

# Research on the Feasibility and Realization Path for Online Marketing of Intangible Cultural Heritage

-- Case Study on Chongzhou Daoming Bamboo Weaving

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**Abstract:** Online marketing, a pivotal pillar of the digital economy, is marked by its vast scale, vibrant performance, and accelerating momentum. This emerging industry, a dynamic force of energy, plays an essential role in the blueprint of new development paradigms. Daoming Bamboo Weaving, a unique product of Daoming Town, garnered national recognition when it was included in the Intangible Cultural Heritage Representative Project List in 2014. Despite the rapid progression of the internet age, there remains a gap for Daoming Bamboo Weaving within the sphere of online marketing. By contrasting the strengths and weaknesses of Daoming Bamboo Weaving with the facets of online marketing, it's possible to analyze consumer preferences and marketing strategies. This analysis can, in turn, pave the way for suggestions to enhance the economic benefits of Daoming Bamboo Weaving.

**Keywords:** Daoming Bamboo Weaving; Online Marketing; Intangible Cultural Heritage.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of Daoming Bamboo Weaving Intangible Cultural Heritage Technique

Daoming Town, situated in the western Sichuan Plain and acclaimed as the home of bamboo weaving, has a rich heritage of over 2000 years in bamboo weaving. Known for its abundant *Neosinocalamus* bamboo since ancient times, Daoming's artisans skilfully create an array of beautiful, exquisite, and colourful bamboo products through techniques of weaving, twisting, locking, inserting, piercing, and bucking. With a diverse range of 150 categories and nearly 1,000 varieties, Daoming bamboo products have earned numerous national and international awards, including the National Applied Arts Award. These products are marketed in over 120 countries, and certain skilled craftsmen have even been extended invitations to teach their skills abroad [1].

As per the Annals of China [2], the people of Daoming Town embarked on growing and using bamboo as far back as 2000 years ago during the Qin Dynasty. Bamboo was integral to various aspects of life, used for activities like twisting ropes, making frames, weaving exteriors, constructing houses, and creating agricultural tools such as back baskets and dustpans. By the time of the Qing Dynasty, Daoming Bamboo Weaving had progressed from producing coarse gabions to crafting intricate western gabions. This evolution not only enriched product categories but also elevated the level of craftsmanship. Baskets, skips, bamboo sieves, and other household items gained popularity beyond western Sichuan and won the Provincial Persuasion First Prize. As stated in the Chongqing County Chronicle [3], the Qing dynasty witnessed Daoming Bamboo Weaving at its zenith, producing bamboo wares renowned for their beauty. During the Republic of China era, Daoming Bamboo Weaving continued its upward trajectory and began gaining recognition both within and outside the province. The Chongqing County Chronicle records instances of products selling well overseas, generating significant profit [4].

### 1.2. Analysis of the Selling Points of Daoming Bamboo Weaving Products

Daoming Bamboo Weaving's chief appeal lies in the blend of its practical and artistic values. The materials employed in Daoming bamboo weaving are long-lasting and soft, and the unique craftsmanship further enhances the durability of the products. Intertwining various techniques with a distinctive style, the process results in both flat and three-dimensional bamboo weaving [5]. The end products bear distinct patterns, vibrant colors, and exquisite craftsmanship, embodying both practical and ornamental qualities. The complex and meticulous production process involves selecting two to three-year-old bamboo, discarding the head and tail, and choosing the middle sections that exhibit uniform color without spots. The chosen bamboo is then scraped, removed, and split into thin and thick bamboo pieces and wires of consistent thickness.

With a history spanning over 2,000 years, Daoming bamboo weaving techniques find extensive practical application. Most commonly, they are used in commodities, production tools, large-scale outdoor art productions, and as a branding mechanism for tourism. For instance, in 2017, Daoming Bamboo Weaving was invited to participate in the Chicago Architecture Biennial, the largest architectural event in North America. The subsequent year, it was invited to the world's most prestigious and highest-profile academic exhibition, the Venice Biennale. However, despite these accolades, the sales of its physical products have not matched expectations [6]. Ren Li, the honorary head of Daoming Bamboo Art Village, stated, "The bamboo weaving industry in Daoming Town is flourishing, but the promotion channels are limited, thus hindering the products from reaching a wider audience." Given that the products embody artistic value, economic value, and use value, the focus should be on devising strategies to promote and sell the products more effectively (See Table 1).

**Table 1.** Symbolic Events of Daoming Bamboo Weaving in recent five years

Time	Event/Project	Details
2017	Chicago Architecture Biennale	Telling the future of the village with technical humanism
2018	Venice Biennale	Bringing Daoming Bamboo Weaving to the stage of the Venice Biennale, bamboo weaving has become a key element of wealth and income generation and cultural tourism development.
2020	Economic benefits of Daoming Town Bamboo Weaving Industry	More than 130 million yuan, of which the sale of bamboo products is nearly 36 million yuan.
2020	Comprehensive Income of Tourism in Daoming Town	190 million yuan
2020	Bamboo Art Park	square kilometers in coverage

## 2. Analysis of the Challenges and Opportunities

### 2.1. Opportunities for Online Marketing of Daoming Bamboo Weaving

Currently, the sale of heritage products within the Chinese market is primarily through physical stores. While some businesses have ventured into online sales, few have successfully balanced both online and offline promotion and selling. The unique advantage of physical stores is their ability to offer distinctive bamboo crafts and provide customers with an experiential understanding of the bamboo weaving process. Moreover, bamboo weaving, as a green handicraft, does not necessitate further investment post-establishment. These low-cost, high-margin crafts do not demand extensive technical skills, thereby reducing industrial costs. The physical stores, typically located in popular scenic spots, benefit from high footfall, ensuring a sustainable business and a steady sales volume.

Chinese bamboo handicrafts hold special value, and despite the industry's substantial market scale, marketing and storefront expansion have been sub-optimal. The limited application of bamboo weaving in contemporary life is a significant reason why the intangible cultural heritage has not been fully exploited and developed. Promoting bamboo weaving culture and infusing culture into goods can integrate intangible cultural heritage into daily life, boosting the sales of bamboo weaving products and, in turn, fostering the development of Daoming bamboo weaving skills [7].

One effective approach to accentuate these strengths is to innovate upon tradition, driving creative transformation and development. This involves leveraging the time-honored reputation of Daoming bamboo weaving through innovative products and marketing strategies, thereby ensuring the preservation of skills and maximizing product value. Firstly, Daoming bamboo weaving, as a handicraft, carries unique value, representing local social history, customs, geography, and aesthetic traits while showcasing the distinct style of local crafts. Secondly, as an intangible cultural heritage, Daoming bamboo weaving possesses substantial cultural value. The draft outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan and the 2035 Vision propose an expansion of high-quality cultural products and a deepening reform of the cultural system. Consequently, it is

imperative to amplify the promotion of bamboo weaving, catalyze the bamboo weaving economy, and vigorously develop related industrial marketing.

Market research indicates that half of the respondents were younger individuals who expressed a desire to make purchases at tourist attractions and on e-commerce platforms. Therefore, to cater to the characteristics and needs of consumers, Daoming bamboo weaving sales should extend beyond physical stores and venture into online platforms to bridge the gap in network marketing. Sichuan province, known for its rich tourism resources, boasts numerous tourist attractions in Chengdu and surrounding cities such as Ganzi and Aba. As the homeland of the national treasure, the panda, Sichuan offers a wide variety of panda-themed cultural products.

For instance, establishing a Daoming Bamboo Weaving store at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding could not only address the disposal of surplus bamboo from the base but also promote sales by pairing it with the iconic panda image. This store could serve as more than a retail space—it could host a DIY bamboo weaving experience area where visitors can engage with the bamboo weaving process, making the heritage accessible and tangible. Besides, the panda base is frequented by children and teenagers, which not only promotes the product but also attracts locals to bring their children and friends for an immersive experience of the charm of bamboo weaving. It could also serve as a genuine cultural incubator and a source of non-heritage learning for young individuals. The offline store, designed in a minimalistic and fresh style, would resonate with the eco-friendly ethos. Concurrently, collaborations with major tourist groups could transform bamboo weaving into panda-themed products, making it a signature product of Sichuan and a souvenir for domestic and international tourists visiting Sichuan.

### 2.2. Challenges for Online Marketing of Daoming Bamboo Weaving

Several pressing issues arise when considering the developmental dilemmas and disadvantages of Daoming bamboo weaving. Firstly, the current processing and sales of Daoming bamboo weaving largely occur through home production or self-employment, resulting in a relatively small scale of operation. The diversity of products and lengthy product lines make it challenging to form industrial clusters. In essence, the production and sales scale of Daoming bamboo weaving is small and fragmented, leading to issues such as inefficient resource utilization, high production costs, operational inefficiency, and sub-par sales performance. This situation arises primarily from an excessive emphasis on tourism development and participation in major exhibitions, with insufficient focus on innovation within the bamboo products themselves: (See Table 2)

**Table 2.** Main sales companies of Daoming Bamboo Weaving

Name
Chongzhou City Jijun Bamboo Products Factory
Chongzhou City Daoming Hongmei Bamboo Weaving Workshop
Sichuan Daoming Bamboo Art Industry Development Co.,Ltd.
Ding Zhi Zhu Chengdu Cultural Creative Co.,Ltd.
Chongzhou City Zhu Xing Daoming Bamboo Weaving Professional Cooperative

Secondly, the prevalent products are mainly production tools and household utensils required for daily use, resulting in a relatively homogeneous and unappealing product range that fails to trigger consumers' purchasing desire. The primary products currently sold by Daoming Bamboo Weaving—baskets and other basic everyday utensils—fall short of practical agricultural tools and artistic decorative products. Merchants often display identical products, leading to a lack of originality and recognition, a glaring disadvantage. This uniformity can engender a predicament where "all bamboo weavings look the same."

Thirdly, there is a weak public awareness of the heritage of Daoming Bamboo Weaving. The techniques have not yet been innovated, let alone the deficiency in marketing and promotional capabilities. As a result, a robust consumer atmosphere for the bamboo weaving market has not been established. Additionally, the dominant product in bamboo weaving is singular and highly substitutable. With the rapid progress of similar bamboo technology and product innovation, such as Changshou bamboo weaving, the market becomes fiercely competitive. If Daoming Bamboo Weaving fails to identify its core competencies, it will be in a precarious position if it is unable to update its products: (See Table 3)

**Table 3.** Other Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bamboo Weaving and their dominant products

Name	Dominant Product	Examples
Qingshen Bamboo Weaving	Fans	Dongpo Palace Fan
Ruichang Bamboo Weaving	Ruichang Three Treasures Made of Thin Bamboo Strip	Hat, silk basket and rice sieve
Bamboo Weaving with Porcelain	Bottle and jar	Bamboo vase on porcelain, bamboo tea set, bamboo coffee set on porcelain, bamboo wine set on porcelain
Liangping Bamboo Curtain	Curtain	Strip screens, through-screen screens, Luohan screens, chandeliers, thrusters, horizontal thrusters, doufang, screens, couplets, award certificates, letter inserts, embroidered curtains, door curtains, lampshades and many other varieties

### 3. Feasibility Analysis of Internet Sales of Daoming Bamboo Weaving

Having discerned the challenges in the evolution of Daoming bamboo weaving, the question arises: how can these issues be addressed? Chinese traditional handicrafts, steeped in a rich and impressive history, command a significant position within the broader evolution of Chinese cultural and artistic development. Handicrafts, a consistent element through the progress of cultural, artistic, and design history, have been accepted by the public, transformed and modernized with the emergence of new materials and techniques. Nonetheless, the essence of successful design is the designer. Historically, bamboo weavers have informally innovated and inherited their skills in an agricultural context. This milieu, unfortunately, does not offer the expansive

expertise and contemporary design perspective necessary to captivate modern consumers. Despite the fact that their products lack sufficient innovation, the ongoing national promotion of traditional culture and skills, combined with the economic recovery, provides a favorable atmosphere. Supportive national policies and the rise of rural tourism have created promotional opportunities and markets for Daoming Bamboo Weaving. However, to most people, this Intangible Heritage skill remains elusive. The constraints of physical stores impede its wide-scale distribution. To genuinely incorporate Daoming Bamboo Weaving into everyday life, to engage the interest of younger generations, and to ensure its continuous inheritance, it's imperative to adapt to the digital era. Actively engaging with online sales platforms and expanding promotional efforts is essential.[8]

#### 3.1. Innovation and Transformation of Daoming Bamboo Weaving Products and the Industry

Currently, the development of Daoming bamboo weaving industry is somewhat fragile, characterized by deficits in systematic industry communication, all-encompassing academic guidance, and a nurturing developmental environment. Beyond the involvement of the government and the community, universities bear a significant historical responsibility for nurturing the evolution of Daoming bamboo weaving. The establishment of a traditional craft workstation as a vehicle for the development of the non-heritage project inheritance could enable the innovation of Daoming bamboo weaving within the realm of art and aesthetics. The combination of traditional craftsmanship and modern design, in cooperation with the Central Academy of Fine Arts, allows the exploration of an industrial model for intangible cultural heritage involving the academy, farmers, and a base. The Central Academy of Fine Arts' traditional craft workstation in Chengdu, Sichuan, approved by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in October 2018, serves as an exemplary case. This arrangement facilitates the innovation of ideas, the incubation and cultivation of bamboo cultural spaces and talents, and the continuous excavation, research, and transmission of Daoming's bamboo weaving culture in terms of craftsmanship and design. Based on the Daoming Bamboo Weaving Research Internship Base of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Daoming, inviting students and teachers from the academy to Daoming for internships and research is beneficial. This collaborative effort with the non-genetic inheritors and craftsmen of Daoming bamboo weaving fosters the excavation, protection, and inheritance of Daoming bamboo weaving culture and the continuous research and development of bamboo weaving crafts in terms of product design and innovation. Dual education and training with the traditional craft workstation of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Chengdu, Sichuan, allows craftsmen and students to grow together and fosters moral and aesthetic education, expanding the identity of craftsmen. Guiding them to take the initiative to utilize their artistic professional advantages and participate in the cultural construction of the new era can revive traditional crafts and transform the bamboo art village into a living museum of non-hereditary culture. Upholding the concept of integrating bamboo culture, bamboo life, bamboo products, and bamboo artwork, the further excavation and refinement of traditional craft items' cultural connotation, the improvement of traditional craft product quality, and the research on traditional crafts can support

product innovation. This approach fosters the integration of traditional crafts with contemporary lifestyles and aesthetic requirements. The products themselves should emphasize functionality, customization, trendiness, ecological compatibility, and sociality. The business strategies and sales directions of traditional crafts should be innovatively expanded in a timely manner. Thus, the traditional craft industry can thrive in the current era, and the art of bamboo weaving can permeate more aspects of life, reinforcing its enduring relevance.

### 3.2. Efficient and Effective Online Sales Platforms

Survey results from potential buyers show a marked preference for purchasing related products on online sales platforms. Market research reveals that half of those interested in buying Daoming bamboo weaving products would be inclined to do so, given a convenient purchasing channel. Similarly, another survey shows that half of potential buyers would choose to purchase from online sales platforms if Daoming bamboo products were available there. Therefore, the establishment of a user-friendly online sales platform is a significant driver for expanding the sales of Daoming bamboo weaving products. As a national intangible cultural heritage, constructing an online platform for the sale and promotion of Daoming bamboo weaving products is essential. A well-developed online sales platform could thus make the sales of Daoming bamboo weaving products quite feasible.

Considering the online sales environment, the swift advancement of the internet has made online shopping ubiquitous. If bamboo products can achieve substantial sales on online platforms, this aligns with the trajectory of our era's development. Looking at the majority of current sales channels for intangible cultural heritage products, there is a distinct trend towards utilizing the internet and adopting diverse promotional and sales strategies. For instance, TikTok introduced the "Meet the New National Tide" campaign in the Shopping Festival for intangible cultural heritage. This campaign featured nearly 1,000 intangible cultural heritage products in the form of short videos or live broadcasts and invited over 300 non-heritage stores from 29 cities, including Beijing, Ganzhou, Wuzhishan, and Kaili, to participate in the TikTok live broadcasts. In these broadcasts, stories of intangible cultural heritages were shared while selling products, and special stickers were introduced to allow netizens to participate in activities, further understanding, appreciating, and purchasing intangible cultural heritage.[2] Therefore, in this new media era and with the development of Internet +, intangible cultural heritage products should be sold both online and offline. Through special live broadcasts of intangible cultural heritage culture, these products can resonate more closely with the audience and enhance the efficiency of selling intangible cultural heritage products.

### 3.3. Extensive Potential Buyer Base

Since 2013, Daoming bamboo weaving has been extensively used in the production and display of large outdoor public artworks, architectural decorations, hotel decorations, residential interior and exterior decorations, and more, as evidenced by their presence in locations such as Qingcheng Six Senses Hotel, Renhe Spring Hotel, Zhixin Real Estate, Chongqing Vanke, Beijing Prince Gong's Mansion, and the Shanghai World Expo. From 2016 onwards, its involvement has expanded to tourism products, including

decorative ornaments, women's handbags, earrings, pendants, rings, and dozens of other types of tourism brands. The non-genetic inheritors of Daoming bamboo weaving have exhibited and communicated in many countries, such as Korea and Russia.[9] This exemplifies the broad scope of bamboo weaving applications, from public decoration design to everyday necessities. As the adage goes: where there is demand, there is a market. Given the extensive demand for bamboo woven products, there is certainly no shortage of large consumer groups. Market research indicates that over 70% of respondents expressed interest in Daoming bamboo weaving and related products and were willing to purchase them. Approximately 80% of respondents reported having purchased or participated in bamboo weaving products and exhibitions. Half of the respondents were familiar with Daoming bamboo weaving and its products. In conclusion, the influence of Daoming bamboo weaving is substantial, and it has a sizable audience.

## 4. Conclusion

In brief, in this era of rapid internet development, Daoming bamboo weaving, as a national intangible cultural heritage, can not only be promoted via online platforms, but can also leverage this technology to facilitate cross-regional, cross-cultural, and cross-generational discussions and publicity. In a time when people's quality of life has greatly improved and convenience is paramount, adapting marketing strategies is a necessary progression. As we live in a digital age, online marketing should naturally evolve with the times. Both tangible and intangible products can be traded on e-commerce platforms without the limitations of geography and time. The growth of e-commerce platforms has been relentless, with an increasing number of middle-aged and elderly people starting to shop online, not to mention the younger generations. Therefore, no matter the product in this era, it's essential to reform trading methods, shedding the traditional constraints of trading time and place, and gradually transitioning towards an e-commerce trading platform. This is particularly applicable to intangible cultural heritage skills and products, as represented by Daoming bamboo weaving.

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