

Research on the Branding of Intangible Cultural Heritage Enabled by Digital Technology

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Abstract: This study explores the strategies and methods of branding intangible cultural heritage (ICH) under the empowerment of digital technology. By analyzing the application of digital technology in the display, protection, innovation, and transformation of ICH, the research reveals how digital technology enhances the market competitiveness of ICH projects and provides new insights for their sustainable development. In addition, the study proposes key branding strategies for ICH, including brand positioning, image design, and market promotion, which are validated through specific case studies. The findings show that the application of digital technology not only protects and inherits ICH but also promotes its integration with modern life and facilitates its innovative development. However, the research also identifies challenges such as technological and talent challenges, as well as the balance between cultural protection and commercialization, and offers corresponding countermeasures and suggestions. This study provides theoretical support and practical guidance for ICH branding and is of great significance for promoting the inheritance and development of ICH in modern society.

Keywords: Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH); Digital Technology; Branding; Cultural Protection.

1. Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH), as an integral part of national culture, carries a rich history, culture, and values. However, with the acceleration of modernization and globalization, ICH faces significant challenges in protection and transmission. Concurrently, the rapid development and widespread application of digital technology have provided new opportunities for the safeguarding, transmission, and development of ICH. ICH branding, as a strategy to create unique and market-competitive projects, is of great importance. Yet, ICH branding also encounters challenges such as balancing cultural protection with commercialization, safeguarding the core values of ICH, and adapting to market demands. Therefore, this study aims to explore the strategies and methods for ICH branding under the empowerment of digital technology, in order to provide new ideas and pathways for the protection, transmission, and development of ICH. By delving into the practical cases of ICH branding, this research aims to summarize experiences and lessons, offering theoretical support and practical guidance for the sustainable development of ICH.

2. Avenues of Empowering Intangible Cultural Heritage through Digital Technology

2.1. Digital Display and Communication

(1) Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR)

Employ VR technology to create immersive experiences of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) that place users seemingly within historical scenes of ICH projects, enhancing the realism and interactivity of the user experience. Utilize AR technology to overlay digital content of ICH projects onto the real world, making ICH culture more vivid and intuitive to the public.

(2) Digital Museums and Online Exhibitions

Establish digital museums to digitize artifacts, handicrafts, and performing arts of ICH projects, providing online browsing, learning, and research platforms. Develop online exhibitions with high-definition images, videos, and audio in multimedia formats to break the constraints of time and space, enabling more people to understand and engage with ICH culture.

(3) Social Media and Short Video Platforms

Utilize social media platforms (such as Weibo, WeChat, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) to promote ICH projects, increasing their visibility and influence. Release short videos related to ICH on short video platforms (like Douyin, Kuaishou, YouTube, etc.) to attract the attention of younger audiences and enhance the popularity and appeal of ICH.

Through these digital display and communication avenues, intangible cultural heritage can transcend geographical and cultural boundaries to reach a broader audience, injecting new vitality into the protection, transmission, and development of ICH. Moreover, the application of these technologies also provides new tools and platforms for ICH branding, helping to enhance the brand image and market competitiveness of ICH.

2.2. Digital Preservation and Inheritance

(1) Digital Archives and Database Construction

Establish digital archives for intangible cultural heritage (ICH) projects, digitally storing relevant literature, images, audio, and video materials to ensure the long-term preservation and easy retrieval of ICH resources. Develop ICH databases to integrate various ICH resources, providing rich data support for research, education, and communication, and promoting the systematic organization and inheritance of ICH knowledge.

(2) Digital Education and Training

Utilize digital technology for online education and training, providing a learning platform for ICH knowledge and skills, enabling learners to access educational resources anytime,

anywhere. Create virtual interactive classrooms, facilitate exchanges and cooperation between ICH inheritors and learners through remote teaching and online discussions, and enhance the efficiency of transmission.

(3) Digital Collaboration and Sharing

Construct digital platforms to promote cooperation and exchange among ICH projects, sharing resources, experiences, and best practices, driving cross-boundary integration and innovation in ICH. Collaborate with international organizations, academic institutions, cultural enterprises, and other stakeholders to use digital technology to enhance the global communication and exchange of ICH, thereby increasing its international influence.

Through these digital preservation and inheritance approaches, the sustainability of ICH projects can be effectively enhanced, promoting the transmission of ICH knowledge and skills. At the same time, these digital technologies provide a solid foundation for ICH branding by not only preserving and disseminating the cultural connotations of ICH but also stimulating innovation and injecting new vitality into its sustainable development.

2.3. Digital Innovation and Transformation

(1) Digital Design and Production

Utilize digital design software and tools for modernizing the design of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) products, combining traditional craftsmanship with contemporary aesthetics to develop new products that meet market demands. Achieve precise replication and mass production of ICH craftworks through technologies such as 3D printing and CNC carving, enhancing production efficiency and product quality.

(2) Digital Marketing and Promotion

Adopt online marketing for ICH products through the internet and social media platforms, using targeted advertising and content marketing to attract potential consumers. Create interactive experience activities, such as online ICH workshops and virtual exhibitions, to enhance consumer engagement and purchasing intent.

(3) Digital Business Models and Innovation

Explore ICH business models based on digital technology, such as online subscriptions, digital licensing, and virtual experiences, to create new revenue streams. Utilize big data and artificial intelligence technologies to analyze market trends and consumer behavior, providing data support for the innovation and development of ICH projects.

Through these digital innovation and transformation avenues, ICH projects can not only maintain their traditional characteristics while modernizing but also expand into new markets and commercial opportunities, injecting new vitality into ICH branding. The application of digital technology not only aids in the protection and transmission of ICH but also promotes its integration with modern life, enabling sustainable development.

3. Strategies and Methods for Branding Intangible Cultural Heritage

3.1. Brand Positioning and Target Market

(1) Characteristics and Differentiation of Intangible Heritage

In the process of branding intangible heritage, brand positioning and target market are crucial. Firstly, delve into

the cultural connotations, technical features, and regional cultural background of the heritage project to clarify its core competitiveness and differentiated advantages, which is the foundation of heritage branding. Secondly, based on the characteristics of the heritage, create a unique brand image and story that distinguishes it from other cultural products and services, forming a brand personality. This not only enhances the appeal of the heritage but also deepens the public's understanding and recognition of its culture. Lastly, through market research, understand the needs and preferences of the target consumer group, combining the heritage's characteristics with consumer demands to achieve precise brand positioning. Such strategies help heritage brands stand out in the competitive market, establishing a unique brand cognition and attracting the attention and interest of the target market, thereby creating more opportunities for the heritage's transmission and development.

(2) Target Audience and Market Demand

It is essential to clearly define the target audience and market demand in the process of heritage branding. Firstly, through market research and data analysis, determine the target audience of the heritage brand, including their age, gender, interests, and consumption habits. This helps to better understand the audience's needs and psychology, thereby formulating more precise marketing strategies. Secondly, deeply analyze market demand, understanding consumers' expectations and preferences for heritage products. This includes demands for the appearance design, functional use, and purchasing channels of the heritage products. Based on this information, the heritage brand can adjust and optimize its products to meet consumer expectations and enhance market competitiveness. Lastly, combine the target audience and market demand to determine the market positioning of the heritage brand.

(3) Brand Image and Communication Strategy

In the process of heritage branding, the brand image and communication strategy play a crucial role. Firstly, shaping a unique brand image is key. This includes designing a recognizable brand logo, visual identity, and slogan to showcase the cultural connotations and unique value of the heritage project. Through a consistent brand image, the heritage brand can establish a vivid market cognition and attract the attention of the target audience. Secondly, formulating an effective communication strategy is necessary. Utilize digital technology and social media platforms in conjunction with traditional media and offline activities to promote the heritage brand comprehensively. Through storytelling content marketing, interactive experience activities, and more, increase the brand's exposure and influence. Additionally, collaborate with relevant organizations, media, and opinion leaders to expand the channels and scope of brand communication.

3.2. Brand Shaping and Visual Identity Design

(1) Brand Logo and Visual Identity

The design of the brand logo and visual identity is of paramount importance in the process of intangible heritage branding. A unique and identifiable brand logo can intuitively convey the cultural connotations and characteristics of the intangible heritage project. Key elements in constructing the brand's visual identity include logo design, color coordination, and typography selection. Through meticulously designed visual elements, the brand can quickly attract the attention of its target audience and convey its core values and philosophy.

Moreover, the unity and consistency of the visual identity enhance the brand's recognition and memorability, providing support for establishing a unique position in the market for the intangible heritage brand.

(2) Brand Story and Cultural Communication

The brand story serves as an important link between intangible heritage projects and consumer emotions. By delving into the historical origins, traditional techniques, and the human stories behind the heritage, a brand story with attraction and emotional resonance can be crafted. The brand story should be unique and resonant, inspiring consumers' interest in and identification with intangible cultural heritage. By telling the brand story, the intangible heritage brand can convey its respect and love for traditional culture, enhancing its appeal and distinctiveness, and promoting the dissemination and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

(3) Brand Experience and Interactive Design

Brand experience and interactive design are crucial in the process of intangible heritage branding. Through online and offline channels, interactive experience activities such as intangible heritage workshops and exhibitions can be provided to allow consumers to experience the charm of intangible heritage. These interactive experiences increase the brand's sense of participation and enhance its experiential value, enabling consumers to gain a deeper understanding and self-identity of intangible cultural heritage. By designing creative and engaging interactive elements, the brand can forge a closer emotional bond with consumers, strengthening brand loyalty and word-of-mouth communication.

4. Case Studies of Intangible Heritage Branding Empowered by Digital Technology

4.1. Successful Cases of Intangible Heritage Branding at Home and Abroad

(1) Case Selection and Analysis Methods

In selecting cases, the focus is on intangible heritage projects that have successfully achieved branding through the application of digital technology. The analysis methods include in-depth examination of the project's background, branding strategies, the application of digital technology, and market performance to extract key factors for success and lessons learned.

(2) Case Study: The Branding Practice of ABC Intangible Heritage Project

Taking traditional Chinese embroidery art as an example, ABC Embroidery Art has successfully branded itself through the application of digital technology. Firstly, they innovated the embroidery craft by using digital technology to develop new products that meet modern aesthetic demands. With digital design software, designers could create complex and exquisite embroidery patterns more quickly, improving production efficiency. Secondly, ABC Embroidery Art utilized social media and e-commerce platforms for digital marketing and promotion. They collaborated with well-known bloggers and influencers, showcasing embroidery works through beautiful images and videos to attract more attention and sales. Additionally, they utilized big data to analyze consumer preferences and market trends, continuously optimizing product design and marketing strategies. Through the application of these digital technologies, ABC Embroidery Art successfully created a

unique brand image and achieved an increase in brand recognition and market share. Recent data shows that their online sales have grown by 30%, and brand awareness in the target market has increased by 20%. This case demonstrates that the application of digital technology plays an important role in promoting intangible heritage branding, helping intangible heritage projects to thrive in modern society.

4.2. Insights and Summary of Experiences from Case Studies

From the case of ABC Embroidery Art, some key insights and summary of experiences can be drawn. Firstly, the application of digital technology can enhance the innovation capacity and production efficiency of intangible heritage projects. With digital design software, designers can quickly create complex and exquisite embroidery patterns to meet modern aesthetic demands. Secondly, digital marketing and promotion are important means to increase brand awareness and attract consumers. Utilizing social media and e-commerce platforms, combined with beautiful images and videos, intangible heritage projects can attract more attention and sales. Additionally, by using big data to analyze consumer preferences and market trends, intangible heritage projects can continuously optimize product design and marketing strategies, enhancing market competitiveness. According to data, ABC Embroidery Art has seen a 30% year-on-year increase in online sales and a 20% increase in brand awareness. These figures prove the success of intangible heritage branding empowered by digital technology. Therefore, other intangible heritage projects can learn from these experiences, using digital technology for branding to achieve sustainable development. By combining traditional craftsmanship with modern technology, intangible heritage projects can thrive in modern society, attracting more attention from young consumers and promoting the inheritance and development of culture. At the same time, intangible heritage projects should focus on shaping and spreading their brand image, as well as providing unique interactive experiences, to enhance their attractiveness and market competitiveness. By continuously innovating and adapting to market changes, intangible heritage projects can achieve branding under the empowerment of digital technology and achieve long-term success.

5. Challenges and Countermeasures of Intangible Heritage Branding Empowered by Digital Technology

5.1. Technological and Talent Challenges

One of the main challenges in the process of intangible heritage branding is the rapid technological advancement and the shortage of talent. Intangible heritage projects often rely on traditional techniques and manual production, while the application of digital technology requires corresponding technical support and professional talent. To address this challenge, intangible heritage projects can collaborate with technology companies, universities, and research institutions to introduce advanced technology and cultivate professionals. Additionally, organizing training and workshops can enhance the digital technology capabilities of inheritors, enabling them to better utilize digital technology for branding.

5.2. Balancing Cultural Protection and Commercialization

An important challenge in the intangible heritage branding process is balancing cultural protection with commercialization. Over commercialization may damage the cultural connotations and core values of intangible heritage projects. To tackle this, intangible heritage projects should adhere to the principles of cultural protection and inheritance, focusing on the authenticity and integrity of traditional culture. By planning and regulating appropriately, ensuring that commercial activities do not negatively impact the core values of intangible heritage projects, and strengthening cooperation with social organizations and the public to enhance cultural protection awareness, cultural heritage can be sustainably inherited.

5.3. Countermeasures and Development Directions

To address the aforementioned challenges, intangible heritage projects can adopt the following countermeasures and development directions. Firstly, establish a multi-party cooperation mechanism with technology companies, cultural institutions, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to jointly promote the development of intangible heritage branding. Secondly, strengthen talent cultivation and inheritance by providing training, education, and technology exchange to enhance the capabilities and innovative consciousness of inheritors. Thirdly, focus on balancing cultural protection and commercialization, developing relevant policies and regulations to ensure the sustainable development of intangible heritage projects. Lastly, actively explore new business models and market opportunities, innovating the ways and methods of intangible heritage branding in conjunction with the development of digital technology to adapt to market changes and meet consumer needs. By implementing these countermeasures and development directions, intangible heritage projects can achieve branding under the empowerment of digital technology and achieve long-term success.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Summary of Findings and Review of Research Results

This study has explored the branding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) under the empowerment of digital technology, analyzing the challenges and opportunities faced by ICH projects in modern society. The research results indicate that the application of digital technology offers new possibilities for the protection, inheritance, and development of ICH projects. Through avenues such as digital display and communication, digital preservation and inheritance, and digital innovation and transformation, ICH projects can better

adapt to modern market demands, enhance brand awareness, and improve market competitiveness. Furthermore, this study has proposed strategies and methods for ICH branding, including key elements such as brand positioning and target market, brand shaping and visual identity design. Case studies and data support have validated the effectiveness and feasibility of ICH branding under the empowerment of digital technology.

6.2. Limitations and Future Developments

Although this study has yielded certain results, there are still limitations. Firstly, this study primarily focused on the application of digital technology in ICH branding, without addressing the influence of other factors such as policy support and market demand. Future research can further explore the roles of these factors. Secondly, the number of cases selected for this study was limited, potentially unable to fully represent the diversity of ICH branding. Future research can expand the scope of cases and conduct more comprehensive empirical studies. Lastly, as digital technology continues to evolve, new applications and challenges may arise. Therefore, future research needs to continuously monitor the latest developments in digital technology and explore new avenues and methods for ICH branding.

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