

# Research on Sichuan Wine Culture and Brand Communication from the Perspective of Globalization

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## ABSTRACT

With the acceleration of the process of world economic integration, brand cultural consumption has increasingly become a consumption trend, and brand competition and cultural communication have become new ways and means of competition. It has become an important research topic for Sichuan wine enterprises to participate in international competition and take the road of international development. Based on Sichuan wine culture and brand communication, this paper analyses the development status of Sichuan wine industry and the existing problems of international communication of Sichuan wine brand, and discusses how Sichuan wine enterprises carry out brand communication internationally. And some useful ideas for the "going out" of Sichuan wine enterprises will be provided, so as to help the development of Sichuan wine industry, enhance the brand value and brand influence of Sichuan wine, and help Sichuan wine industry gain a position in the international market.

**Keywords:** *Sichuan wine brand, Sichuan wine culture, International communication, Brand communication.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Chinese liqueur has a long history and rich cultural connotation. It is a shining pearl in China's liquor culture. For a long time, only a few brands of Chinese liqueur, such as Wuliangye and Swellfun, have actively explored the way of internationalization. Most other Chinese liqueur enterprises have not really entered the international market, especially the European market and the North American market with large potential consumers. Judging from the current development trend, the scale of Chinese liqueur export is at a low level, and its development is slow.

As a big agricultural province in western China, Sichuan is the largest liqueur producer in China and the "Golden Triangle of Chinese liqueur" with its good natural environment, high-quality water source and unique advantages in liquor making.

There are many famous brands of Sichuan liqueur, forming a competitive pattern of "one superpower and many powers". However, it has not been fully developed and promoted, and lacks influence in the international liquor market.

In 2017, the Sichuan provincial government vigorously implemented the "eight plans" to further consolidate the advantages of Sichuan wine in terms of quality, enterprise, and market. The "revitalization of Sichuan wine" has been listed as one of the priorities of the provincial government's works of "governing Sichuan and revitalizing Sichuan". In addition, the NDRC issued the "Guidance directory on industrial policy adjustment (2019 Edition)", which has been implemented since January 1, 2020, and the liqueur industry is no longer a "restricted category". Relevant departments attach great importance to the development of Sichuan wine, and its development has ushered in new historic opportunities.

Human beings in China can learn from relevant brand promotion experience in foreign countries,

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and tap the cultural connotation and cultural value of Sichuan wine, so as to realize the premium and added value of wine culture. Also, it is necessary to promote and publicize Sichuan liquor brand, establish the national brand image of Sichuan wine, identify the communication direction, create a cultural image, tell stories about Sichuan wine, and lead it to the international market.

## **2. CHINESE WINE CULTURE AND SICHUAN WINE CULTURE**

Based on the CNKI database, this research conducted a fuzzy matching search on the two themes of "Sichuan Wine Culture" and "Sichuan Wine Culture Communication". As of 2021, a total of 125 related academic papers (including 5 dissertations) have been published. According to the literature, there is a certain amount of research on wine culture, but there has not been an in-depth study of the subdivision of Sichuan wine, and there is a lack of systematic analysis of Sichuan wine culture and its promotion [1].

### **2.1 Chinese Wine Culture**

China is a country of civilization with a long history. China is one of the earliest wine-making countries in the world. Dukang has a history of thousands of years. Wine is the carrier of culture. Chinese wine culture has a long history and rich connotation. Therefore, wine culture is also one of the important manifestations of Chinese culture. From wine-making, storage, transportation, drinking to wine tasting, appreciation, praise, and cherishment, many literati use wine to make fun, to make elegant poems, and to meet friends [2].

In ancient times, wine was regarded as a sacred substance and was used to worship heaven, earth and ancestral temples. For example, 56 ethnic groups of China have their own unique and colourful drinking customs. Throughout the history, it is not difficult to find that no matter what era, wine not only has a certain position in life, but also carries a certain cultural value.

### **2.2 Sichuan Wine Culture**

The ancient civilization of Sichuan was first born in Chengdu Plain. Throughout the historical documents of ancient Shu Dynasty, there were few words directly related to wine. According to historical records, "Huayangguo · Records of Shu Dynasty" said: "in the ninth generation (Lu Shi · Yu Lun), there was an emperor of Kaiming

Dynasty, who began to establish an ancestral temple, making fun with wine, liking red, and establishing the reign." It can be seen from this historical data that by the ninth (or fifth) Kaiming Dynasty, Shu Dynasty reformed the ritual and music cultural system and established a set of ancestral sacrifice system to consolidate the country. "The sweet wine" shows the importance of wine in the ancestral temple of Shu Dynasty. In the Shang Dynasty, there was a wine called "醴". The ninth (or fifth) Kaiming Dynasty called "醴" as wine, which imitated the name in the Central Plains and collectively referred to "醴". It does not mean that there was sweet wine in Shu Dynasty at that time. In fact, the ancient Shu Dynasty had a long history of wine making, and Shu people had been able to make wine for a long time.

There are a large number of archaeological sites to prove that ancient Shu Dynasty has a long history of wine making. For example, a large number of historical sites from the Neolithic age to the bronze age have been unearthed at the Sanxingdui site. Among the thousands of precious cultural relics unearthed, a considerable number of pottery and bronzes belong to wine vessels, such as Gu, Chen, Weng, bowl, Zun, Jue, etc. The earliest pottery was born about 4000 years ago, and the age of bronzes was equivalent to that from the Shang Dynasty to the late Warring States Period. Archaeologists also found a large number of wine vessels from Shang and Zhou Dynasties to the late Warring States period in Sichuan, including pottery, lacquerware, bronze and wine vessels. . More than 100 bronze wares such as jugs, Zun, Chen, Fang, Fu, Shi, and Jue have been discovered. The discovery of a large number of wine vessels is sufficient to illustrate the development of wine-making in ancient Shu Dynasty and the prevalence of drinking by the Shu people [3].

## **3. THE CURRENT SITUATION AND ANALYSIS OF SICHUAN WINE BRAND COMMUNICATION**

### **3.1 Status Quo of Sichuan Wine Brands**

Brand is an inevitable product of commercial society, and has a certain social relationship with a specific cultural meaning. With its unique product craftsmanship, quality, history, cultural accumulation and natural, geographical, and climatic conditions suitable for wine-making, Sichuan wine has inherited the achievements of wine-making for thousands of years, and has

achieved the unique Sichuan wine culture, and has nurtured a large number of well-known wine brands. The most notable among them are the "six golden flowers" that account for nearly 40% of China's liqueur production and sales: Wuliangye, Jiannanchun, Luzhou Laojiao, Quaxing, Tuopai, and Langjiu. In addition, a large number of Sichuan wine rookies have emerged, driven by Sichuan

famous wine companies. The brand's interpretation of wine culture has made Sichuan wine the first core cognition object of the domestic consumer market of liqueur. There are many famous and high-quality Sichuan wine brands, and a competitive pattern of one superpower and many powers is currently formed (see "Figure 1") [4].

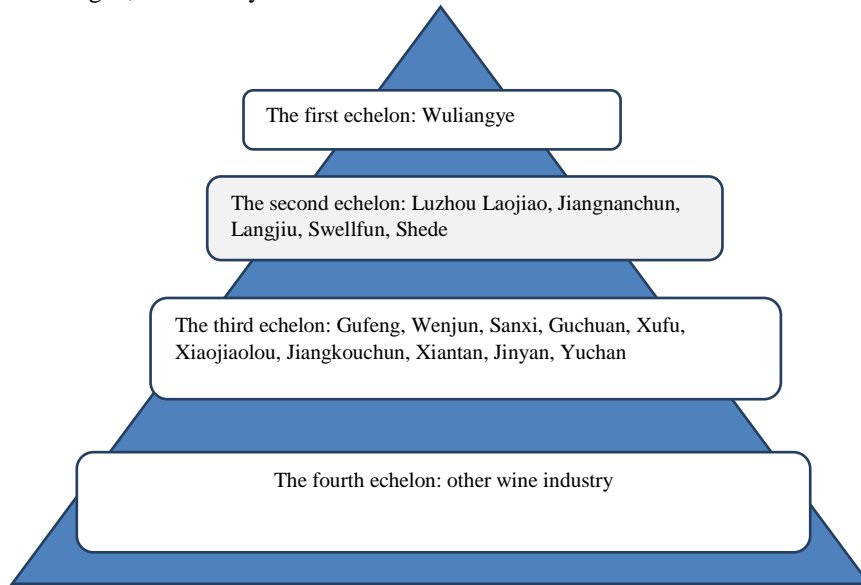


Figure 1 Classification of Sichuan wine brands.

### 3.2 Existing Problems and Analysis

Although Sichuan wine has famous brands such as "Wuliangye", most of them are not well recognized in the foreign market. Compared with the highly white-hot Chinese wine market, most Sichuan wine companies' exports at this stage have not really entered the international market, especially the European and North American markets with a large number of potential consumers. According to the current development trend, the scale of Chinese liquor exports will be at a low-level development stage for a long time, showing a slow wave of progress. Generally speaking, the international market share of Sichuan wine brand is low; the construction of brand culture is single and the means of cultural marketing is insufficient; and it also lacks systematic research on the audience. Moreover, due to the differences in drinking habits and wine culture in China and foreign countries and the problems of Sichuan wine itself, Sichuan wine brand and culture have encountered many challenges on the road of international communication [5].

Although the international market of Sichuan wine can be expected in the future, it is still difficult for Sichuan wine to truly integrate into the global wine market and occupy a considerable share. Combined with the characteristics of brand communication, the reasons are mainly reflected in the following aspects.

#### 3.2.1 Brand Establishment and Insufficient Promotion

Brand establishment is very important. Although brand culture is implemented by enterprises, it provides a brand with rich cultural connotation rather than cold products for consumers. People's spirit and lifestyle are integrated into the brand culture. If a brand becomes a symbol of a culture or forms habits in life, its communication, influence and sales are immeasurable. Human beings represent their own values, personalities, tastes, styles, lifestyles and consumption modes. The product they buy is not just a simple object, but a unique experience and specific props to express themselves and realize their self-worth. It can be seen that the brand is like a banner flying high. The brand culture represents a

value, a taste, a style, a fashion and a way of life [6].

At present, Sichuan wine lacks the establishment and promotion of brand, and fails to make consumers take Sichuan wine as a part of their life. Most Sichuan wine brands pay attention to the long history when shaping their culture, but they lack the sense of historical massiness and the excavation of the essence of traditional culture. Putting emphasis on tactics and lighting brand culture construction is still more common. Wine marketing is keen on the cultural superiority, such as "state", "King", "emperor" and "first". However, it ignores the brand culture and brand personality that can truly reflect consumer values and cultural needs. This disorderly competition, which focuses on immediate interests, ignores long-term development and is eager for quick success and instant benefit, is actually at the expense of the brand, which is not conducive to the sustainable and healthy development of the industry.

**3.2.2 Lack of International Vision in Brand Culture Construction**

At present, Sichuan wine has not been accepted by the western international market in terms of wine culture, product taste and marketing methods. The biggest problem is the lack of brand culture recognized by international consumers. The soul of a brand is culture. Without culture, a brand is only a product [2]. How to give full play to the advantages of Sichuan wine resources, further tap the development potential of Sichuan wine, cultivate and enhance the international core competitiveness of Sichuan wine, consolidate the overall strength of Sichuan wine industry and pillar enterprises, and promote new leaps in economic and trade development have become the bottleneck and urgent problem to be solved in the development of Sichuan wine.

**3.2.3 The Category of Sichuan Wine Products Is Single**

At present, all major brands of Sichuan wine have the same problem. In terms of taste, being "pungent, spicy and high-degree" make the audience cannot accept. The alcohol contents of some Sichuan wine brands are generally above 30%vol. (see "Table 1").

Table 1. The alcohol contents of some Sichuan wine brands

brand	alcohol content
Wuliangye	35%vol.-68%vol.
Langjiu Liquor	38%vol.-53%vol.
Swellfun	38%vol.-52%vol.
Luzhou Laojiao	35%vol.-52%vol.
Shede Spirits	50%vol.-56%vol.

**4. THE COMMUNICATION WAYS OF SICHUAN WINE BRAND FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF INTERNATIONALIZATION**

How to create a strong brand culture is the core mission of every Sichuan wine brand strategy. On the one hand, it is suggested to strengthen brand power through brand culture, so as to better realize the business purpose of enterprise promotion. On the other hand, it can also carry forward the excellent culture, and international people understand the Sichuan wine culture with long history.

Brand culture meets the cultural needs of target consumers in addition to the material, helps to cultivate loyalty group, and makes brand culture a part of people's life.

**4.1 Improving Cultural Strength and Building Brand Culture**

Sichuan wine history should be integrated into the brand. Since entering the 21st century, the competition among brands has developed into the competition of cultural marketing. As a wine brand, it is not enough to dig out a folk story to get a name. The establishment of Sichuan wine brand must have the carrier of culture, history and resources. Sichuan has thousands of cultural sites such as Swell fun site, 262 national key cultural relics protection units, 1136 provincial cultural relics protection units, etc. The process of creating brand culture generally includes the following steps (see "Figure 2").

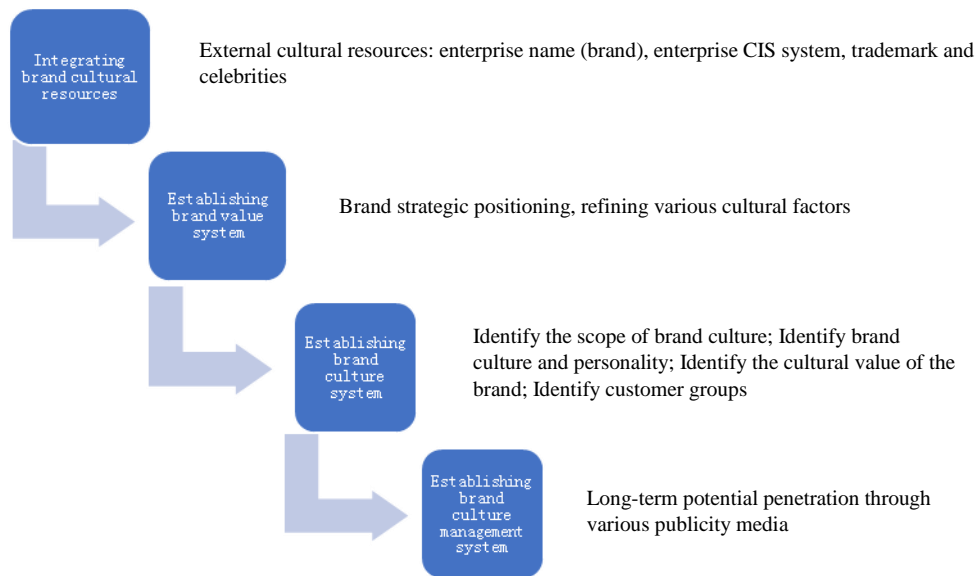


Figure 2 General process of brand culture establishment.

#### 4.2 Expanding International Vision and Strengthening Brand Communication

It is suggested to use the new media platform to shape the brand. The rise of social media has brought the marketing industry into a completely transparent era. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Weibo have completely changed the mode of brand communication. Consumers may communicate with millions of consumers they have never met and talk about the brand. Therefore, brand communication on the global digital platform can cover the global audience. Sichuan wine brand needs to seize the tide of science and technology and the development opportunity of global Internet, and use the platform of new media to spread the brand to global consumers [7].

Human beings in China can learn from South Korea, which is a big consumer of alcoholic beverages and ranks in the forefront of the world. Korean sake is not only supplied to China, but also exported to other parts of the world. In Europe and America, Korean Baijiu has established the status of Baijiu boss. Europeans and Americans have a strong sense of identity with the Korean spirit. They think Korean Baijiu is the best baijiu. This makes Chinese Baijiu brand indignant. Over the years, the technology of Korean Baijiu brewing has been constantly updated. From the perspective of fashion and taste, Korean brewing culture is constantly introduced to the world through Korean dramas, films, sports events and other ways. Almost all Korean dramas are packed in round green bottles,

which is also a common image in Korean dramas. It is undeniable that Korean drama plays an indelible role in the promotion of Korean spirit in China.

#### 4.3 Having Deep Self-reflection and Moving Towards "Quality" Manufacturing in China

It is suggested to divide the overseas market and adopt different promotion modes. At present, 30%vol.-40%vol. wine is popular in foreign countries. In order to achieve the goal of "going out", the key is that Sichuan wine must speed up technological innovation. Human beings in China should constantly explore how to innovate the technology, carry out research and development on all links of Sichuan wine brewing, such as component detection, alcohol reduction, wine beverage, etc., and design localized export-oriented products with different packaging, different flavor and different alcohol content for consumer groups in different regions and cultural regions, and adhere to the principle of giving consideration to the characteristics and the public, so as to meet the needs of personalization and high quality [8].

At the same time, it is necessary to respect the drinking habits of international people, subdivide them according to different needs, regions and groups, and build the Sichuan wine brand of the group. For example, although Japanese sake draws lessons from the brewing methods of Chinese wine, it is different from Chinese wine. Japanese sake is colourless and transparent, with pleasant fragrance. Its taste is pure, soft and refreshing. Its sour, sweet,

bitter, astringent and spicy tastes are harmonious. It is a beverage wine that meets the needs of women.

#### **4.4 Carrying Out Joint Development of Various Industries and Doing a Good Job in "Sichuan Wine +"**

As a famous wine and tourism province, Sichuan combines its own advantages and tourism industry, and promotes the emergence of new economic forms and the further upgrading of industry. Accelerating the integration of "Sichuan wine + tourism + cultural heritage", "Sichuan wine + tourism + folk culture", "Sichuan wine + tourism + catering culture" and "Sichuan wine + tourism + creative culture" not only promotes the optimization and upgrading of industrial structure and forms new economic growth points, but also promotes the construction of local economy, political culture and cultural ecology [9]. In addition, brands in China can also adopt the model of "bundle sales" to shift the market focus from the monopoly of shopping malls and supermarkets to the dishes of restaurants and hotels. The bundling sales mode of "Chinese wine + Chinese food" can be adopted to guide consumers to eat Sichuan wine and Chinese food with a certain brand, and then the audience will form consumption habits.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

This paper deeply discusses the cultural story of Sichuan wine and the profound cultural heritage of Sichuan, so as to provide reference for Sichuan wine brand to increase cultural added value. The current market competition refers to brand competition and cultural competition. Cultural power can better promote the long-term development of the brand. The soul of a brand is culture, and a brand without culture is only a product. If this culture cannot enter the international market before the wine brand, foreign consumers will not be able to recognize and identify with Chinese wine. Therefore, focusing on the culture and publicity of Sichuan wine culture, and playing a good marketing battle from the perspective of cultural communication will help the revitalization of Sichuan wine, enhance the brand value and brand influence of Sichuan wine, and help the Sichuan wine industry to occupy a place in the wine market.

By analysing the development status of Sichuan wine industry, it is clear that the effective way to develop wine brand in Sichuan is to work hard in

terms of cultural strength, foster strengths and circumvent weaknesses, form a unique Sichuan wine culture, increase its own cultural taste, and mark the consumption of Sichuan wine with culture, so as to provide some reference for operators of Sichuan wine brand.

### **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

This paper is common completed by Zijun Yi and Long Jiang.

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