

Innovative Research on the Dissemination Pathways of Huangjiu Culture in the Digital Era

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Abstract: As a treasure of traditional Chinese wine culture, Huangjiu culture demonstrates distinct characteristics and trends in its dissemination across different historical contexts. In digital age, user experience and personalized services is placed great emphasis for wine culture communication. Consequently, the dissemination pathways of Huangjiu culture are also undergoing profound transformation and innovation. This study focuses on innovating the communication pathways of Huangjiu culture in current digital context. By conducting an in-depth analysis of the limitations of current communication approaches, the paper proposes specific innovative strategies, aiming to provide new insights and methodologies for the extensive dissemination and profound impact of Huangjiu culture.

Keywords: Digital Era; Huangjiu Culture; Communication Pathways; Innovation.

1. Introduction

Huangjiu, originating in China and unique to it, is one of the oldest alcoholic beverages in the world. It is renowned as one of the world's three ancient wines, alongside beer and grape wine [1]. As a distinctive Chinese specialty and fermented alcoholic drink, Huangjiu boasts a unique brewing technique. With its long history, unique brewing craftsmanship, and profound cultural heritage, it stands as a typical representative and paradigm of Eastern brewing. Brewing Huangjiu in Shaoxing is a long-standing and well-established industry, with written records traceable to the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods [2]. According to *Lushi Chunqiu*, King Goujian of Yue, to encourage population growth, implemented a policy that for the birth of a son, two pots of wine and one dog are rewarded for the family; and for the birth of a daughter, two pots of wine and one pig are rewarded, which highlights the importance of Huangjiu at that time. By the Song Dynasty, Huangjiu had become a source of inspiration for literati and scholars. Su Shi, in *Red Cliff Rhapsody*, expressed his lofty sentiments with the line "the wine cup is full, courage is open," while Lu You left the famous verse "Don't laugh at the farmer's cloudy winter wine,". These poems further enrich the cultural connotations of Huangjiu.

By the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Huangjiu was already quite famous and listed as a tribute product[3]. Throughout the long history, brewing Huangjiu evolved into local customs in Shaoxing, subsequently giving rise to the rich Huangjiu culture. Notably, during the Ming and Qing dynasties, Shaoxing Huangjiu was continuously sold to northern markets via the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, becoming a banquet favorite for the imperial family and officials. During this period, the brewing process of Shaoxing Huangjiu gradually formed the fixed pattern of "being brewed in winter and fermented in summer". Since then, typical varieties such as "Huadiao Wine" and "Nv'er Hong Wine" gradually emerged, further consolidating the cultural status of Shaoxing Huangjiu.

In 2006, the brewing techniques of Shaoxing Huangjiu were inscribed on the first batch of National Intangible Cultural Heritage list. However, today, Huangjiu faces the

dilemma of "being a large production but enjoying a minor brand power in international community." With rapid social development and technological advancement, the dissemination of Huangjiu culture encounters new challenges and opportunities. According to the *Huangjiu Industry White Paper* released by the China Alcoholic Drinks Association in 2023, Huangjiu accounts for less than 3% of the domestic alcoholic beverage market share, significantly lower than Baijiu (white liquor) and beer. Furthermore, awareness of Huangjiu among young consumers stands at merely 28%, with a widespread perception that drinking Huangjiu is traditional and outdated. Against the backdrop of the digital era, how to innovate the communication pathways of Huangjiu culture to achieve its widespread dissemination and profound impact has become an urgent issue to address.

2. Current Dissemination Pathways and Limitations

Throughout history, the primary channels for promoting Huangjiu culture have been literary works, the natural permeation of regional culture, and advertising. While these methods possess profound cultural depth and broad influence, they appear inadequate in the digital era. Literary works, though capable of vividly portraying the charm and essence of Huangjiu culture, have a limited reach and slow dissemination speed, failing to meet the demands of modern fast-paced lifestyles. The natural permeation of regional culture relies on local characteristics and daily life integration. Although it can foster a deep sense of cultural identity, its reach is confined and it is difficult for Huangjiu culture to transcend geographical limitations through this channel. For instance, for the annual Huangjiu Festival held in Shaoxing, participants are predominantly local residents or the tourists nearby. The publicity activities related to Huangjiu lack nationwide influence.

According to statistics, the online live broadcast of the 2022 Shaoxing Huangjiu Festival attracted only 150,000 viewers, whereas that of a popular milk tea brand concurrently garnered 5 million viewers. Traditional advertising methods through TV commercials and outdoor media can enhance brand awareness to some extent but lack

interactivity and precision, making it difficult to capture the attention of young consumer groups. For example, despite the exquisite production of a CCTV advertisement *Millennial Craftsmanship*, the brand's awareness among consumers aged 18-30 increased by only 2% after its broadcast, falling short of expectations.

With the development of digital technology, attempts have been made to disseminate Huangjiu culture through emerging channels like the internet and social media. However, effectively leveraging digital communication pathways remains a significant challenge. Firstly, the wine enterprises often produce similar promotional content lacking novelty, making it difficult to capture consumers' attention. They fail to capitalize on the interactive advantages of digital communication and have not established robust data analysis systems. Coupled with low update frequencies, these promotional pathways hinder their ability to track capricious consumer demands, resulting in communication ineffectiveness. Furthermore, Huangjiu enterprises remain overly reliant on the Jiangsu-Zhejiang-Shanghai market and have not utilized digital pathways to break through geographical constraints, and spread Huangjiu culture and products to other domestic regions and overseas markets.

3. Innovative Pathways in the Digital Context

With the vigorous development of digital technology, local government and enterprises are also seeking new dissemination paths through emerging channels like online media and social media to widen Huangjiu's influence at home and abroad. However, existing digital communication channels still face numerous challenges. To break through these limitations, it is imperative to explore innovative solutions for communicating Huangjiu culture in the digital age, thereby injecting new vitality into it.

1) Leveraging Social Media Platforms to Enhance Interactivity

Social media platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and Douyin have experienced rapid development over the past decade, becoming integral components of the modern lifestyle. Huangjiu enterprises can fully utilize these platforms to publicize content that appeals to the younger generation. For example, Huangjiu culture could be personified by creating a character IP like "Master Brewer Huangjiu", using engaging short videos to convey Huangjiu knowledge, making the learning process more vivid and interesting.

In addition, historical stories, brewing techniques, and cultural value of Huangjiu can be promoted and displayed through various modern communication tools like videos and graphics, highlighting the cultural heritage of ancient brewing methods. Detailed procedures, from ingredient selection and fermentation to aging, can be displayed to convey its cultural depth to consumers. Furthermore, hosting events like "Challenge of Huangjiu Culture and knowledge" and "Wine Tasting Competition" in Shaoxing can enhance participant engagement and add fun and challenge to the activities. Finally, Live-streamed Huangjiu tasting activities can also integrate with new media by inviting knowledgeable hosts to introduce Huangjiu types, vintages, and flavors during the events. Participants can learn about Huangjiu culture through lectures, and they can taste different wines. Apart from all the pathways above, promoting Huangjiu in leisure and social

occasions like cafes, campsites, and fashion exhibitions can help break down the traditional boundaries.

Through these methods mentioned above, Shaoxing Huangjiu may become a favorite choice for new consumer groups, further promoting the dissemination and inheritance of its culture.

2) Utilizing Big Data Technology for Precise Targeting

In today's era, big data technology makes it possible to precisely target the intended audience. The advent of the mobile internet era means that users' online behaviors, such as browsing websites, watching videos, and socializing on phones, can be automatically recorded by big data. Leveraging big data technologies enables more efficient and accurate identification of target audiences for Huangjiu enterprises. Statistical analysis of basic user information can reveal their interests, consumption levels, and living habits, allowing for tailored communication strategies and achieving more desirable dissemination outcomes. Analyzing data on users' shopping frequency, spending habits, and shopping channels can identify core users. Following this analysis, effective communication methods can be adopted for selected marketing pathways. Firstly, marketing strategies can be optimized through social media platforms like Weibo, WeChat, and Douyin. These platforms serve as useful marketing tools to deepen young people's understanding of Huangjiu. Secondly, e-commerce platforms such as JD.com and Tmall can be utilized for sales and marketing, particularly during major shopping events like "Singles' Day Online Shopping Gala". Popular hosts or live streamers can be invited to promote videos and attract consumer attention. Simultaneously, cultural strategies can also be employed to empower Huangjiu brands, transforming their cultural value into brand equity and enhancing their soft competitive power.

Furthermore, geographical data analysis shows strong consumption capacity and high penetration rates for Huangjiu in the Jiangsu-Zhejiang-Shanghai region, while consumption potential in other regions is gradually emerging, indicating room for increased market penetration. This is related to the profound Huangjiu culture and stable consumption habits in the core region. Therefore, corresponding market promotion strategies can be formulated. In the Jiangsu-Zhejiang-Shanghai region, the government and enterprises should consolidate market presence, enhance quality, and strengthen brand and cultural marketing, and leverage digital marketing strategies to expand the market[4]. For other regions, Shaoxing government and Huangjiu enterprises should jointly intensify promotion efforts, improve consumer awareness of Huangjiu, and develop products suited to local tastes to meet diverse needs. Concurrently, efforts must be made to break regional restrictions and establish a nationwide sales network.

3) Expand Visibility through Digital Communication Innovation and Brand Collaboration

The effectiveness of Huangjiu culture dissemination requires focused efforts from various parties to utilize modern popular culture and aesthetic trends, particularly updating digital communication content. Crucially, this includes releasing micro-films, short videos, and animations about Huangjiu culture, promoting the traditional culture of Shaoxing Huangjiu via the internet. Through these means, young people can more intuitively understand the history and culture of Huangjiu, thereby fostering and disseminating positive social values.

At the same time, Huangjiu enterprises can collaborate

with other brands to transform Huangjiu into a kind of product catering to young people. Chinese traditional brewed Huangjiu is increasingly recognized by consumers for its unique taste and nutritional value. Nowadays, milk tea shops are a new force in the beverage industry, attracting many consumers with their fashionable and diverse characteristics. Previously, Guizhou Maotai collaborated with Luckin Coffee and launched “Sauce-fragrance Latte”, and later, Luzhou Laojiao partnered with Naixue’s Tea, releasing the “Unwind Gift Box”. These famous partnerships gained immense popularity in the market. Consequently, Huangjiu industry can create products like coffee Huangjiu and lime Huangjiu targeted at the young market through collaborating with some popular beverage brands.

Moreover, the packaging design of traditional Huangjiu can follow historical styles while strengthening modernization and innovation to enhance market competitiveness, while preserving cultural genes. For example, some new products from Guyue Longshan recently underwent repackaging; the new designs are bold and simple, using modern colors, reducing some traditional elements, and adding a touch of freshness. Furthermore, the heavy, old-fashioned, locally traditional designs are gradually being replaced by more fashionable China-chic elements, which retain the charm of Eastern aesthetics while aligning with the aesthetic preferences of young consumers.

4) Integrating Online and Offline Activities to Deepen Impact

Although digital communication offers many advantages, offline activities should not be entirely disregarded. Huangjiu enterprises can integrate online and offline activities to maximize communication effectiveness[5]. For instance, Guyue Longshan has organized a series of promotional activities such as opening ceremony rituals, wine brewing performance, square shows, and wine culture promotion events. Through persistent long-term promotion, the effects gradually emerges [6]. For Huangjiu enterprises, hosting tastings and attending trade fairs can facilitate the sharing of brewing techniques, encourage innovation in manufacturing processes, and thus contribute to the development and refinement of the Huangjiu industry. This not only promotes the growth of domestic and international sales but also enhances the presence of wine enterprises and wine brands, ensuring that Huangjiu is no longer confined to Zhejiang and surrounding areas but expands its reach to other provinces and even overseas. These activities allow participants to experience the entire process of making Shaoxing Huangjiu while learning the intricate details of its craftsmanship. Under the guidance of master brewers, participants can brew their own wine and choose to have the finished product delivered to their homes. This activity will not only allow people to experience the joy of brewing but also foster a deep understanding of Huangjiu techniques, promoting the widespread popularity of Shaoxing Huangjiu.

Online, Shaoxing Huangjiu culture can be promoted through live streams, short videos, and knowledge competitions focusing primarily on Huangjiu history and brewing technology. To enhance the sense of participation, organizers can release relevant competition information on social media, inviting netizens to participate. After the knowledge contest, the highest-scoring participants become eligible to win prizes. These prizes are not limited to Shaoxing Huangjiu and Huangjiu cultural products but also extend to

books related to traditional culture, specialty handicrafts, and local tourism experience vouchers. This approach may stimulate people’s interest in Huangjiu, improve its awareness, and expand the influence and presence of Huangjiu culture in the whole world.

4. Conclusion

In the digital era, the communication pathways for Huangjiu culture are undergoing profound transformation and innovation. Local governments and enterprises can enhance interactivity through social media platforms. For example, initiating a “Challenge of Huangjiu culture knowledge” on platforms like Douyin and Xiaohongshu, combining fun short videos and user-generated content trends can be successful to spread Huangjiu culture. Some wine brand attracted over 500,000 user participants with the topic “New Ways to Drink Huangjiu”, and related video views exceeded 200 million, successfully connecting with younger demographics. Regarding online-offline integration, immersive experience is a key step. Shaoxing Huangjiu Town used AR technology to recreate ancient brewing scenes; visitors could scan codes to unlock a “Virtual Brewer” identity. During this activity, offline visitor flow increased by 40%, and online topic readership grew by 200%.

In the future, with the proliferation of technologies like the Metaverse and AI-Generated Content, Huangjiu culture could move towards virtual tasting experiences. Users could enter a digital cellar via VR devices, interact in real-time with master brewers, and customize their exclusive wine. These innovative products combining culture and technology will not only break the spatiotemporal limitations of traditional communication but also build an integrated virtual-real cultural ecosystem, continuously infusing digital vitality into the inheritance of Huangjiu.

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