the former Ministry of Culture also emphasized the importance of productive protection. Crafting a cultural brand and shaping a successful brand image can effectively enhance the visibility and influence of Regong art, injecting new vitality into its protection, inheritance, and industrial development.

2. Overview of Regong Art

Regong Art, an essential school of Tibetan Buddhism, is hailed as a 'brilliant pearl' in the treasure trove of China's ethnic folk culture and art. It boasts an abundance of cultural resources, distinctive religious hues, and regional characteristics. This art form embodies the historical development of Regong culture, reflecting profound cultural heritage and religious beliefs. It not only encapsulates the understanding and expression of Buddhist doctrine but also emphasizes depictions of natural landscapes and figures. Even today, Regong Art remains an integral part of the lives and production of the vast populace in the Regong region.

2.1. Historical Origins of Regong Art

Historically, the development of Regong Art evolved with the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism to southern Qinghai Province. From the late 10th century to the early 13th century, known as the 'post-prosperity period' of Tibetan Buddhism, a transformation occurred in its artistic expression as it adapted to the local aesthetic preferences alongside the rise of Tibetan Buddhism's ethnic identity in Qinghai-Tibetan regions. This historical period marked the birth of Regong Art.

As a vital segment of Chinese Tibetan Buddhist art, Regong Art represents a widely influential school within Tibetan Buddhism. Situated at the juncture of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and the Loess Plateau, it carries dual artistic characteristics of both Tibetan and Han ethnicities. It stands as an art form uniquely shaped by the integration of Tibetan plateau culture and central plain Buddhism, rendering Regong Art a testament to cultural amalgamation. Originating in the heartland of Tibetan culture, Regong Art emerged along the Longwu River in Tongren County, Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. Its genesis can be traced back to the Yuan Dynasty (13th century) and flourished alongside the prosperity of the Longwu Monastery. With over

seven centuries of development, Regong Art stands as one of China's significant and representative forms of intangible cultural heritage.

2.2. Expressive Forms of Regong Art

Regong Art encompasses a diverse array of artistic forms, including painting arts like thangka and murals, sculptural arts such as clay and bronze sculpture, engraving arts like stone and wood carving, embroidery arts, architectural decorative arts, and butter sculpture art. Among these, painting art is the most fundamental and crucial style. Serving as a religious art, Regong Art elucidates the intricate teachings of Tibetan Buddhism [2]. Its content primarily features Buddhist Jataka tales, Tibetan historical figures, myths, legends, and epics, while also encompassing aspects of daily life. Among these, Regong thangka art stands out prominently. As a pivotal component of Tibetan Buddhist art, thangka showcases the distinctive artistic expression of Tibetan Buddhism and has garnered significant popularity among Tibetan communities, giving rise to various regional painting styles. Regong thangka, in particular, has earned high acclaim due to its skilled artists and wide recognition.

The techniques and craftsmanship of Regong Art inherit traditional Tibetan Buddhist creative and expressive methods while also integrating painting techniques from other ethnic groups. This amalgamation has led to its unique artistic expression, granting Regong Art a distinct status both within China and on the international stage. Additionally, Regong Art represents a significant facet of Tibetan Buddhist art and ranks among the most representative forms of intangible cultural heritage within our nation's rich cultural resources.

2.3. Current Status of Industrial Development in Regong Art

Currently, Regong Art has achieved notable progress in productive protection and industrial development. The production and creation of Regong art pieces have become a principal source of income for many households in Tongren County. According to data released by the Cultural and Tourism Department of Qinghai Province, by the end of 2021, the cultural industry revenue of Huangnan Prefecture, where Regong Art resides, reached 1.307 billion yuan, representing a 10.7% growth compared to the previous year. The added value of the cultural industry accounted for over 3% of the entire prefecture's GDP. There were 594 cultural enterprises employing 33,881 individuals (with over 70% working in the arts and crafts sector), including 291 thangka enterprises with 21,630 employees, generating an annual revenue of 435 million yuan, and a per capita annual revenue of 20,100 yuan. The number of apprentices trained exceeded 5,000.

3. Current Analysis of Cultural Brand Image Development in Regong Art

Despite achieving certain progress in the industrialization of Regong Art, the establishment of a distinct cultural brand for Regong Art lags behind. Currently, Regong Art mainly thrives through household and workshop-based production, with art products such as thangkas and embroidered pieces primarily being sold offline in a fragmented manner, lacking unified management and collaborative division of labor. The quality of art products varies based on the skills of individual artists, and there is limited scale and brand recognition. Not having a reputable and well-known cultural brand

endorsement significantly impacts the sales of Regong Art products and the overall development of its cultural industry. A well-crafted brand image is pivotal in cultivating a successful cultural brand. At present, Regong Art also faces several deficiencies in brand image development that need to be addressed and improved further.

3.1. Mind Identification Level

3.1.1. Insufficient Clarity in Cultural Brand Positioning for Regong Art

A clearly defined brand positioning is a crucial premise for effective cultural promotion. Regong Art exhibits various forms of expression, and the current developmental equilibrium among these distinct art forms has not resulted in a cohesive and clear cultural brand positioning. In terms of cultural products, there is an insufficient exploration of related cultural resources and underlying cultural significance, failing to represent the rich cultural heritage behind Regong crafts. With its diverse array of expressive forms, each having its unique characteristics and untapped cultural resources, Regong Art presents numerous possibilities for development. However, the overall development level of Regong's cultural resources is not uniformly high. Apart from painting arts like thangkas, many cultural resources such as traditional dance and architecture remain in their nascent stages of development. Currently, the Regong Art cultural brand fails to articulate a core value that encapsulates the distinctive features of Regong's cultural resources, rendering it unable to represent the cultural diversity and variety inherent in Regong Art.

3.1.2. Lagging Overall Planning for Regong Art's cultural industry Development

In recent years, Regong Art has made certain strides in industrial development; however, due to the relatively short period of Regong Art's cultural industry development, its developmental ideology lags behind, and the overall planning for cultural industry remains exploratory. Currently, the scale of the Regong Art's cultural industry is limited, characterized by small production batches, low concentration, and lax management. Most industries lack self-regulatory organizations and have limited internal connections, resulting in a lack of specialized division of labor and collaboration [3]. Simultaneously, the absence of effective comprehensive planning, guidance, supervision, and management, coupled with inadequate protection of intellectual property rights, impedes the achievement of large-scale and intensive development goals. This situation does not favor the clear shaping of a cultural brand image.

3.2. Behavioral Identification Level

3.2.1. Insufficient cultural Brand Promotion Efforts in Regong Art

Currently, there is a lack of adequate funding invested in the promotion and marketing of the Regong Art cultural brand, resulting in insufficient promotional efforts. The promotional strategies predominantly adhere to traditional and singular methods such as television and print media. Digital platforms are underutilized, neglecting the interaction and integration between new media and traditional media. This suboptimal promotional effectiveness constrains the propagation and dissemination of the Regong Art cultural brand, contributing to its relatively low visibility.

3.2.2. Absence of Brand Management

Due to the relatively modest scale of the Regong Art's

cultural industry, during field research conducted in Tongren County, I observed that shops selling Regong art and crafts are scattered across the region. However, the majority of these businesses operate under a household or workshop production and sales model, and there is limited collaboration between merchants. The presence of large-scale institutions integrating production, academia, and research in Tongren County is scarce, resulting in a deficiency in brand management for Regong Art. This lack of comprehensive management from a unified brand perspective is coupled with the absence of a uniform management model and production processes, leading to substantial challenges in maintaining overall product quality. In the realm of cultural tourism, I noted that the development of cultural tourism related to Regong Culture in Tongren County is incomplete. Tourists are required to independently gather information about Regong Art-related attractions. The absence of well-planned specialized routes and introductions to relevant cultural backgrounds can impede visitors' experiences and subsequently affect the reputation of the Regong Art cultural brand.

3.3. Visual Identification Level

3.3.1. Lack of Distinctive Cultural Brand Identity

Currently, the Regong Art cultural brand does not present a unique and unified standard font, logo, or color scheme, resulting in limited recognition of the brand in the market. Additionally, various companies related to Regong Culture on the market design their own trademarks and logos with distinct visual identities. This lack of uniformity and comprehensive representation of Regong Art's cultural essence and depth can confuse consumers, ultimately impacting the visibility and influence of the Regong Art cultural brand.

3.3.2. Limited Application of Regong Cultural Elements

Currently, the integration of Regong Art into town-specific cultural construction, cultural tourism, performances, and other related cultural activities is insufficient. The use of Regong Art elements is not adequately integrated into Regong Cultural Tourism Festivals, urban construction, and landscapes in the Regong region. The cultural characteristics are not distinctly evident. Relevant activities associated with Regong Art fail to adequately reflect the conceptual and behavioral identification of the Regong Art cultural brand. As a result, they struggle to leave a lasting impression on consumers and tourists.

4. Strategic Considerations for Shaping the Cultural Brand Image of Regong Art through CIS System

The Corporate Identity System (CIS) refers to an enterprise's image recognition system, encompassing Mind Identity (MI), Behavioral Identity (BI), and Visual Identity (VI). The incorporation of CIS into brand image facilitates the conscious and systematic display and promotion of a brand's distinct features to the public. This approach fosters a standardized and differentiated perception of the brand in the market, enhancing its recognizability and leaving a positive impression.

Regong Art, recognized as a national-level intangible cultural heritage of China and listed in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, boasts abundant historical and folk cultural resources. Creating a

cultural brand for Regong Art based on the CIS system, coupled with the unique characteristics of Regong Art, contributes to the protection, inheritance, and development of Regong Art from a unified brand perspective. Constructing a favorable cultural brand image for Regong Art propels its sustainable development.

4.1. Shaping the Cultural Brand Image of Regong Art through Mind Identity (MI)

4.1.1. Precise Cultural Brand Positioning

Regong Art encompasses an extensive cultural essence. Throughout its history, Regong Art has earned the moniker of a "cultural sanctuary," characterized by diversity, ethnic uniqueness, and concentration in China's western ethnic regions. Regong Art encompasses diverse forms of expression, each resonating with strong regional and ethnic characteristics, as well as unique artistic styles. The art's distinctiveness lies in its organic fusion and mature development of diverse cultural elements, constituting its richness and diversity. The region's multicultural origins, stemming from various ethnic groups including the Mongols, Tibetans, Hans, and Huis who settled in Regong since the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties, have laid the foundation for its cultural diversity. The amalgamation of diverse religious and cultural elements, such as Han Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, indigenous religions, Taoism, Islam, and Confucianism, has given rise to a distinctive religious and cultural landscape in the Regong region [4]. Further accentuating Regong Art's diversity. Each cultural facet carries historical accumulations, reflecting various cultural backgrounds, making it challenging to isolate a single element that comprises a cultural category.

In light of the above, the unique attributes of "diversity" and "mystery" can be promoted as distinctive labels for Regong Culture. This strategic approach elevates awareness of Regong Art products and cultural tourism, attracting increased attention from audiences and tourists. The establishment of a comprehensive feedback mechanism to assess consumer experiences continuously refines and maintains Regong Cultural brand image and market positioning, enhancing its impact and reputation.

Furthermore, presenting Regong Art's core values through a dual-pronged approach is recommended. In the realm of cultural and artistic products, the core value of "diversity and multiplicity" can be emphasized, highlighting the wide-ranging styles of Regong Art and the diversity of its cultural heritage. In the context of cultural tourism, introducing the core value of "mystery and enchantment" could attract tourists by framing the experience as a journey to unveil the enigmatic facets of Regong, thereby enhancing Regong Art's visibility.

4.1.2. Strategic Development Planning

Currently confined to family-based and decentralized production, achieving large-scale and intensive development for Regong Art remains a challenge. The variable quality of produced art and crafts necessitates the refinement and rational allocation of cultural resources. Presently, Regong Thangka art enjoys high recognition in the market. As such, Thangka can serve as the initial cornerstone of Regong Art's cultural brand, propelling the industrialization of other cultural resources. The establishment of a 'production-learning-research' system in the Regong region is also imperative, aggregating diverse talents and resources to bolster unified training for Regong Art practitioners and to

enhance quality control for Regong Art crafts. Centering around the core brand 'Chinese Regong Culture,' strengthening cultural infrastructure, enhancing the cultural service system, and reshaping market participants should be prioritized [5].

In the context of cultural tourism, proper planning must be undertaken to unlock historical resources and cultural connotations associated with Regong Art-related attractions. Crafting a Regong cultural tourism atmosphere, optimizing visitor experiences, and establishing mature Regong cultural tourism routes are crucial. Fully utilizing and developing festive resources can attract tourists. Establishing a Regong Art Museum could also provide visitors with a comprehensive understanding of the development and cultural essence of Regong Art, allowing them to experience the 'Journey to Unveil Regong's Mystery.'

4.2. Shaping the Cultural Brand Image of Regong Art through Behavioral Identity (BI)

4.2.1. Amplifying the Promotion Efforts of Regong Cultural Brand

Despite being the sole national-level historic and cultural city in Qinghai Province, Regong remains relatively obscure due to inadequate cultural promotion. Efforts should be directed toward expanding the reach of communication and revitalizing public memory points associated with Regong's cultural brand. Leveraging traditional media for communication is recommended. Newspapers, magazines, radio, and television offer cost-effective options with authoritative outreach capabilities, ensuring effective advertising. Initiatives such as dedicating columns in newspapers to Regong Culture's historical roots, artistic techniques, and distinctive tourism features could be adopted. Television's immersive capabilities can be harnessed to produce short films and documentaries introducing Regong Culture, enhancing local identification, while also elevating Regong Art's visibility and reputation among a wider audience. Leveraging new media platforms, such as short video sharing platforms, to disseminate Regong Culture is promising. The rapid growth of short video platform users underscores its potential impact, presenting an effective method to reach broader audiences. Establishing a Regong Art app to promote both traditional dance fitness activities and online tutorials for thangka painting, wood carving, and pile embroidery can facilitate Regong Art's further development and promotion.

Moreover, complementing media propagation, public outreach is equally pivotal. Utilizing traditional cultural festivals as resources to host events like Regong Tourism and Culture Experience Festival, Thangka International Art Festival, and Regong Dance Festival enhances public engagement, providing a robust impetus for shaping and promoting the brand image of Qinghai Regong Art.

4.2.2. Emphasis on Brand Management and Consumer Satisfaction

Scientific and orderly management is pivotal for constructing a long-lasting brand. Adopting advanced international brand management models and experiences tailored to Regong Art's characteristics is recommended. This fosters a brand management approach in sync with Regong Art's unique attributes, propelling the growth and competitiveness of the cultural brand.

Moreover, prioritizing consumer satisfaction is key. In the realm of Regong Art product sales, stringent quality control measures must be in place to ensure compliance with established standards. Implementing a robust feedback mechanism and effective after-sales services, coupled with a thorough understanding of customer experiences, is pivotal. In the context of cultural tourism, while designing mature tourism routes, opportunities for direct engagement with Regong Culture should be introduced. Activities such as donning traditional attire, sampling local delicacies, and experiencing the production of Regong Art crafts can be provided. Attention must also be given to staff training and assessment, encompassing specialized knowledge, ethical standards, and comprehensive qualities related to Regong Art. This guarantees the provision of high-quality services to visitors, enhancing their overall experience and satisfaction.

4.3. Visual Identity (VI) for Shaping the Cultural Brand Image of Regong Art

4.3.1. Development of a Distinctive Brand Identity

Brand identification is conveyed through images and text in market communications and other brand stimuli, creating unexpected, surprising, or unanticipated meanings that influence consumers' perceptions, experiences, and expectations, thereby forming a brand image [6]. A unique brand identity for Regong Art's cultural brand includes standard typography, logo, and color palette. It serves as the comprehensive and distinct visual expression system of Regong Art, representing the most prominent and recognizable aspect of the brand image, and embodies the Mind Identity (MI) and Behavioral Identity (BI) of Regong Art. The creation of the brand identity should align with the region's landscape, folk characteristics, and the inherent features of Regong Art. Given that Regong Art embodies quintessential Tibetan culture and shares a close connection with Tibetan Buddhism, the design of the logo and typography should incorporate Tibetan cultural and religious elements. Employing professionals to design a unique and recognizable logo and typography for Regong Art's cultural brand is recommended. In terms of standard colors, the combination of Tibetan yellow, Tibetan red, and Tibetan blue can be considered. In the 'Eight Auspicious Symbols of Tibet' color system, Tibetan yellow signifies earth, light, and hope, carrying strong Tibetan Buddhist connotations; Tibetan red symbolizes flames, representing joy and celebration; Tibetan blue represents the sky and lakes, indicating mystery and loftiness. The fusion of these three colors distinctly reflects the inherent characteristics of Regong Art.

In the process of promoting and marketing Regong Art, the designed brand identity should be fully utilized to enhance recognizability. The distinctive brand identity should be integrated into the construction of Regong Art-related areas, on-site arrangements for Regong-related events, and the design of cultural and creative products. This application deepens consumers' and tourists' impressions of the Regong cultural brand, further augmenting the visibility and influence of Regong Art's cultural brand, infusing it with more vitality.

4.3.2. Formulation of a Unique Slogan

In the visual identity system of a cultural brand, a slogan plays an important role as well. A precise, succinct, and memorable slogan should be designed, aligned with the characteristics of Regong crafts and cultural tourism, and grounded in the core values of Mind Identity (MI). For artistic aspects, the slogan "Eastern Elegance, Artistic Treasure"

could be considered; for Regong cultural tourism, the slogan "Echoes of the Tibetan Land, Cultural Sanctuary" could be used. Employing these slogans extensively in promotional and marketing activities related to Regong Art maximizes their impact, contributing to heightened awareness and influence of the Regong cultural brand.

5. Conclusion

Drawing upon relevant research literature pertaining to Regong Art, its industrialization status, and strategies for shaping its cultural brand image, this paper has analyzed the current status of Regong Art's industrialization development and the formation of its cultural brand image. Addressing the challenges and bottlenecks encountered in constructing Regong Art's cultural brand, this study has utilized the CIS system to guide the formation of the cultural brand image of Regong Art. In the realm of Mind Identity (MI), suggestions have been proposed, including accurate brand positioning based on regional cultural characteristics, optimal resource integration, and rational developmental planning. In the context of Behavioral Identity (BI), recommendations have been provided for intensifying Regong Art's cultural brand promotion efforts and placing a strong emphasis on brand management and heightened consumer satisfaction. Pertaining to Visual Identity (VI), suggestions encompass the creation of a unique brand identity and the formulation of a distinctive slogan. It is anticipated that the recommendations and measures outlined above will contribute to the shaping of

Regong Art's cultural brand image.

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