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SOCIAL MEDIA IN PROMOTING INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CHINA

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INTRODUCTION

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is a vital component of human civilization that embodies the wisdom, aesthetics, and values of different nations and communities. However, under the impact of modernization, urbanization, and cultural homogenization, many ICH practices are facing unprecedented challenges and even the risk of extinction. According to UNESCO, ICH refers to "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage". China, with its 5,000-year-old civilization, boasts a rich and diverse repository of ICH, ranging from traditional performing arts, craftsmanship to festivals and rituals. Nevertheless, the rapid socio-economic transformations in recent decades have profoundly altered the cultural ecosystem, leading to the decline of traditional lifestyles, values, and knowledge systems that sustain ICH.

The advent of social media has opened up new possibilities for the safeguarding and transmission of ICH in the digital age. With their decentralized structure, participatory culture, and immersive experience, social media platforms have become a powerful tool for cultural expression, knowledge sharing, and community building. In China, the thriving social media landscape, represented by platforms such as WeChat, Douyin (TikTok), and Weibo, has deeply reshaped the way people create, consume and interact with cultural content. According to the 45th Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, as of March 2020, the number of Internet users in China reached 904 million, and the Internet penetration rate reached 64.5%. Among them, 99.1% are mobile Internet users, and social media applications such as instant messaging and short video have become the most popular and frequently used services. This massive user base and dynamic digital ecosystem have presented an unprecedented opportunity for the dissemination and promotion of ICH.

However, while recognizing the potential of social media in ICH communication, we must also be aware of the multifaceted challenges it entails. The fragmented nature of social media, the uneven digital access and literacy of ICH-inheritors and users may influence the depth and accuracy of ICH and hinder the inclusive and equitable participation in ICH-related activities online.

Taking into account the advantages and limitations of social media it is crucial to develop a nuanced and reflexive understanding of the ways social media communicate ICH and analyze their efficiency in promoting ICH so that we could cope with challenges and develop countermeasures to successfully promote China's ICH.

The research topic of this thesis deals with the study of the relationship between social media and ICH communication in contemporary China. It reveals the ways ICH

communication is conducted and attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of this communication and reveal possible challenges.

The main problem under discussion in this thesis is the problem of leveraging the power of social media to enhance the visibility, vitality, and viability of ICH while respecting its cultural integrity and social embeddedness in contemporary China. If we can make use of social media to advantage, we can succeed in preserving the exquisite Chinese cultural heritage for future generations.

Topicality of the research topic could be explained by the fact that understanding the role of social media in ICH communication has become crucial for the protection and inheritance of ICH in the digital age. Revealing the ways of China's ICH effective communication in social media and combatting challenges can provide new ideas for promoting heritage of other cultures as well.

The main methods used in this dissertation are literature research method, descriptive, analytical, content analysis, data analysis method.

The areas of possible practical implementation include cultural heritage protection and policy making for ICH safeguarding and promotion, social media communication, digital anthropology. The results could be used in further academic research on the issues of cultural heritage protection

OVERVIEW

Keywords: INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE, SOCIAL MEDIA, DOUYIN, COMMUNICATION, TRADITIONAL CRAFTS, TRADITIONAL DRAMA, TRADITIONAL MUSIC.

The **research aim** is to determine the ways and efficiency of popularizing China's intangible cultural heritage in social media.

To reach the aim the following research **tasks are set:**

1) to define the concept of intangible cultural heritage;

2) to describe social media as a communication tool for intangible cultural heritage dissemination;

3) to provide a study of intangible cultural heritage content and dissemination effect in social media short videos;

4) to identify the challenges of using social media in promoting intangible cultural heritage;

5) to offer recommendations for the effective use of social media in promoting intangible cultural heritage.

The research object is the Douyin platform's ICH-themed short videos.

The research subject is ways and efficiency of promoting intangible cultural heritage in social media.

The research results are as follows. Focused on ICH-themed short videos on Douyin from 2020 to 2024, this research analyzes the role and potential of social media in disseminating China's intangible cultural heritage. It discovers the characteristics, advantages, and challenges of social media as a communication platform for ICH. The work provides theoretical and empirical research on ICH communication and offers suggestions for the innovative development and creative transformation of China's traditional culture in the digital era.

The dissertation **structure** includes three chapters covering the following topics: (1) "Intangible cultural heritage in social media" that provides a literature review on the key concepts and theories related to ICH and social media, (2) "Social media in communicating international cultural heritage in China" that presents the analysis of ICH content and communication on the Douyin platform, and (3) "Challenges and countermeasures of social media in the dissemination of China's intangible cultural heritage" that discusses problematic issues faced in ICH disseminating and offers recommendations on their solution.

The length of the dissertation is 69 pages. It contains 14 figures, 1 table, and 104 references.

ОБЩАЯ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА РАБОТЫ

Ключевые слова: НЕМАТЕРИАЛЬНОЕ КУЛЬТУРНОЕ НАСЛЕДИЕ, СОЦИАЛЬНЫЕ СЕТИ, DOUYIN, КОММУНИКАЦИЯ, ТРАДИЦИОННЫЕ РЕМЕСЛА, ТРАДИЦИОННАЯ ДРАМА, ТРАДИЦИОННАЯ МУЗЫКА.

Цель исследования — определить способы и эффективность популяризации нематериального культурного наследия (НКН) Китая в социальных медиа.

Для достижения цели поставлены следующие исследовательские **задачи**:

1) дать определение понятию нематериального культурного наследия;

2) описать социальные медиа как инструмент коммуникации для распространения НКН;

3) изучить содержание и эффект распространения НКН в коротких видео социальных медиа;

4) выявить проблемы использования соцмедиа в продвижении НКН;

5) предложить рекомендации по эффективному использованию социальных медиа в продвижении нематериального культурного наследия.

Объект исследования – короткие видео платформы Douyin на тему НКН.

Предмет исследования – способы и эффективность продвижения НКН в социальных медиа.

Результаты исследования следующие. Данное исследование, посвященное коротким видеороликам в Douyin на тему НКН с 2020 по 2024 год, анализирует роль и потенциал соцсетей в распространении нематериального культурного наследия Китая. В нем раскрываются характеристики, преимущества и проблемы соцсетей как коммуникационной платформы для НКН. Работа представляет теоретическое и эмпирическое исследование в области НКН-коммуникации и предлагает рекомендации по инновационному развитию и творческой трансформации традиционной культуры Китая в цифровую эпоху.

Структура диссертации включает три главы: (1) «Нематериальное культурное наследие в социальных медиа», в которой представлен обзор литературы по ключевым концептам и теориям, связанным с НКН и соцсетями, (2) «Социальные медиа в коммуникации НКН в Китае», в которой представлен анализ содержания НКН и его продвижения в Douyin, и (3) «Проблемы и контрмеры социальных медиа в распространении НКН Китая», в которой обсуждаются проблемные вопросы распространения НКН и предлагаются рекомендации по их решению.

Объем диссертации составляет 69 страниц. Работа содержит 14 рисунков, 1 таблицу и 104 ссылки.