

Examining the Primary Factors Restricting the Overseas Promotion of Chinese Culture: A Case Study of Association Mugua in France

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the main factors restricting the overseas promotion of Chinese culture, focusing on the case of the Mugua Association in France. With China's increasing national power and global influence, Chinese culture has become an effective tool to enhance China's image and others' perceptions of China. By analyzing the experiences and strategies employed by the Mugua Association, this paper aims to shed light on the main barriers that hinder the successful promotion of Chinese culture overseas. The study adopts a qualitative approach, using document analysis to gather data. The conclusion is that various factors, including but not limited to cultural differences, a lack of official support, and the wrong promotion mode, contribute to the challenges faced by Mugua Association and other similar organizations.

Keywords: Chinese culture, China, cross-culture communication, cultural differences, Hanfu costume

1. Introduction

The overseas dissemination of Chinese culture is an important way to "let the world understand China and let China go to the world". The overseas dissemination of Chinese culture will provide the world with an opportunity to understand China and help enhance my country's international influence and competitiveness. Meanwhile, people also encounter some challenges and barriers during their practise. Understanding these obstacles is crucial for addressing them effectively and devising strategies that can overcome the barriers hindering the overseas promotion of Chinese culture. By delving into the case of Association Mugua, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the intricate dynamics that impact the dissemination of traditional Chinese culture abroad. The French Association Mugua is organized by a group of Chinese who love traditional Chinese culture in France to carry out corresponding activities in Han costume and traditional Chinese culture. This study will analyze some possible problems with spreading Chinese culture and three specific challenges. This research holds great significance in advancing our understanding of the challenges and opportunities of promoting traditional Chinese culture overseas. By addressing the hindrances faced by organizations like Association Mugua, this study can pave the way for more effective cultural exchange and a deeper appreciation of Chinese culture among international audiences.

2. The Current Situation of Chinese Culture Spreading Overseas

With the improvement of China's comprehensive strength, China's influence in the world is also growing. At the same time, Chinese culture is gradually being influenced and spread overseas. The dissemination of Chinese culture is mainly through the following channels: 1. Media and social media dissemination. 2. Academic or cultural exchange programs. 3. Establish a local Confucius Institute to promote Chinese and Chinese culture. 4. Overseas Chinese communities organize cultural activities. Nevertheless, the majority of disseminators have political backgrounds because the channels of dissemination of Chinese culture are mainly controlled by Chinese government. With China's rapid development and strength improvement in recent years, some critics may regard these actions as political activities or censorship that fear threats to their interests and thus generate unwilling psychology and resistance. For example, on April 21, 2020, Sweden closed the last local Confucius Institute, and on July 18, 2023, the University of Nuremberg in Germany announced that it would refuse to accept CSC (China Scholarship Council) scholarship winners.

3. Analysis of Main Factors

People will encounter various challenges when spreading Chinese culture overseas, and the reasons for these challenges are various. Such challenges could be found in lack of official supports, propagation mode, and cultural differences.

3.1. Limitation of Spreading Chinese Culture Oversea Caused by Cultural Difference

Cultural differences pose a major challenge to the spread of Chinese culture abroad. The language barrier is a significant aspect of cultural differences that impede cross-cultural communication, especially in the context of spreading Chinese culture overseas to individuals who do not speak Chinese. While individuals may resort to using the local language, there are inherent limitations to translation that cannot be easily overcome. Jin Zhao-hui argues that "language possesses distinct classifications, and the vast differences between language systems give rise to difficulties in pure translation." Consequently, it becomes arduous for audiences to fully grasp the intended meaning of narrators [1].

Also, it is important to recognize that disparities in cultural norms and values can contribute significantly to difficulties in cross-cultural communication. China, with its rich history and distinct cultural heritage, often differs from Western cultural norms and values, including concepts of collectivism, hierarchy, social etiquette, and communication styles. For instance, French cultural values emphasize individualism, multitasking, low-context communication, and femininity [2].

These divergent cultural values can lead to misunderstandings and difficulties in relating to or accepting certain cultural practices. The clash between Chinese and Western cultural values creates a phenomenon known as the "Cultural Plateau and Culture Basin" [2]. In this dynamic, the culture in the "basin" position struggles to have equal dialogue power with the culture in the "plateau" position [3]. Selective exposure theory suggests that individuals tend to select specific aspects of exposed information that align with their existing mindset. This makes it challenging for cultures in a "basin" position to effectively communicate and be understood by cultures in a "plateau" position.

In the context of disseminating Chinese culture abroad, these cultural differences add complexity to the process. The target audience, often from Western cultures, may have preconceived notions, stereotypes, or prejudices based on historical events, media coverage, or misinterpretations. Such biases can hinder the acceptance and understanding of Chinese cultural practices. Consequently, Chinese individuals face significant obstacles when sharing their culture in foreign countries [4].

Moreover, determining the success of disseminating Chinese culture overseas becomes a complex task. The purpose behind spreading Chinese culture can vary, whether it is to encourage

greater participation, foster understanding, or simply observe from a distance. These variations in goals further emphasize the importance of addressing cultural barriers in order to facilitate effective cross-cultural communication and achieve meaningful cultural exchange.

3.2. Limitations of Spreading Chinese Culture Overseas Caused by a Lack of Official Support

Although the Chinese Government has expanded and internationalized the media in order to tell the Chinese story and diminish the difference between its self-image and the world's perception of China since 2009, the Chinese government exercises strict control over the media, both domestic and foreign [5]. Thus, individuals or non-governmental organizations have a hard time getting support from the Chinese government. In such situations, those who want to spread Chinese culture have to rely more on social media sites such as Douyin and TikTok to spread Chinese culture and tell Chinese stories. In terms of overseas communication, there is a shortage of people who understand both the overseas cultural environment and have deep insights into Chinese culture, so it is difficult to contact appropriate local organizations to get their support [6].

3.3. Limitation of Spreading Chinese Culture Oversea Caused by Promotion Mode

Hoskins and Mirus pointed out that "the reduction of the value of cultural products in the international market is due to the difference in cultural background, which is not recognized or understood by the audiences in other regions." Hence, due to cultural differences, understanding deviation, and other reasons, it is hard for audiences to fully understand Chinese culture. In the process of disseminating Hanfu culture, the MUGUA Association mainly adopts the form of displaying and explaining Hanfu. They ignore most people's limited knowledge of Hanfu and Chinese culture, and the cultural discount produced by language and culture so the influence of Hanfu communication overseas is poor. Hence, they can use more creative ways by integrating other traditional cultures and new media technology to promote Hanfu culture. Other traditional cultures, new media technology, and Hanfu culture are in mutually reinforcing partnership [7]. Meanwhile, Hanfu culture is often spread through communication between fans interested in Hanfu and other young netizens interested in Hanfu or traditional culture to attract them as fans and expand the insider's knowledge of Hanfu culture. However, this neglects the publicity and popularization of the general public [8]. Therefore, the Mugua Association's influence is weak, and the radiation area is very narrow.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the overseas dissemination of Chinese culture serves as a vital avenue for enhancing global understanding of China and expanding its presence on the international stage. While this endeavor offers numerous opportunities, it is not without its challenges. This research has shed light on the intricacies and barriers encountered during the promotion of traditional Chinese culture abroad, with a specific focus on the case of Association Mugua in France. By delving into these challenges and analyzing their impact, this paper can obtain some valuable insights that can inform strategies for more effective cultural exchange and a deeper appreciation of Chinese culture worldwide. By addressing the obstacles faced by organizations like Association Mugua, this study can pave the way for a more successful overseas dissemination of Chinese culture and contribute to the enrichment of global cultural diversity.

This paper still has certain limitations. Firstly, the data resources about Association Mugua are limited, and it can be argued that their information on their official social media accounts. Moreover, spreading Chinese culture is a complicated and difficult thing and during this process there are still

various problems people should deal with, and this paper cannot cover all of them. Furthermore, the analysis of this study is not in-depth enough. It just analyzes one case in France, without combining similar associations in other countries. Hence, it is necessary to analyze more cases and combine them with the situation in the corresponding countries.

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