

Research on the International Communication Strategies of Yanbang Cuisine from the Perspective of Cross-Cultural Communication

Lijiao Zhao, Jia Liu

School of Foreign Languages, Sichuan University of Science & Engineering, Zigong 643000, China

Abstract: As an important branch of Sichuan cuisine, Yanbang cuisine features a "rich, strong and diverse taste" and carries the salt merchant culture of Zigong. However, its internationalization process is relatively lagging behind, facing such problems as cultural cognitive barriers, single communication channels and vague brand image. Based on the cross-cultural communication theory, this study systematically analyzes the current situation and predicaments of Yanbang cuisine in international communication, and puts forward four strategies: deepening cultural connotation, product innovation, channel expansion and technological empowerment, as well as compliant operation and sustainable development.

Keywords: Yanbang cuisine; Cross-cultural communication; International communication; Cultural discount; Dietary culture.

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of increasing global cultural exchanges, as an important component of cultural soft power, has gradually become a key carrier for national image communication and cultural identity construction. As a prominent representative of Chinese dietary culture, Sichuan cuisine has shown strong communication potential in the international market in recent years. Yanbang cuisine, an important branch of Sichuan cuisine, originated in Zigong, Sichuan Province. Relying on the unique salt merchant culture and geographical environment, it has formed a distinctive culinary technique and flavor system. Divided into three major branches: salt merchant cuisine, salt worker cuisine and guild hall cuisine, Zigong Yanbang cuisine is famous for its distinct feature of "rich, strong and diverse taste", enjoying the reputation of "Eating in Sichuan, Tasting in Zigong". Nevertheless, compared with other widely spread schools of Sichuan cuisine, the internationalization process of Yanbang cuisine is still slow, confronted with cultural cognitive barriers, single communication channels, vague brand image and other issues. How to systematically promote the cross-cultural communication of Yanbang cuisine to the world from the perspective of cross-cultural communication has become a topic worthy of in-depth discussion.

Combined with the cross-cultural communication theory, this study explores the cultural discount phenomenon and its elimination mechanism in the international communication of Yanbang cuisine, which helps to enrich the research perspective of the external communication of Chinese dietary culture. By analyzing the communication status and problems of Yanbang cuisine, this paper puts forward operable international communication strategies, so as to support the protection, inheritance and international promotion of Yanbang cuisine culture.

2. Current Situation and Problems of the Cross-Cultural Communication of Yanbang Cuisine

2.1. Current Situation of the Cross-Cultural Communication of Yanbang Cuisine

As an important branch of Sichuan cuisine, the formation and development of Yanbang cuisine are deeply rooted in the more than 2,000-year history of well salt production in Zigong. This unique form of dietary culture has evolved with the rise and fall of the salt industry economy, not only carrying rich collective historical memories, but also condensing distinct regional spiritual characteristics, forming an indispensable part of China's dietary cultural heritage.

However, from the perspective of the practical situation of international communication, the globalization process of Yanbang cuisine is still in the initial stage. The current main communication paths present a three-track parallel pattern: first, the spontaneous folk communication carried by overseas Chinese restaurants; second, relying on government-led cultural exchange programs; third, phased display through international food exhibitions. In recent years, the Zigong municipal government has attempted to construct a systematic external promotion mechanism by holding Yanbang cuisine culture festivals, organizing chefs to study abroad, and participating in international catering expositions. Notably, the acceptance of Yanbang cuisine in the overseas Chinese food market still remains at the level of adaptive improvement—the formula and craftsmanship are adjusted to cater to the preferences of local consumers, resulting in the "distortion" of the flavor characteristics of authentic Yanbang cuisine in the international market.

From a communication perspective, the international promotion of Yanbang cuisine has obvious structural limitations. In terms of media forms, the existing practices over-rely on offline physical activities, and the construction of a digital communication matrix is obviously lagging behind, failing to effectively reach the global digital native groups. In terms of channel strategies, the communication focus still adheres to the "localization" logic of traditional

print media and local festivals, and the utilization of emerging digital infrastructure such as short video platforms and social media is insufficient, leading to the limitation of communication efficiency and coverage. In terms of cultural narrative, the profound cultural codes behind Yanbang cuisine, such as salt industry civilization, craftsmanship spirit and social networks, have not yet undergone systematic academic combing and contemporary translation, and there is a lack of a symbolic system that can resonate in the cross-cultural context. This communication dilemma of "having products but no brands; having skills but no narratives" restricts the leap of Yanbang cuisine from a "local flavor" to a "global delicacy".

2.2. Problems in the Cross-Cultural Communication of Yanbang Cuisine

Yanbang cuisine faces multiple obstacles in the process of international communication. First of all, the phenomenon of cultural discount is prominent. The salt merchant culture, historical allusions and regional characteristics contained in Yanbang cuisine are difficult for overseas audiences to understand, resulting in a great reduction in its cultural attraction. Sichuan cuisine is often simplified into a single label of "spicy and numbing" in international communication, and its rich connotation of "a hundred dishes with a hundred flavors" is obscured, and Yanbang cuisine is facing the same problem.

Secondly, the communication content is highly homogeneous, lacking differentiated expression strategies for different cultural backgrounds. There are deficiencies in menu translation and cultural interpretation, leading to the failure of effectively conveying the historical and cultural allusions behind the dishes. Research shows that the English translation research of Zigong Yanbang cuisine is still in its infancy, lacking a systematic translation standard and communication strategy.

Thirdly, the communication channels are relatively single, mainly relying on traditional offline activities, and the application of digital communication means is insufficient. The communication carriers and methods of the intangible cultural heritage of Sichuan cuisine are single, with a low breadth of audience and participation, and the digital publicity is not yet mature. Yanbang cuisine is also facing the same problem in digital communication, lacking a unified brand image and a clear cultural communication path.

Finally, there is a lack of systematic communication strategies and long-term mechanisms. Most communication activities are fragmented and short-term, making it difficult to form a sustained influence. The overseas promotion of Yanbang cuisine lacks follow-up research, and the evaluation and feedback mechanism of communication effects has not yet been established.

3. Strategic Suggestions for the International Communication of Yanbang Cuisine from the Perspective of Cross-Cultural Communication

3.1. Deepening Cultural Connotation and Cross-Cultural Expression

The international communication of Yanbang cuisine should first focus on the in-depth excavation and

transformative expression of cultural connotation. Rooted in the salt merchant culture of Zigong, Yanbang cuisine carries rich historical memories and regional spirits. It is necessary to extract cultural symbols with universal values, such as the "salt merchant spirit" and "craftsmanship inheritance", and enhance the cultural resonance of overseas audiences through narrative and situational expression methods.

In terms of cross-cultural translation and interpretation, it is necessary to combine the pragmatic translation theory, optimize the translation strategies of dish names and cultural backgrounds, and improve the comprehensibility and acceptability of cultural information. Academic investigations show that literal translation can be adopted for dish names with unobtrusive markedness, while for dishes with distinctive characteristics, their connotative and denotative cultures should be transmitted through annotations or other methods. It is suggested to cooperate with universities and cultural research institutions to carry out research on the extraction and transformation of Yanbang cuisine cultural symbols, so as to provide theoretical support for international communication.

In addition, we can learn from the experience of the development of digital IP images, design IP images around the historical figures, myths and legends or folk stories of Yanbang cuisine, personify the intangible cultural heritage dishes, design characters with story backgrounds, and vividly tell the historical allusions and cultural connotations behind Yanbang cuisine. For example, the IP image of "Pixian Bean Paste" has successfully created an enthusiastic and lively "Bean Paste Elf" through the elements of "green beans + chili peppers", effectively conveying the cultural heritage and local characteristics of the brand.

3.2. Optimization of Product and Content Innovation

At the product level, the internationalization of Yanbang cuisine needs to carry out moderate innovation to adapt to the overseas market while maintaining the core flavor and cultural characteristics. We can learn from the experience of the internationalization of Sichuan cuisine, develop adaptive dishes such as "low salt" and "mild spiciness" according to the taste of local people, and lower the threshold of cultural acceptance. At the same time, attention should be paid to the visual presentation and cultural recognition of the dishes to enhance the communication power of Yanbang cuisine on social media and other platforms.

At the content level, it is necessary to develop diversified cultural products, such as Yanbang cuisine cultural documentaries, digital IP images, condiment packages, cooking tools and cultural books, forming a multi-level content matrix and expanding communication paths. According to the survey, the raw materials of Zigong Yanbang cuisine have developed from the early single beef series to rich categories such as rabbit meat series, fish series, fresh pepper series, pickled vegetable series and tofu pudding series, which provides a solid foundation for product innovation.

In terms of dish innovation, we should balance the inheritance of tradition and innovative development. We should not only maintain the characteristics of Yanbang cuisine of "rich and fragrant taste, spicy and fresh stimulation", but also adapt to the modern consumers demand for healthy diet, and develop innovative dishes with low oil, low salt and better health. For example, emerging dishes such as Spicy Boiled Rabbit and Spicy Dried Rabbit have

gradually surpassed traditional dishes and become the representative of Yanbang cuisine loved by consumers.

3.3. Communication Channel Expansion and Technological Empowerment

The international communication of Yanbang cuisine should build a diversified communication network integrating online and offline channels. On the one hand, continue to give play to the role of traditional channels such as overseas Chinese restaurants, cultural festivals and exhibitions, and famous chef competitions; on the other hand, make full use of digital communication means such as short video platforms, social media and food documentaries to expand the audience coverage.

It is suggested to use big data and artificial intelligence technologies to accurately identify target audiences, formulate differentiated communication strategies, and improve communication efficiency. At the same time, establish a digital cultural resource database of Yanbang cuisine to provide systematic content support for international communication. We can learn from the international communication experience of the "Sichuan Pepper Craze", and enhance the international popularity of Yanbang cuisine through the diffusion effect of media reports and opinion leaders.

In terms of specific communication paths, we can learn from the communication experience of Sichuan pepper in Japan, France, the United States and other countries. For example, in Japan, classic dishes such as Mapo Tofu can be promoted through TV programs, social media and food competitions; in the United States, interactive activities such as taste challenges can be held by taking advantage of consumers curiosity about spicy and numbing flavors; in France, by taking advantage of the existing impression of Sichuan pepper as a high-end spice among the French, promote the "authentic Yanbang cuisine" with artistic taste through cooperation with high-end restaurants and fine food brands.

3.4. Compliant Operation and Sustainable Development

The international development of Yanbang cuisine needs to follow the laws, regulations and industry standards of the target countries, and ensure compliant operation in food safety, trademark registration, intellectual property protection and other aspects. The authors suggest establishing a standardized system for the international communication of Yanbang cuisine, covering dish production, cultural expression, communication content and other aspects, so as to improve the professionalism and credibility of communication.

In terms of standardization construction, we can learn from the experience of the international standard system of Sichuan cuisine, quantify the proportion of core seasoning sauces, cooking temperature, time and other indicators, and provide technical support for kitchens with different cultural backgrounds to replicate a relatively stable authentic taste. Technical standardization helps to reduce the quality fluctuation caused by the randomness of production, and lay a foundation of trust for in-depth cultural interpretation.

At the same time, focus on sustainable development, promote the integration of Yanbang cuisine with international trends such as green catering and healthy diet, and enhance its competitiveness and attractiveness in the international market. In terms of business model, we can learn from the experience

of chain operation, and expand brand influence and market share through the business model of "five unifications", "four centralizations" and "one decentralization".

In addition, it is necessary to integrate the resources of the government, society, market and enterprises to jointly promote the rapid development of Yanbang cuisine. The government should provide policy support and environmental guarantees, all sectors of society should participate actively, follow the laws of the market economy, give play to the main role of enterprises, and promote the formation of the aggregate effect of large-scale social production.

4. Conclusion

From the perspective of cross-cultural communication, this study systematically analyzes the current situation and problems of Yanbang cuisine in international communication, and puts forward four strategic suggestions: deepening cultural connotation, product innovation, channel expansion, and compliant operation. The research shows that the international development of Yanbang cuisine not only requires the in-depth excavation and expression transformation of cultural connotation, but also needs to build a systematic and sustainable communication system with the help of modern communication technologies and diversified channels. The introduction of references provides theoretical support and practical basis for the research, enhancing the academic nature and practical pertinence of the discussion.

As a unique characteristic dietary culture of Zigong, the formation and development of Yanbang cuisine are closely related to the well salt culture. In the process of cross-cultural communication, Yanbang cuisine is faced with such problems as cultural discount, single communication channels and vague brand image. Through deepening cultural connotation, optimizing product innovation, expanding communication channels and ensuring compliant operation, Yanbang cuisine is expected to break through the existing communication predicament and realize effective international communication.

In the future, the cross-cultural communication of Yanbang cuisine should further strengthen the combination of theory and practice, and promote the collaborative cooperation between the academic circle, industry and cultural institutions. It is suggested to strengthen the research on the evaluation of the cultural communication effect of Yanbang cuisine and explore its new communication paths in the digital age. At the same time, it is expected that Yanbang cuisine can integrate into the global dietary culture system with a more open and inclusive attitude, and become an important carrier for Chinese culture to go to the world.

In the digital age, the inheritance and development of the intangible cultural heritage of Yanbang cuisine are facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges. Through strategies such as digital IP image design, construction of diversified communication channels and enhancement of emotional connections, Yanbang cuisine is expected to attract the attention of more young audiences and enhance their sense of cultural participation and emotional connection. Looking forward to the future, the inheritance and development of Yanbang cuisine need continuous innovation in the wave of digitalization and diversification to achieve sustainable development.

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