

Research on the International Communication Path of Intangible Cultural Resources of Jingchu Traditional Chinese Medicine in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

In the trend of global digital communication, the intangible cultural resources of Jingchu Traditional Chinese Medicine, as a significant part of outstanding Chinese traditional culture, face new opportunities and challenges in international communication. This research focuses on three core areas: traditional Chinese medicine figures, medical techniques, and traditional Chinese medicine health - preservation culture. It systematically investigates their digital communication status, analyzes the dilemmas, and proposes targeted strategies, aiming to provide theoretical support and practical paths for the international communication of Jingchu Traditional Chinese Medicine culture.

KEYWORDS

Jingchu Traditional Chinese Medicine; Intangible cultural resources; International communication; Digitalization

1 Introduction

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), a precious treasure of ancient Chinese science, serves as the key to unlocking Chinese civilization. It embodies the millennial health - related wisdom and practical experiences of the Chinese nation. In the context of accelerated globalization and the advancement of the “Healthy China” strategy, the international communication of TCM culture is of great significance. It is not only an important factor in enhancing national soft power and a contemporary interpretation of cultural confidence but also a crucial measure for promoting the construction of a global health community^[1]. The Party and the state attach great importance to the international communication of TCM. They have introduced many policies, such as the “Development Plan for Promoting the High - Quality Integration of Traditional Chinese Medicine into the Belt and Road Initiative (2021 - 2025)” and the “Implementation Plan for the ‘14th Five - Year Plan’ Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture Promotion Project”, providing strong support for TCM to “go global”. The Jingchu region, as one of the important birthplaces of TCM culture, is rich in intangible cultural resources of TCM. In the current era of the integration and innovation of scientific and technological development and traditional culture, TCM, as a valuable intangible cultural heritage, carries the wisdom and experiences of thousands of years. TCM intangible cultural heritage is of great significance for promoting human health and strengthening national cultural confidence^[2].

2 Current situation of the international communication of intangible cultural resources of Jingchu Traditional Chinese Medicine

Hubei Province is the hometown of Shennong (the Yan Emperor) and Li Shizhen, the “Sage of Medicine”. The “Ten Famous Chu Medicines” represented by Qichun mugwort (*Artemisia argyi*) are well - known far and wide. Shennongjia and Wudang Mountain, with their abundant natural medicine resources, are like natural medicine warehouses [3]. Meanwhile, the Jingchu region has remarkable advantages in government - industry - education - research - application, laying a solid foundation for the inheritance and dissemination of TCM culture. In recent years, the booming development of digital technology has brought new opportunities for the international communication of TCM culture. Various digital platforms and technical means have emerged, providing a broader space for the dissemination of intangible cultural resources of Jingchu TCM. This section aims to deeply explore the digital communication of intangible cultural resources of Jingchu TCM. Based on a comprehensive consideration of factors such as the diversity of communication channels, audience acceptance, cultural adaptability, and technical accessibility, this research selects traditional Chinese medicine figures, medical techniques, and traditional Chinese medicine health - preservation culture as the core research objects. Through systematic data collection and analysis, the current situation of the digital communication of typical representatives of the above - mentioned intangible cultural resources of Jingchu TCM is summarized.

2.1 Traditional Chinese Medicine figures - taking Li Shizhen as an example

Li Shizhen is the core cultural symbol of Jingchu TCM culture. The dissemination of his life stories, legends, and medical

thoughts has shifted from traditional literature to digital multimedia. On platforms like Ximalaya, e - books and audiobooks of the “*Compendium of Materia Medica*” break through time and space limits, greatly expanding its reach. Documentaries like “TCM in China” and the “Li Shizhen Lecture Hall” series vividly showcase his medical contributions through an audio - visual blend. Animated works such as “Li Shizhen’s *Compendium of Materia Medica*” target a younger audience, broadening the viewership. Technologically, the “AI Li Shizhen” intelligent consultation system, based on Tencent’s medical model, showed digital service potential at the 2024 Wuhan TCM Culture Week. Moreover, the Li Shizhen Memorial Hall’s online exhibition, digital collections, and multi - language “*Compendium of Materia Medica*” compilations, empowered by digital technology, build a multi - dimensional international communication system, innovating the way TCM culture goes global.

2.2 Medical techniques - taking Qichun Moxibustion as an example

Qichun Moxibustion Therapy was selected as the fifth batch of national intangible cultural heritage in 2021. As an outstanding representative of Jingchu TCM culture, its international dissemination shows the characteristics of digitalization and industrialization. In terms of communication channels, relying on online education platforms such as MOOCs and documentaries like “Intangible Cultural Heritage in China”, the traditional technique has achieved international dissemination. At the technical application level, the use of intelligent diagnosis and treatment equipment and VR interactive devices not only improves the diagnosis and treatment efficiency but also enhances the immersive experience of international audiences. In terms of industrial development, through the combination of digital protection technology and cross - border e - commerce platforms, a complete industrial chain of “cultural inheritance - product development - market promotion” has been constructed^[4]. This multi - dimensional dissemination model not only expands the international influence of traditional medical culture but also provides a practical example for the protection and innovation of intangible cultural heritage.

2.3 Health - Preservation culture - taking Wudang Taiji as an example

As a Taoist holy land and a world cultural heritage, the health - preservation culture of Wudang Mountain (including Taijiquan, Taoist music, medicinal cuisine, etc.) has achieved innovative international dissemination in recent years through digital means, forming an online - offline integrated promotion model. In the aspect of digital content creation and multi - platform dissemination, Wudang Mountain makes full use of platforms such as Douyin and YouTube to release various health - preservation culture contents. For example, the “Dou You Shenyun Wudang” activity in 2025 invited many Douyin influencers to create short videos, strengthening the “Prayer Holy Land · Taiji Wudang” IP. CCTV also broadcast related special programs, attracting global audiences. At the same time, international KOLs such as American martial artist Jack play a leading role in promoting Wudang culture overseas through social media and English - language tutorials. In immersive digital experience projects, the “Wudang Asking - Dao Digital Hall” uses multiple technologies to provide virtual experiences for tourists, becoming the “first stop for international tourists’ cultural deep - dive tours”. The “Wudang Fantasy” exhibition area uses VR/AR technology to assist overseas students in learning Taiji, and the digital Taoist music ensemble enhances cultural attractiveness by restoring ancient music. In the integration of online education and industry, Wudang Taiji courses have been launched on international MOOC platforms, combined with cloud games to lower the learning threshold. E - commerce live - streaming promotes Wudang - featured products and, together with scenic spots, creates a “digital + physical” tourism loop. In addition, the World Taiji Wudang Conference attracts hundreds of millions of global audiences through online live - streaming. Wudang Mountain’s digital projects have won awards for cultural - tourism integration and innovation, promoting international digital promotion. Wudang Mountain adopts a “culture + technology + industry” model, relying on multiple channels such as short videos, live - streaming, VR experiences, and international KOLs, focusing on interactivity and localized expression, and achieving the international dissemination of health - preservation culture.

3 Dilemmas faced in the international communication of intangible cultural resources of Jingchu Traditional Chinese Medicine

The international communication of Jingchu TCM intangible cultural resources faces systematic challenges, mainly in four dimensions: communication content, channels, technology, and talent. These dilemmas seriously limit the improvement of the global influence and effective communication of TCM culture. These challenges not only concern the prosperity and development of TCM culture itself but also reflect the profound dialogue and integration between traditional culture and modern science, as well as between local wisdom and international vision in the context of globalization^[5].

3.1 Shallow communication content

The international dissemination of Jingchu TCM culture faces significant challenges regarding content quality, particularly in depth and professionalism. Current representations often oversimplify complex medical theories - as seen when the documentary "TCM in China" inadequately explains Li Shizhen's "human-nature correspondence" concept, or when animated adaptations reduce the *Compendium of Materia Medica* to mere adventure stories. This superficial approach extends to short-video platforms like Douyin, where dramatic elements dominate (comprising over 85% of Li Shizhen-related content) while substantive academic contributions receive minimal attention. More alarmingly, some media content contains fundamental inaccuracies, from misinterpretations of classical texts to unsubstantiated claims about "elixirs of immortality," with even AI-generated advice occasionally violating basic TCM principles.

3.2 Limited communication channels

The international communication of Jingchu TCM cultural resources overly relies on domestic platforms and does not make full use of international mainstream social platforms (such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, etc.) and video platforms (such as Netflix, Vimeo, etc.). Take the online exhibition of the Li Shizhen Memorial Hall as an example. 92% of its visits are from domestic sources. In contrast, the "TCM Cultural Digital Museum" of the University of Munich in Germany has 120,000 subscribers on YouTube. The digital collection of the Jinling version of the *Compendium of Materia Medica* has not been issued on international platforms (such as SuperRare), and the *Compendium of Materia Medica* Illustration currently only has an English version, without a multi-language resource library. Language barriers limit the scope and depth of the international communication of TCM culture.

3.3 Technical application problems

While digital technologies offer new possibilities for TCM cultural dissemination, practical challenges remain. VR/AR applications in TCM health preservation often suffer from technical limitations like low-resolution visuals and motion lag, compromising user experience. Similarly, diagnostic tools such as the Four-Diagnostic Instruments present accessibility barriers - their operation requires specialized TCM knowledge (including inspection, auscultation, interrogation, and palpation techniques) that most international users lack. Language barriers and inadequate training further compound these difficulties, severely limiting the global adoption of these digital TCM solutions.

3.4 Lack of talent and collaboration

The digital dissemination of TCM health-preservation culture faces significant talent gaps, particularly in professionals proficient in both TCM theory and digital communication. Many content teams lack TCM expertise, leading to superficial outputs - such as Taijiquan tutorials that demonstrate movements without explaining their meridian-based therapeutic principles. TCM institutions' digital platforms consequently suffer from slow updates, poor interactivity, and ineffective content dissemination. Compounding this issue is weak collaboration between stakeholders. Government, industry, academia, and research institutions often operate in silos without coordinated strategies, resulting in duplicated efforts and inefficient resource allocation that hinders effective international TCM communication.

4 Strategic for the international communication of intangible cultural resources of Jingchu Traditional Chinese Medicine

4.1 Optimize communication content

To enhance communication content quality, collaborate with professional TCM scholars to explore TCM cultural connotations. When creating documentaries and academic lectures, use AI like ChatGPT and DeepSeek to assist scholars. For instance, embed an AI-driven Q&A in academic lectures for real-time, accurate answers, boosting interactivity. An authoritative review mechanism is essential. Assemble a review team of TCM experts, historians, and media pros. Employ AI and big-data to review all content. Partner with authoritative TCM institutions and universities for content accuracy. Use AI tools for initial reviews, flagging content for manual checks to ensure quality.

4.2 Expand communication channels

Actively accessing international mainstream platforms is crucial for expanding communication channels^[6]. Leverage new media's immediacy to present TCM history and culture alongside useful info, aiding audience understanding. Use AI

and platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Netflix, and Vimeo to promote TCM's multi-language communication.

AI tools like ChatGPT and DeepL can translate TCM content into major languages accurately and adaptively. Translate the English-version "*Compendium of Materia Medica*" illustration into more languages with AI-optimized expressions. Release TCM cultural content on international short-video platforms with AI-generated multi-language subtitles and dubbing, such as in the "TCM Health - Preservation Mini-Class" series, to widen TCM culture's international reach.

4.3 Break through technical barriers

Collaborate with technology firms to optimize VR/AR technology. This improves image quality, operation smoothness, immersion, and interactivity. VR/AR breaks geographical and time-space limits, bringing the museum to people^[7]. When creating VR acupuncture teaching software, integrate Meta's AI for real-time feedback on acupuncture operations. The AI can monitor and correct users' operations, enhancing the immersive learning experience.

Optimize the user interface of digital diagnosis and treatment tools and simplify operations. Set up a service team with advanced AI. Along with traditional support, introduce an intelligent diagnosis system. For example, Huawei Cloud's AI service can quickly analyze problems reported by users, like sensor calibration issues with the Four-Diagnostic Instruments. Complex problems can be passed to manual processing, improving support efficiency and lowering the technical barrier for users.

4.4 Strengthen talent training and collaboration

The success of TCM culture's international communication hinges on cultivating a high-quality interdisciplinary talent team^[8]. Universities should offer TCM-digital-communication-related courses like "International Communication of TCM" and "Digital Technology Application in TCM" to blend TCM theory, digital tech, and communication laws. Regular training programs can enhance the digital and communication skills of existing staff. During training, experts' lectures and intelligent teaching assistants can answer trainees' questions, and AI video analysis can evaluate practical operations, such as video-making and social media management, to improve skills.

A government-industry-education-research-application collaborative innovation platform is needed to integrate resources. The global spread of TCM culture is a systematic effort. It needs the government's leading role, along with the joint and coordinated efforts of social organizations and civil sectors^[9]. The government sets policies, enterprises offer financial and technical support for TCM product development, universities and research institutions provide knowledge and talent, conduct research, and drive innovation, and medical institutions offer clinical experience to ensure content quality. By working together, they can boost the efficiency and effectiveness of Jingchu TCM intangible cultural resources' international communication.

5 Conclusion and prospect

This research analyzes the international communication of Jingchu TCM intangible cultural resources, including its status, challenges, and strategies. Jingchu TCM intangible cultural resources have advanced in international communication via digital methods, with diverse dissemination in TCM figures, medical techniques, and health-preservation culture. But problems like shallow content, limited channels, technical issues, and talent shortages persist. By optimizing content, expanding channels, solving technical problems, and strengthening talent training and collaboration, we can enhance their international communication, promoting global spread and cultural recognition.

Despite the strategies proposed, this research has limitations. Future research can concentrate on evaluating communication effects, establishing a scientific index system for quantification, and providing better bases for strategy optimization. Regarding emerging technologies, explore the potential of blockchain and the metaverse in TCM culture communication, especially for heritage protection and immersive experiences. Additionally, study cultural differences to create more targeted communication strategies, further improving the international communication of Jingchu TCM intangible cultural resources.

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