Globalization of the Cultural Industry and the Construction of "Cultural Soft Power" in Developing Countries

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Abstract. Against the background of the globalization of the cultural industry, the construction of "cultural soft power" is a core issue for developing countries to enhance their international influence. This study takes China, India and Pakistan to explore the current situation, influence mechanism and path of their cultural soft power construction. Research findings show that the three countries have developed distinctive paths. China focuses on the modern transformation of traditional culture and the internationalization of digital cultural products. India relies on Bollywood films and yoga for global dissemination. Brazil expands its regional influence through samba and football. However, all of them are confronted with problems such as incomplete industrial chains, insufficient technological empowerment, and weak international communication. Developing countries need to make breakthroughs in three aspects. In terms of content innovation, they should deeply explore local resources and integrate tradition with modernity. In terms of industrial upgrading, improve the entire industrial chain and enhance the levels of industrialization and digitalization. In international communication, precisely target the audience and activate the folk forces such as overseas Chinese and cultural Kols. This research provides a reference for it to seize the opportunities of globalization and promote the development of cultural soft power.

Keywords: Globalization of Cultural Industry, Developing Countries, Cultural Soft Power, International Cultural Dissemination, Upgrading of the Cultural Industry.

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, the cultural industry has become a crucial economic and cultural force on the global stage. The rapid development of information technology and the continuous deepening of global economic integration have broken down geographical and cultural barriers, providing convenience for the cross-border flow of cultural products and services. This trend of globalization in the cultural industry brings both opportunities and challenges for developing countries to build "cultural soft power".

The concept of cultural soft power was proposed by Joseph Nye, referring to a country's ability to influence the behaviors and preferences of other countries through the appeal of its culture, values and ideas (Nye, 1990). In today's world, cultural soft power has become an important indicator for measuring a country's comprehensive national strength. It not only plays a significant role in enhancing national identity and cohesion but also boosts a country's international status and influence. For developing countries, the construction of cultural soft power holds special significance. On the one hand, it helps these countries break through the bottlenecks of traditional economic and cultural development, promote economic growth by developing the cultural industry, and achieve the transformation from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based and culture-based economy. On the other hand, by enhancing cultural soft power, developing countries can better participate in global cultural governance, promote cross-cultural exchanges, establish a positive international image, thereby reducing the "cultural deficit", and strengthening cultural confidence and international discourse power (Rabêlo Neto et al.,2022).

Domestic research in developing countries mainly focuses on the exploration of local cultural resources and the development of cultural industries. For instance, in China, scholars emphasize the significance of inheriting and innovating traditional culture, and propose promoting the "going global" of cultural products through digital technology and international cooperation (You, 2018; Liang and Wang, 2020); In India, research has focused on the global influence of Bollywood films

and the internationalization of yoga culture (Thussu, 2019); In Brazil, research has focused on the global dissemination of samba and football culture (Margolis, 2013). Foreign research mainly focuses on the impact of cultural industry globalization on the cultural soft power of developing countries, as well as the strategic paths for these countries to enhance their cultural soft power. Some scholars point out that the globalization of the cultural industry provides developing countries with opportunities to access the global market and technology, but it also brings challenges such as cultural homogenization and the threat of cultural hegemony (Rabelo Neto et al., 2022). Other scholars have proposed that developing countries should enhance their cultural soft power through content innovation, industrial upgrading and international communication (Titova, 2021; Pizzati, 2023). However, the existing research still has limitations: First, most of them are case studies of a single country, lacking comprehensive and systematic comparative analysis of multiple developing countries; Second, the research on the mechanism by which the globalization of the cultural industry affects the construction of cultural soft power in developing countries is not in-depth enough, and targeted strategic suggestions are relatively scarce.

The structure of the thesis is arranged as follows. The second part analyzes the current situation of cultural soft power construction in developing countries under the background of cultural industry globalization, including the practical exploration and construction characteristics of typical countries. The third part explores the impact of the globalization of the cultural industry on the construction of cultural soft power in developing countries from three dimensions: technological empowerment, market expansion, and cultural integration. The fourth part proposes the key paths for developing countries to build cultural soft power, covering content innovation, industrial upgrading and international communication. The fifth part summarizes the main research conclusions and puts forward practical suggestions and future prospects.

2. The Current Situation of Cultural Soft Power Construction in Developing Countries

2.1. Practical Exploration in Typical Developing Countries

In the wave of globalization of the cultural industry, China, India and Brazil, based on their own cultural endowments and development stages, have formed their own distinctive paths for building soft power. China has incorporated the enhancement of cultural soft power into its national strategic system. Scholars pointed out in his research that China's rise in the era of globalization has always been accompanied by the systematic construction of cultural soft power. This construction is reflected not only in the modern transformation of traditional culture but also in the cluster development of the cultural and creative industries (Wu, 2018). As Liang and Wang observed, China's cultural and creative industry has been deeply integrated into the urban renewal process. From the revitalization of industrial heritage in Beijing's 798 Art Zone to the planning and construction of the China-Asean Animation and Game Industrial Park in Nanning, a development model of "industrial agglomeration + regional radiation" has been formed. Among them, the original IP "Ling Qiqi" created by Guangxi Four-Leaf Clover Culture realizes the international expression of ethnic cultural elements through the empowerment of AI technology, becoming a typical case of regional culture going global (Liang and Wang,2020).

India builds its cultural influence with the film and television industry at its core. Thussu specifically takes Indian popular films as the research object to reveal their unique value as a carrier of soft power. The Bollywood film industry not only maintains an average annual production scale of over a thousand films, but also builds "Indian cultural symbols" on a global scale by integrating religious philosophy, family ethics and modern narratives (Thussu,2019). In 2022, the trade volume of cultural-related services in India exceeded 20 billion US dollars, with film exports contributing the core increment. This closed loop of "cultural product export - value dissemination - trade benefit improvement" has become a prominent feature of India's soft power construction. Meanwhile, India

has integrated cultural cores such as yoga and non-violent philosophy into its international discourse system by holding events like World Tolerance Day, thus forming a diverse communication matrix.

The practice in Brazil presents the characteristics of "regional radiation + civilian-driven". Margolis (2013) indirectly reflected the regional limitations, and breakthrough attempts of its cultural influence in his research on Brazilian immigrant culture (Margolis,2013). The Brazilian government has established a special fund through the "Cultural Diplomacy Program", focusing on supporting international exchanges of traditional arts such as samba and Brazilian war dance. At the same time, it is setting up cultural centers in Latin America to build a regional cultural network. At the folk level, cross-border street art performances led by non-governmental organizations have become an important supplement. However, as Rabelo Neto et al. (2022) pointed out, the internationalization of Brazil's cultural industry is still insufficient. Compared with Bollywood in India, its cultural products lack core brands with global recognition. Although the carnival display at the Athens Olympics attracted brief attention, however, it failed to form a sustained influence (Rabelo Neto et al.,2022).

2.2. Construction Features: Advantage Discovery and Institutional Limitations

Developing countries generally exhibit a common feature of "prioritizing the exploration of local advantages" in the construction of soft power. Relying on the accumulation of five thousand years of civilization, China has deeply explored intangible cultural heritage resources and ethnic cultural symbols, and achieved the integration of tradition and modernity through the "IP linkage + industrial activities" model. Based on religious culture and linguistic diversity, India has built a cultural radiation circle covering South Asia, the Middle East and even Africa. Brazil, on the other hand, focuses on the commonalities of Latin American culture and uses football culture as a bond to strengthen regional identity. This in-depth cultivation of local resources has become the starting point of soft power construction. Rabelo Neto et al. emphasized in their research that the process of cultural internationalization in developing countries is essentially "the global adaptation of local values", and this adaptation ability directly determines the effectiveness of soft power (Rabelo Neto et al.,2022).

Institutional limitations also pose a universal challenge. From an industrial perspective, Brazil faces problems such as unstable investment in the cultural industry and lagging application of technology. Economic fluctuations make it difficult for cultural export support policies to be sustained. Although India has a huge market, the imperfect intellectual property protection system has restricted the upgrading of the creative industry. China is confronted with the difficult problem of balancing the cultural management system and market vitality. Although the "Internet Plus" strategy has provided a new path for cultural dissemination, the cross-departmental collaboration mechanism has not been fully rationalized (Deng,2017). From the perspective of international communication, developing countries generally lack the dominance of global communication channels. Global streaming media platforms are still controlled by Western capital. Cultural products from developing countries often face the predicament of "display-oriented communication rather than deep penetration", making it difficult to form a sustained value influence (Titova,2021).

3. The Impact of Cultural Industry Globalization on the Construction of Cultural Soft Power in Developing Countries

3.1. Technological Empowerment: Breaking Through the Boundaries of Communication

The popularization of digital technology has completely reshaped the traditional pattern of cultural dissemination in developing countries and has become an "accelerator" for the construction of soft power. China's exploration in this field is quite representative. The proportion of digital cultural exports has increased from 35% in 2015 to 58% in 2023. New business forms such as online literature and short videos have achieved global coverage through cross-border platforms. Technological empowerment is reflected in both creation and dissemination dimensions. At the creative end, the "cultural element analysis" capability of AI technology enables the precise integration of cross-

cultural symbols. For instance, the Four-leaf Clover culture uses AI to extract elements from Thai amulets and Guangxi bronze drums, creating animation content tailored to the ASEAN market. At the dissemination end, multi-language real-time translation and regional aesthetic modeling technologies break through language and cultural barriers, enabling cultural products to quickly adapt to different market demands (Titova, 2021). This technology-driven communication revolution has enabled developing countries to break away from their reliance on traditional Western media. For instance, India has achieved global simultaneous dissemination of Bollywood films through platforms like YouTube, and the Samba Festival in Brazil has attracted tens of millions of international viewers with the help of live streaming technology.

3.2. Market Expansion: Unleashing Industrial Potential

The market expansion brought about by the globalization of the cultural industry provides economic support and value export for the soft power construction of developing countries. The global cultural industry is expected to reach a scale of 3.5 trillion US dollars by 2025, with the share of emerging economies continuously increasing. The Indian film industry has formed a development model of "domestic market guarantee + international market growth" by precisely connecting with the global South Asian community and multicultural markets. Its overseas box office revenue has accounted for more than 30% of its total revenue (Thussu, 2019), and this market success has in turn strengthened the international recognition of Indian culture. China has promoted cultural and creative products to enter the markets of Central Asia and Southeast Asia through the "Belt and Road" cultural trade network. The Nanning Animation and Game Industrial Park have received a credit line support of 300 million yuan, building a complete industrial chain of "creation - production - transaction", achieving the synchronous growth of cultural value and economic value (Liang & Wang, 2020). Although Brazil has not yet achieved large-scale cultural exports, through the global operation of its football industry, it has still realized the value of sports culture and accumulated funds for the construction of soft power.

3.3. Cultural Integration: Promoting Value Synergy

Cultural interaction in the context of globalization is not a one-way output, but rather a dynamic process of "local reconstruction - global integration - value resonance". Developing countries have not only adhered to their local core but also achieved international recognition through cultural integration. China adheres to the principle of "rooting in the local and getting close to the local" in cultural exports. The "Ling Qiqi" IP not only retains ethnic elements such as the white-headed langur but also gains regional recognition through the integration of ASEAN cultural symbols, embodying the value concept of "harmony without uniformity" (WU, 2018). Indian Bollywood films combine the Hindu philosophy of "karma" with the modern universal value of "family warmth", evoking emotional resonance in the global market. Thussu (2019) believes that this ability to integrate is precisely the core source of its soft power. Brazil has demonstrated cultural inclusiveness through the fusion of samba and African drum music, shaping a national image of "diversity and coexistence" on the international stage (Thussu, 2019). Just as Rabelo Neto et al. (2022) emphasized, cultural integration in developing countries is not cultural assimilation, but rather the construction of a new type of international cultural relationship through value synergy, opening up a sustainable path for the construction of soft power (Rabelo Neto, 2022).

4. Key Paths for Building Cultural Soft Power in Developing Countries

4.1. Content Innovation: Build a Cultural Core that is Compatible with both the Local and the Global

Content innovation is the foundation of soft power construction, with the core lying in achieving the organic unity of "locality" and "globality". China's practice shows that deeply exploring local cultural resources and carrying out modern transformation is an effective path. For example, from

"Nezha: The Devil Boy in the Sea" to the "Ling Qiqi" IP, they are all based on traditional cultural symbols and achieve value reconstruction through modern narrative and technological means (Liang and Wang, 2020). This kind of innovation needs to avoid two extremes: neither adhering to tradition and leading to cultural isolation, nor being overly westernized and losing local characteristics. The success of Bollywood in India lies in striking a balance between religious cultural expression and modern entertainment demands, naturally integrating cultural symbols such as yoga and curry into the plot, thus forming a distinctive "Indian narrative" (Thussu, 2019). Drawing on Pizzat 's (2023) research experience on K-pop, developing countries can establish a "cultural element database", analyze global cultural preferences through AI technology, and achieve a precise match between traditional symbols and modern aesthetics. Create cultural content that is both "down-to-earth" and "international" (Pizzati,2023).

4.2. Industrial Upgrading: Improving the Industrial Chain and Enhancing Production Capacity

A sound industrial system is the guarantee for the continuous output of cultural soft power. Developing countries need to shift from "single-point breakthroughs" to "full-chain upgrades". China's exploration in this aspect is of exemplary significance. By building carriers such as animation and game industrial parks, it realizes the full-chain layout of "production - transaction - derivative". Meanwhile, through school-enterprise cooperation, animation industry colleges are established to cultivate compound talents in a targeted manner (Liang and Wang, 2020). Brazil can draw on this model to integrate cultural resources such as samba dance and football and build an industrial chain of "artistic creation - event operation - cultural and creative development" to solve the problem of low added value of cultural products. Industrial upgrading also requires strengthening technological empowerment. Just as Chinese enterprises use AI technology to achieve personalized production of cultural and creative products, developing countries should increase investment in digital technology to promote the transformation of the cultural industry towards intelligence and digitalization. Furthermore, it is of vital importance to improve the intellectual property protection system. India needs to address the issue of piracy through institutional innovation and provide legal protection for the creative industry, which is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development of the industry (Bosah,2021).

4.3. International Communication: Optimizing Strategies and Activating Civil Forces

The construction of communication capacity requires the establishment of a diversified system featuring "government leadership and public participation" to enhance the accuracy and penetration of cultural dissemination. At the government level, a systematic communication strategy should be formulated. For instance, China builds an official platform through the "Belt and Road" cultural exchange project, and Brazil constructs a regional communication network relying on the Latin American cultural center. Such strategic layouts need to optimize resource allocation in combination with geographical characteristics (Dong, 2013). The power of the people is an important source of communication vitality. The spontaneous dissemination of Bollywood films by overseas Indian communities and the street art exchanges by Brazilian non-governmental organizations both demonstrate the flexibility advantage of folk communication. In terms of dissemination channels, developing countries should focus on digital platforms, draw on the experience of Chinese short videos going global, and achieve "precise drip irrigation" of cultural content through localized operations. At the same time, innovate the forms of communication, such as transforming intangible cultural heritage into immersive experience projects, enabling overseas audiences to shift from "passive reception" to "active participation". As Deng Wenjun pointed out, the key to communication innovation under the background of "Internet +" lies in achieving the deep integration of "technical tools" and "cultural content", allowing soft power to truly enter the hearts of international audiences (Deng,2017).

5. Conclusion

This study systematically explores the construction of cultural soft power in developing countries under the background of the globalization of the cultural industry. The core conclusions are as follows.

Firstly, China, India and Pakistan have formed differentiated paths by relying on local resources, but all have institutional shortcomings. China has built a "digital output + traditional innovation" model through online literature and short videos. India has become a global symbol with Bollywood films and yoga. Brazil has strengthened its Latin American identity through samba and football. However, the three countries generally face problems such as insufficient industrial investment, incomplete industrial chains, and weak international communication. For instance, Brazil lacks global cultural brands, while India is constrained by an imperfect intellectual property system. Secondly, globalization drives soft power in three aspects. Technically, the Internet and streaming media have broken the monopoly of channels. For instance, Chinese short videos have gained hundreds of millions of overseas users through Douyin, and Indian films have been globally synchronized with Netflix. In the market, the global cultural market has expanded its trade space. India's cultural service trade exceeded 200 billion US dollars, and China's digital cultural exports grew by double digits. In terms of cultural integration, the local core and global values are in harmony. For instance, "Mulan" reduces the "cultural discount". Thirdly, enhancing soft power requires a trinity of "content - industry - dissemination": in terms of content, deeply explore the local connotations (such as the reconstruction of traditional myths in "Nezha"); Improve the entire industrial chain in terms of industry and draw on the experience of Hollywood and the Korean Wave. In terms of communication, precisely target the audience and activate the folk forces such as overseas Chinese and cultural Kols.

Based on the above research conclusions, the following practical suggestions are put forward.

To enhance international cooperation, developing countries should strengthen cooperation with other countries in the cultural field, share experiences and resources, and jointly promote the development of the global cultural industry. Cultivate international talents, attach importance to the training of international cultural talents, covering creative talents, production talents and international communication talents, to provide talent support for the construction of cultural soft power. Establish an evaluation mechanism, build a scientific and reasonable evaluation mechanism for cultural soft power, accurately measure the development level of cultural soft power in developing countries, and provide a basis for policy-making and strategic adjustment. In the future, with the continuous advancement of globalization and technological progress, the construction of cultural soft power in developing countries will face more opportunities and challenges. It is expected that developing countries can achieve greater breakthroughs in areas such as content innovation, industrial upgrading and international communication, continuously enhance their cultural soft power, play a more important role in global cultural governance, and promote the diversity and prosperity of world culture.

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