Frontiers in Business, Economics and Management
ISSN: 2766-824X | Vol. 22, No. 3, 2026

The Path of Combining Huainan Tofu Culture with Rural Revitalization in the Digital Era

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Abstract: Intangible cultural heritage is an important crystallization of the wisdom and cultural inheritance of the Chinese nation. The intangible cultural heritage rooted in rural areas carries a profound historical context and contains potential for promoting rural revitalization. The important challenge it faces is how to effectively connect the protection of intangible cultural heritage with the strategy of rural revitalization, activate the vitality of intangible cultural heritage, and transform it from a "protected heritage" to a "developable resource". As a national intangible cultural heritage, the Bagongshan tofu production technique in Huainan, Anhui is a representative cultural identity and characteristic industrial resource in northern Anhui. The current status of its inheritance, development bottlenecks, and future prospects provide highly representative local samples for observing and researching this topic. Based on existing literature, relevant data collection, and field visits, this article aims to comprehensively understand the actual situation of Huainan tofu production technology, clarify its core values, face its practical difficulties, and explore innovative paths for the deep integration of intangible cultural heritage and rural revitalization. Optimize the rural revitalization system where it is located, provide and improve feasible plans, and provide examples for the development of similar areas.

Keywords: Intangible cultural heritage; Digitalization; Rural revitalization; Huainan Tofu.

1. Cultural Value of Bagongshan Tofu in Huainan

1.1. Cultural Introduction

In August 2008, the Bagongshan tofu production technique in Huainan, Anhui Province was recognized as a national geographical indication product by the AQSIQ, and then included in the fourth batch of national intangible cultural heritage list published by the original Ministry of Culture in 2014. Huainan Bagongshan tofu does not stay in the simple food category, it has evolved into a production and lifestyle and cultural symbols deeply rooted in the Huaihe River basin. The protection scope of the geographical origin of the intangible cultural heritage covers Bagong mountain area of Huainan City, Anhui Province, Ancheng town of tianjia'an District, liyingzi town of Xiejiaji District, Wangfenggang street, Tangshan town, gaohuang town of Panji District, Pingwei Town, Tianji street, Panji Town, Luji Town, Qiji Township, gugou Hui Township, Jiahe Township, and the administrative areas under the jurisdiction of Bagong Mountain Township, Shouchun Town, and Jiangou town of Shou county of Lu'an City. The protection scope of the geographical origin of the intangible cultural heritage covers Bagong mountain area of Huainan City, Anhui Province, Ancheng town of tianjia'an District, and Liying town of Xiejiaji District.37090 Jiazi Town, Wangfenggang street, Tangshan town, gaohuang Town, Pingwei Town, Tianji street, Panji Town, Luji Town, Qiji Township, gugou Hui Township, and Jiahe Township in Panji District, as well as Bagongshan Township, Shouchun Town, and Jiangou town in Shou county, Lu'an CityThere are high-quality water sources such as Pearl Spring in the Bagong Mountain area of Huainan. The northern plain of Huainan at the foot of the mountain has always been suitable for planting various grains, especially soybeans. Huainan Bagongshan tofu production technology focuses on local high-quality soybeans, Bagong Mountain spring water, and traditional gypsum point production technology, forming a set of interconnected, intelligent and complete system. This skill is deeply integrated into the daily lives and seasonal customs of local residents, becoming an indispensable part of regional cultural identity. It is a traditional handicraft that sustains livelihoods and a spiritual bond that carries collective memory and emotional resonance. After more than two thousand years of inheritance and development, this historic local famous product has gradually grown from a single food to a large-scale characteristic industry. Since 1991, Huainan City has held a grand Tofu Culture Festival on September 15th every year. Huainan Bagongshan tofu is not only a local delicacy, but also an important part of Anhui food culture [1].

1.2. Historical Connotation

The origin of tofu is related in historical records to Liu An, the King of Huainan in the Western Han Dynasty. Li Shizhen of the Ming Dynasty recorded in Volume 25 "Gu Bu" of "Compendium of Materia Medica" that "the method of tofu began with Liu An, King of Huainan in the Han Dynasty." Apart from the origin legend, the exact record of tofu entering historical documents is much later. The book "Qingyi Lu" written by Tao Gu from the Five Dynasties to the early Song Dynasty records that at that time, some people referred to tofu as "little slaughtered sheep" and described "several types of tofu in the daily market". This is currently recognized as the earliest literature mentioning tofu in the academic community, and through this record, it indicates that tofu has become a commodity commonly circulated in the market. And from this period on, the name "tofu" gradually became fixed, replacing previous names such as "Li Qi".

2. Practical Dilemma

2.1. Dilemma of Skill Inheritance

Among the intangible cultural heritage, skill inheritance is the first dilemma. The difficulties and difficulties lie in the small number of inheritors, reduced demand and lack of influence. The lack of development power and insufficient production efficiency of the project make it difficult for inheritors to succeed [2], there are many reasons for the dilemma of Huainan tofu. First, economic factors. Traditional tofu production is a labor-intensive industry, with cumbersome procedures and high labor intensity, and limited profit space. According to the survey data of Daquan village, Bagongshan Township, Shouxian County, there are about 86 tofu workshops in the village, but only about 40 workshops are stable throughout the year, and the rest are unsustainable due to the age of practitioners or seasonal reasons. In addition, the income of young people working outside is much higher than that of traditional tofu making, which leads to serious aging of practitioners. Secondly, due to the technical characteristics, many key techniques in tofu production rely on the accumulation of long-term experience, such as the judgment of soybean milk concentration, the timing of paste application, and the control of pressing strength, which are mainly in the hands of the elderly who have been engaged in the industry for many years, and face the risk of loss. Third, social factors, young people are affected by the fast-paced lifestyle and entertainment methods and activities such as online short videos that are constantly developing in modem society. They are impulsive and have no time and energy to seriously study, research and inherit traditional skills, resulting in a lack of successors.

2.2. Industrial Development Dilemma

Huainan tofu industry has the characteristics of "scale without height, products without brand". First, the product structure is single and homogenization is serious. Huainan soybean products market has long been dominated by primary processed products such as tofu, dried bean curd and thousand pieces. The technical threshold of such products is low and the added value is limited, resulting in a single product structure and serious homogenization. This dilemma is not unique to Huainan, but a common problem in the national soybean products industry. Some studies have pointed out that in the field of basic fresh products, the differences between North tofu, South tofu, dried bean curd and other products are still limited to the brand, origin or local taste level, and fundamental technological or functional breakthroughs have not yet been achieved; In the field of snack food, it fell into "flavor Involution", and the innovation mainly focused on the proportion transformation of condiments, rather than the subversive reconstruction of product form or function [3]. Second, the industrial chain is short and the deep processing capacity is weak. The activity of local soybean products market operators is not high, and some enterprises developed from small workshops still adhere to the business philosophy of "small wealth is easy", resulting in a lack of motivation for industrial development. Due to the low added value of tofu and its products, the sales radius of products will be significantly limited if it is not driven by deep-processing enterprises. Some media comments pointed out that the Huainan tofu industry chain has not been really opened, and it has been confined to the traditional pattern of "relying on mountains and rivers" for a long time, which is difficult to break through the limitations of the regional market, resulting in the failure of the long-standing tofu culture to be effectively transformed into considerable economic benefits . Finally, the brand construction lags behind and the market competitiveness is not strong. Although some large-scale enterprises or "intangible cultural heritage" brands have emerged in the industry to try to establish value barriers, most consumers still consider "price and convenience" as the primary consideration in purchasing conventional bean products, and the brand strategy of high quality and good price is difficult to be widely implemented.

2.3. Development Dilemma of Integration with Rural Revitalization

Huainan tofu culture is also facing deep-seated integration dilemma on the road of enabling Rural Revitalization. First, the cognitive bias of intangible cultural values leads to the inaccurate integration direction. Since the implementation of the Rural Revitalization Strategy, intangible cultural heritage, as an important carrier of traditional culture, has been continuously amplified in the value of rural construction. The economic empowerment function of intangible cultural heritage in policy discourse has been overemphasized, and even has the tendency to regard it as the core tool of rural industrial revitalization [4]. Although the consensus on the coordinated development of intangible cultural heritage protection and Rural Revitalization has been formed at the theoretical level, the excessive focus on the economic value of intangible cultural heritage has led to the expansion of instrumental rationality, and the cognition of intangible cultural heritage positioning in rural construction has deviated [5]. In terms of Huainan tofu, this deviation shows that the local government and relevant subjects pay too much attention to the economic output indicators of the tofu industry, and relatively ignore its intrinsic value as a carrier of cultural identity and a link of social cohesion. When intangible cultural heritage heritage gradually deviates from the cultural essence in the process of industrialization, it will weaken the in-depth direct connection between tofu and the countryside. At the same time, the lack of integration depth and the limited driving effect of culture and tourism will also lead to the integration of tofu industry and Rural Revitalization mostly staying in the "experience" stage, and the cases that really form brand effect and scale benefit are still a few.

3. Innovation and Opportunity of Huainan Tofu Culture Inheritance under the Background of Rural Revitalization

3.1. Build Talent Support System

Build a multi-level and systematic talent support system of "skill inheritance, industrial development, revitalization and empowerment", and form a benign talent ecosystem of "combination of the elderly, middle-aged and young people, connection and inheritance". The government should give full play to the correct policy leadership role, establish the inheritance allowance system, provide funds and platform support, and give stable financial subsidies to intangible cultural heritage inheritors at all levels so that they can carry on the inheritance with peace of mind; Record the core technology of Huainan tofu production by digital means,

collect high-definition images of key processes and experience awards, and establish the "intangible cultural heritage digital gene library"; Intangible cultural heritage inheritors are regularly invited to carry out propaganda and selection of tofu making skills, encourage more people to learn and inherit, and cultivate compound talents who can combine traditional skills with modern technology; Set up a youth entrepreneurship support fund to provide start-up funds, low interest loans and tax relief for young people who are willing to return home to engage in the inheritance of Huainan tofu; Carry out "tofu+" e-commerce live broadcast training to help young practitioners master new skills such as short video marketing and live delivery, and expand Huainan tofu sales channels; Actively introduce interdisciplinary talents, inject new ideas into the inheritance of traditional intangible cultural heritage, and establish industry university research cooperation with colleges and universities. For example, Anhui Bagong mountain bean products Co., Ltd. has long-term cooperation with Hefei University of technology, established industry university research incubation base, and obtained 9 invention patents and 24 utility model patents; Invite professional design team talents to systematically upgrade product packaging and brand image; Introduce cultural and tourism planning talents, integrate the tofu culture with the natural scenery of Bagong mountain and the historical site of Huainan king, and design in-depth experience routes.

3.2. Build Industrial IP Convergence

Based on the existing practice and theory, this study proposes a "three-dimensional integration mode" with cultural IP as the core, and constructs a virtuous cycle of "cultural guidance, industrial support, and brand value-added" through three dimensions of scene immersion, product derivation, and digital communication. First of all, the scene immersion traditional intangible cultural heritage tourism mostly stays at the shallow level of "viewing, listening and guiding", and there are always obstacles between tourists and intangible cultural heritage. The goal of the scene immersion dimension is to transform tourists from "bystanders" to "participants", and then upgrade them to "agents". In Bagongshan Town, Bagongshan District, Huainan City, tofu workshops were rebuilt with ancient cooking methods, and a tofu intangible cultural heritage skills training school was opened to let tourists witness the tofu making process. On this basis, it can expand to a deeper level: first, build an "immersive experience field" with Daquan village as the core, integrate resources such as Bagong mountain scenery, ruins, traditional villages and tofu workshops, and create an "immersive experience belt of tofu culture", so that tourists can experience the whole process from bean selection to shaping; The second is to develop "role substitution script Tour", and design a script tour project based on tofu culture, so that tourists can play different roles in the game and understand the history and skills of tofu. Second, product derivation can be carried out in four directions: first, emotional products of "tofu+cultural creativity", development of tofu source picture books, tea stationery with tofu elements, etc; Second, "tofu+technology" functional products rely on industry university research cooperation to develop high protein soybean powder, instant soybean products and other sub products; Third, the "tofu+aesthetics" etiquette product, the development of "tofu manual gift box", so that consumers can experience tofu production at home; Fourth, digitally collect "tofu+game" and explore the integration of tofu skills into the game scene. Third, digital communication is the content communication of "personal ip+short video". Cultivate local IP images such as "tofu Xishi", "tofu craftsman" and "tofu village secretary", record the whole process of tofu production, tell the history and legend of tofu, and show the seasonal changes of tofu village through short films. Second, the "village broadcast+e-commerce" channel. Let the mobile phone become a new agricultural tool, and let the screen become a new field. Local anchors were trained to set up a live studio on platforms such as Douyin and Kuaishou to show real-time production scenes of tofu workshops, tofu cooking teaching, tofu culture storytelling, etc. The live broadcast not only shows skills, but also brings commodity sales, realizing the business closed loop of "content is traffic, and traffic is sales". Third, in-depth dissemination of "Digital Archives+cloud experience". Huainan tofu culture digital museum will be established to digitally display high-definition images and historical documents of tofu production technology. Develop VR cloud experience project, let users wear VR glasses to "visit" Bagong mountain, "visit" tofu village, "experience" the whole process of tofu production, use digital archives for cultural preservation, and use cloud experience for online drainage. The combination of the two expands the depth and breadth of communication. Fourth, the cross-border spread of "game+intangible cultural heritage". Develop a "tofu workshop" themed mini game, allowing players to experience the complete production process from bean selection, refining to marinating and pressing in the virtual space. Tofu culture can also be implanted into existing leisure games, and a "tofu workshop" game module can be set up. Players can plant soybeans, operate tofu shops, and unlock historical allusions. Through the way of game, let the young groups contact intangible cultural heritage in entertainment.

4. Conclusion

Intangible cultural heritage is an important carrier of Chinese excellent traditional culture and plays a unique role in Rural Revitalization. Taking the Huainan Bagongshan tofu making technology as the research object, this paper systematically combs its historical context and cultural value as a national intangible cultural heritage, and deeply analyzes the triple dilemmas it faces in the process of technology inheritance, industrial development and integration with Rural Revitalization: the aging of inheritors leads to a lack of successors, the industry has been hovering at the low end for a long time, and the cultural value has been obscured by economic demands, weakening the deep connection with the countryside. On this basis, this paper explores the innovation path from the two dimensions of talent support and industrial integration: at the talent level, build a multi-level support system of "skill inheritance, industrial development, revitalization and empowerment", and gather veteran craftsmen, new farmers and cross-border talents through inheritance subsidies, digital filing, school enterprise cooperation, etc; At the industrial level, the "three-dimensional integration model" with cultural IP as the core is proposed, which enables tourists to change from bystanders to participants through scene immersion, promotes tofu from food to cultural innovation through product derivation, and realizes spatial breakthrough from local to online through digital communication. The study believes that only by using cultural empowerment to cast the soul, talent empowerment

to consolidate the foundation, industrial empowerment to strengthen the foundation, and innovation empowerment to add wings, can we break the development dilemma, stimulate the contemporary vitality of intangible cultural heritage, and truly transform Huainan tofu culture from "protected heritage" to "developable resources", so as to achieve the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas and provide a practical example for the deep integration of intangible cultural heritage and Rural Revitalization in similar regions.

Acknowledgments

This work is supported by Anhui University of Finance and Economics College Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program Project (Grant No. 202410378064).

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