

Research on the External Communication Paths of Hainan's Local Culture

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Abstract: Rooted in the tropical island ecology and diverse historical accumulation, Hainan's local culture encompasses a rich array of forms such as folk customs, historical relics, and intangible cultural heritage. Under the construction of the Free Trade Port and the "Belt and Road" Initiative, its external communication is supported by both the uniqueness of resources and external opportunities. However, there are still problems such as fragmented content, traditional channels, and insufficient cross-cultural adaptation. This paper explores the external communication paths of Hainan's local culture by combining cultural communication theories. By refining core cultural symbols, developing hierarchical content, integrating official, folk, and offline multi-dimensional platforms, implementing targeted communication for the Southeast Asian Chinese community as well as the Asia-Pacific and European and American markets, and at the same time strengthening policy support and talent cultivation, it provides a practical direction for Hainan's local culture to break through communication bottlenecks and enhance its international influence, thereby contributing to the construction of the cultural soft power of the Free Trade Port and the implementation of the national cultural going-out strategy.

Keywords: Hainan's local culture; external communication; cross-cultural communication; communication paths

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1. Introduction

As China's only tropical island province, Hainan has formed a unique cultural pattern in the long-term historical development. It not only has folk traditions nurtured by the tropical island ecology, but also bears the historical marks left by the Maritime Silk Road, and moreover, possesses the intangible cultural heritage inherited by ethnic minorities such as the Li and Miao. With the advancement of the construction of Hainan Free Trade Port, the economic and cultural exchanges between Hainan and the international community have become increasingly frequent. The external communication of local culture has become an important way to enhance Hainan's international image and strengthen its cultural soft power. Currently, cultural external communication has become an important part of regional development and national cultural strategy. Relying on resource advantages and policy opportunities, Hainan's local culture has a solid foundation for external communication^[1]. Nevertheless, in practice, it still faces challenges such as insufficient communication efficiency and low international recognition. Sorting out the feasibility and current situation of the external communication of Hainan's local culture and constructing a scientific and effective communication path can not only promote the transformation of Hainan's cultural resources into cultural competitiveness, but also provide practical

references for the going-out of China's regional cultures, thus helping to build an international cultural exchange pattern of pluralistic coexistence.

2. Feasibility of External Communication of Hainan's Local Culture

2.1. Unique Advantages of Cultural Resources

The uniqueness of Hainan's local culture stems from the particularity of its geographical environment and historical development, forming a cultural system different from that of inland areas, which provides rich materials and differentiated competitiveness for external communication. From the perspective of ecology and folk customs, the tropical island ecology of Hainan has nurtured a unique way of production and life. Folk activities such as the "March 3rd" festival of the Li people, the Panhuang Dance of the Miao people, and the maritime fishing songs of the Dan people deeply integrate the natural environment with humanistic traditions, demonstrating the dual characteristics of marine culture and tropical culture. Such cultural forms are intuitive and appealing, easily arousing the curiosity and recognition of international audiences. From a historical perspective, relics of the Maritime Silk Road such as Wenchang Confucian Temple and Yazhou Ancient City have witnessed the historical exchanges between Hainan and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, providing narrative support for communication. Additionally, the inclusive characteristics formed by the integration of Central Plains, Lingnan, and Southeast Asian cultures conform to the need for seeking common ground while reserving differences in cross-cultural communication^[2]. Among the intangible cultural heritage, items such as the Li people's textile, dyeing, weaving, and embroidery techniques and coconut carving break through language barriers with their concrete skills, serving as important media for cross-cultural communication and enhancing the communication value.

2.2. External Opportunities and Practical Conditions

The construction of the Free Trade Port has raised international attention on Hainan. International media coverage has expanded from the economic field to the cultural field. The visa-free policy and the expansion of international air routes have also facilitated folk cultural exchanges, creating traffic dividends for communication. Against the background of the integration of culture and tourism, Li village tourism and intangible cultural heritage experience projects integrate culture into tourism products, making tourists secondary carriers of culture. As a pivot of the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road", Hainan has built a cultural dialogue platform with countries along the route through events such as the China-ASEAN Cultural Forum^[3]. Furthermore, the development of digital technology and the optimization of the cross-cultural communication environment provide technical support and environmental guarantees for the external communication of Hainan's culture. The popularization of the Internet and new media technologies has broken the temporal and spatial limitations of traditional communication. Technical means such as short video platforms, social media, and virtual reality (VR) enable Hainan's culture to be presented in a more vivid and diverse manner. For example, the production process of Li brocade is displayed on TikTok (the international version of Douyin), and VR technology is used to restore the historical scene of Yazhou Ancient City, enhancing the interactivity and sense of immersion in cultural communication^[4]. At the same time, with the increasing frequency of global cultural exchanges, the international community's tolerance for diverse cultures has significantly improved, creating a favorable external environment for Hainan's local culture to "go global" and reducing cognitive barriers and cultural discounts in cultural communication.

3. Current Situation of External Communication of Hainan's Local Culture

3.1. Fragmented Communication Content, Lack of Systematicness and Depth

The content of the external communication of Hainan's local culture is scattered, and a complete narrative system has not been constructed. Most of the communication focuses on superficial symbols such as coconut trees and beaches, while

insufficiently exploring the cultural core such as the Li people's "March 3rd" festival and the history of the Maritime Silk Road, making it difficult for the audience to understand the in-depth value. Various communication subjects operate independently. The content from the government, enterprises, and institutions is repetitive and lacks connection. For instance, when different subjects promote Hainan's cuisine, they only list the dishes without explaining them in the context of food culture, failing to present the complete picture of Hainan's culture. This greatly reduces the recognition and influence of communication, making it difficult to form a clear cultural impression in the minds of international audiences^[5].

3.2. Traditional Communication Channels, Insufficient Use of New Media

Currently, the external communication of Hainan's culture relies heavily on traditional channels. International cultural exchange activities and tourism promotion conferences have narrow coverage, poor interactivity, and high costs^[6]. The use of new media is inadequate. Overseas social media accounts are updated slowly and have a single form, mainly using text and pictures, with few popular forms such as short videos and live broadcasts. There is insufficient research on platform algorithms and audience preferences, leading to blind content pushing and low exposure and interaction rates. The layout of emerging platforms is lagging behind, missing the traffic opportunities of platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels. As a result, the scope of cultural communication is limited, making it difficult to reach a wide global audience.

3.3. Insufficient Cross-Cultural Adaptation, Deviations in Audience Cognition

In the communication of Hainan's culture, the awareness of cross-cultural adaptation is weak. The content narrative does not take into account the cultural background, thinking patterns, and language habits of overseas audiences, and lacks the translation of cultural symbols. For example, when introducing historical culture, Chinese-style narration and professional terms are used without explaining in combination with the overseas context, making it difficult for the audience to understand^[7]. The translation quality is low, with grammatical errors and semantic deviations, failing to accurately convey the cultural connotation. Insufficient attention is paid to the cultural preferences and taboos of different regions, resulting in poor targeting of communication content and triggering cognitive conflicts. This leads to a one-sided cognition of Hainan's culture among international audiences, which only stays at the level of tropical tourism, ignoring its diverse and unique values.

4. Construction of External Communication Paths for Hainan's Local Culture

4.1. Dig Deep into Cultural Connotation and Construct a Narrative System

4.1.1. Refine Core Symbols and Build a Symbol System

Core cultural symbols that are both unique and internationally adaptable should be selected from Hainan's cultural resources, such as Li brocade, Hainan's node on the Maritime Silk Road, and tropical island ecology, to form a cultural communication symbol system with coexisting core and derivative symbols. Through unified visual design and narrative style, these symbols are integrated into communication carriers. For example, a series of cultural and creative products can be designed around Li brocade, and cooperation with international design institutions can be promoted to develop clothing products. In addition, the authority of symbols can be enhanced through international intangible cultural heritage certification, making the core symbols the "international business card" of Hainan's culture^[8].

4.1.2. Develop Hierarchical Content to Adapt to the Needs of Diverse Audiences

There are differences in cultural background, cognitive level, and interest preferences among different audience groups. Developing hierarchical communication content is the key to improving the accuracy of cultural communication. A three-tier content system consisting of basic, advanced, and in-depth levels should be constructed according to the type of audience. The basic level is for the general public, presenting cultural symbols through short videos and interactive mini-

games, such as the “1-Minute Hainan Culture” video clips introducing folk customs^[9]. The advanced level is aimed at cultural enthusiasts, interpreting the connotation through documentaries and online lectures, such as the documentary “Yazhou Ancient City” analyzing historical values. The in-depth level serves professional groups, providing theoretical support through academic works and case collections, such as “Research on the International Communication of Hainan’s Intangible Cultural Heritage”, to meet the cognitive needs of different audiences.

4.2. Integrate Multi-Dimensional Platforms to Achieve Accurate Reach

4.2.1. Rely on Official Platforms to Enhance the Voice of Mainstream Media

Official platforms, with authority and credibility, are the core positions for the external communication of Hainan’s local culture. It is necessary to enhance the mainstream voice of cultural communication by expanding cooperation with international mainstream media and operating a multilingual official social media matrix. In terms of expanding cooperation with international mainstream media, columns on culture can be set up in collaboration with international media such as the Lianhe Zaobao in Southeast Asia and the National Geographic Channel in Europe and America, and documentaries on intangible cultural heritage can be co-produced with Netflix. Foreign media reporters can be invited to conduct on-the-spot interviews to produce authentic reports. For the operation of the multilingual social media matrix, accounts in languages such as Chinese, English, and Thai should be established according to the target markets, covering platforms such as Facebook and TikTok^[10]. Professional teams should push content according to the characteristics of each platform. For example, short videos should be the focus on TikTok, and in-depth interpretations on Facebook, so as to form a communication synergy.

4.2.2. Leverage Folk and Commercial Channels to Stimulate Communication Vitality

Folk and commercial channels are flexible and market-sensitive, which can make up for the shortcomings of official channels and stimulate the folk vitality and market momentum of cultural communication. To encourage User-Generated Content (UGC), platforms should be built and incentive mechanisms improved to mobilize the communication enthusiasm of overseas users and foreigners living in Hainan. For example, “Hainan Culture Vlog” challenges can be launched on overseas platforms, and travel bloggers can be invited to drive their fans to participate, with rewards given to high-quality content^[11]. In addition, cooperation with multinational enterprises can be carried out. For instance, international fashion brands can be encouraged to incorporate Li brocade elements into their product designs, and multinational tourism platforms can be promoted to launch “intangible cultural heritage experience tours”, so as to expand the cultural coverage through commercial channels.

4.2.3. Utilize Offline Exchange Activities to Promote Immersive Experience

Offline exchange activities can provide immersive cultural experiences, enhance the perception and recognition of Hainan’s culture among international audiences, and serve as an important supplement to cultural external communication. When organizing cultural weeks, exhibitions, and performances, attention should be paid to the localization adaptation and interactive design of the activities to enhance their attractiveness and influence. Regular Hainan Cultural Week activities can be held in key overseas cities, such as Bangkok, Singapore, Sydney, and Los Angeles, focusing on carrying out activities such as Hainan intangible cultural heritage exhibitions, folk performances, and cultural lectures^[12]. The exhibitions can adopt diverse forms such as physical objects, multimedia, and interactive experiences. For example, while displaying physical Li brocade works, VR technology can be used to restore the brocade production process, and a brocade experience area can be set up for the audience to have a hands-on try. Folk performances can be adjusted according to local cultural preferences. For example, local musical instrument elements can be incorporated into performances in Southeast Asia to enhance cultural resonance.

4.3. Clarify Target Markets and Promote Targeted Communication

4.3.1. Focus on the Southeast Asian Chinese Cultural Circle

The Southeast Asian Chinese cultural circle has a profound historical origin and cultural connection with Hainan, making it a priority target market for the external communication of Hainan's local culture. By relying on Hainan's overseas Chinese network, cultural activities can be held in collaboration with Hainan associations in Southeast Asia, and the descendants of overseas Chinese can be invited to participate in the "March 3rd" festival. "Cultural stations" can be set up in cities with large Chinese populations to hold intangible cultural heritage exhibitions and food festivals^[13]. Content related to overseas Chinese can be developed, such as documentaries on immigration history, which can be disseminated through Facebook and LINE. In addition, the business and media resources led by overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia can be used to expand the influence of cultural communication^[14].

4.3.2. Gradually Expand to the Asia-Pacific and European and American Markets

The Asia-Pacific and European and American markets are important potential markets for the external communication of Hainan's local culture. Although there are challenges such as large cultural differences and weak cognitive foundations, relying on the international attention of Hainan Free Trade Port and unique cultural resources, it is feasible to gradually expand into these markets. For the Asia-Pacific market, the focus should be on ecological and marine culture^[15]. "Ecological and cultural tours" can be promoted to Japan, with publicity through magazines such as *Tabi (Travel)*. Intangible cultural heritage exhibitions and marine culture forums can be held in Australia to promote cultural dialogue. For the European and American markets, the emphasis should be on the innovation of intangible cultural heritage. Li brocade exhibitions can be held in Paris, displaying modern works co-created with designers. Cooperation with the British Museum can be carried out to launch research projects. A "Master of Intangible Cultural Heritage" channel can be opened on YouTube, and Li brocade patterns can be promoted on Pinterest to attract creative groups.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the external communication of Hainan's local culture needs to break through the current bottlenecks of fragmented content, traditional channels, and insufficient cross-cultural adaptation. By digging deep into cultural connotation to construct a hierarchical narrative system, integrating official, folk, and offline multi-dimensional platforms to achieve accurate reach, implementing targeted communication for the Southeast Asian Chinese community as well as the Asia-Pacific and European and American markets, and at the same time strengthening policy support and talent cultivation, a four-in-one communication path covering content, channels, markets, and guarantees can be formed. This will promote the external communication of Hainan's local culture, enabling Hainan's local culture to showcase its unique cultural charm internationally, thereby enhancing China's comprehensive cultural soft power.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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