



Research on Countermeasures for Promoting Rural Revitalization through the Development of Folk Art

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Abstract. With the continuous advancement of the rural revitalization strategy, the folk art of Heilongjiang rooted in rural areas has encountered new development opportunities as a vital means for economic growth in the borderland rural communities. Heilongjiang's rich history of folk art represents the synthesis of material and spiritual culture, being passed down through generations, highlighting its value for preservation and development. This paper takes a perspective of cultural and tourism integration within the context of rural revitalization. It first analyzes the current status of Heilongjiang's folk art, elucidating its regional elements and advantages. Then, considering supportive government policies and the development of distinctive cultural and tourism policies, the paper proposes specific strategies to revitalize the folk art industry in rural areas, providing certain novel industrial support for addressing the issues relating to agriculture, rural areas and farmers.

Keywords: The rural revitalization strategy; Folk art; Agriculture rural areas and farmers

1 Introduction

Heilongjiang's abundant ethnic diversity has established a diverse range of ethnic cultural resources, including Korean, Mongolian, Evenki, and Hezhe cultures. In-depth research on these typical and unique cultural resources can form distinctive ethnic village cultural resources in Heilongjiang province. Folk art in Heilongjiang, such as "Hezhe Yimakan," Fangzheng paper-cutting, Hezhe fish-skin crafts, and Evenki deer-skin crafts, have all been selected as China's national intangible cultural heritage¹. As part of the inheritance of China's eight thousand years of civilization, Heilongjiang's folk art, with its unique forms and profound cultural heritage, is highly cherished by both local people and visiting tourists.

2 Folk Art Development Status

2.1 Poor cultural dissemination effect

The folk village cultures, such as the birch bark manufacturing technique, the Ewenki's birch bark boat-making process, and the Hezhe's fish skin crafting, are folk art forms that possess historical, regional, and commercial attributes. They also carry the cultural heritage of intangible human culture. However, due to societal changes like economic development, population migration, and shifts in the lifestyle of ethnic minorities, the indigenous folk art has lost its creative inspiration, i.e., the intrinsic artistic drive. As a result, the effectiveness of promoting these art forms and disseminating their cultural significance has been limited, leading to low societal attention.

2.2 Slow industrialization process

In recent decades, the transformation of Heilongjiang's folk craftsmanship can be divided into three stages: In the early 1980s, it was purely handcrafted, with the designs directly drawn on the materials. Around 2000, mechanization emerged, allowing the use of machines for cutting cloth and fish skins, while designs on fish and birch bark were still hand-drawn. In the past two years, new environmentally friendly materials replaced tree bark and fish skins, providing a more flexible and resilient canvas for drawing, resulting in more vivid textures². The introduction of mechanization significantly improved the efficiency of producing fish skin and birch bark paintings. However, the variety of art forms remains limited because production is mainly carried out by individual households, resulting in limited production capacity and a lack of vitality in the industrialization process.

2.3 Poor management efficiency

The lack of overall planning and failure to consider all aspects and multiple levels are serious issues in the development of ethnic village cultures in Heilongjiang. The absence of systematic management is hindering progress. Economic development lagging behind the mainland has resulted in insufficient funds for tourism development. Remote villages and towns struggle to attract high-quality talents for proper and effective planning and design, which has become one of the main obstacles to tapping into Heilongjiang's abundant tourism resources.

In the current social environment, all tourist resources are striving to explore their inherent value, emphasizing the emotional aspect, and offering comprehensive services. However, ethnic villages in Heilongjiang face difficulties and limitations. The development of the tourism market is slow, and the range of tourism projects is limited, leading to a lack of core competitiveness in Heilongjiang's tourism industry.

2.4 Low audience psychological identification

With societal changes and the rise of consumerism, the commercialization of aesthetic values has led to a blurring of cultural values. Consumer preferences have gradually shifted towards entertainment. People pay less attention to the development of traditional cultural heritage, and although Heilongjiang's folk art has a long history, its singular form of expression greatly limits the audience's imagination and does not align with modern aesthetics. Moreover, certain flat artworks like paper-cutting lack the vividness and tension of storytelling, while the themes of ethnic minority folk paintings differ significantly from the daily life and experiences of the broader audience. As a result, it becomes challenging to arouse the viewers' interest and emotional resonance. The absence of humanistic identification and aesthetic experience hinders the vitality of folk art culture.

3 Regional element advantage

Regional culture is a culmination of distinctive features of a city or region, holding endless design inspirations such as landmark buildings, traditional attire, auspicious patterns, and more. It is the product of the wisdom of local people over thousands of years and constitutes tangible aspects of regional culture that can be seen and felt. In contrast, intangible cultural elements like folk customs, folklore, and local stories present in people's daily behaviors and ideologies offer more potential elements suitable for product design and are also more conducive to dissemination. By extracting these characteristic elements and incorporating them into cultural and creative designs, the regional identity can be strengthened.

When designing cultural and creative products, in-depth research into the background is essential to accurately grasp the historical and cultural context of a specific region. This includes not only the natural landscapes, tourist attractions, and historical sites but also local traditional handicrafts and customs of the ethnic groups. However, an important challenge in product design is how to accurately analyze and extract these regional cultural elements and express them artistically to convey the essence of the regional culture. It is crucial to understand two key characteristics when conducting the analysis and extraction process.

3.1 Generational transmission and rich connotations

Cultures do not emerge overnight; rather, they are passed down through generations, preserved and transmitted in various ways over time. People living in different regions, influenced by diverse geographical and living environments, develop distinct habits and folk customs in various aspects of life. Examples include the "bathing culture" in Northeast China, the "Qilu culture" in Shandong Province, and the "hutong culture" in Beijing, which all originate from the prolonged inheritance and development of multiple factors, such as folk customs, habits, traditions, and ecology, within certain geographical regions. The Black Dragon River Basin is one of the birthplaces of Chinese culture and civilization³. For instance, Yishun Township in Zhaoyuan County, Daqing

City, is part of the Hui Mo heritage site, dating back six to seven thousand years. Tengjiagangzi in Ang'angxi District, Qiqihar City, represents typical fishing and hunting culture dating back more than six and a half thousand years. Baijinbao Village in Minyi Township, Zhaoyuan County, Daqing City, is part of the Hui Mo heritage site, dating back over three thousand years. Thus, the emergence of cultural civilization in the Black Dragon River Basin coincides with that of the Yangtze River and Yellow River basins, both being products of our ancient ancestors' hard work and cultivation.

3.2 Inclusiveness and openness

While inheriting local culture, regional culture integrates with other regional cultures and absorbs various historical cultural influences, continuously evolving and developing. It is precisely due to its inclusivity and adaptability that regional culture has maintained vitality throughout the millennia. In terms of cultural development, Heilongjiang Province is an immigrant area and an open region. Throughout history, it has maintained frequent and close cultural exchanges with the inland areas, greatly influenced by the Central Plains civilization. During the Qing Dynasty, the population composition of Heilongjiang Province was described as "no province without people from the thirteen provinces," and a continuous stream of inland migrants moved to the province. While the Han ethnic group formed the majority, many other ethnic groups coexisted as well. The influx of large numbers of immigrants not only altered the population structure of Heilongjiang Province but also created new humanistic elements and shaped a completely new historical image for the region.

4 Policies related to promoting Rural Revitalization

4.1 Relying on the "Rural Revitalization" strategy supported by the government

The 19th National Congress report of the Communist Party of China proposed the "Rural Revitalization" strategy, emphasizing that issues related to agriculture, rural areas, and farmers are fundamental to the nation's well-being and must be treated as top priorities in the party's work. The development of ethnic cultural industries can promote rural industries through the development of cultural industries and providing intellectual support. By utilizing cultural industries as an economic growth engine, it can drive the development of other industries and promote the deep integration of primary, secondary, and tertiary industries, ultimately achieving industrial prosperity and prosperity for the people.

Ethnic minority characteristic villages have a long history and possess rich intangible and tangible cultural heritages. These villages hold high economic, social, historical, cultural, artistic, and aesthetic value, bearing witness to the diversity, regionalism, and multiplicity of Chinese traditional culture over thousands of years. They are invaluable treasures of human society.

To preserve and develop traditional villages, relevant policies for ethnic minority villages have been introduced. As early as 2009, the "Guiding Opinions on Promoting

Pilot Projects for the Conservation and Development of Ethnic Cultural Characteristic Villages" was issued by the Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Government Office of the Ministry of Finance. It served as a basic normative document for the conservation and development of ethnic minority villages in China, laying the foundation for national policies regarding ethnic villages. In April 2012, the Chinese State Administration of Cultural Heritage and other government departments began joint efforts to research and identify traditional villages, gradually incorporating the protection of traditional villages into key national projects. Subsequently, in 2013, 2014, and 2016, China published lists of traditional villages, which also included numerous ethnic minority characteristic villages. Thus, the protection and development of ethnic minority villages have been continuously promoted by the government⁴.

4.2 Relying on relevant local policies in Heilongjiang

The cultural and creative industry involves a large amount of self-employment, similar to "soft employment." As China currently faces a soft job market due to economic downturn, promoting the development of the cultural and creative industry can alleviate the impact of traditional manufacturing industries transitioning on the labor market. Therefore, the cultural and creative industry is essential "soft power" for the country and crucial for upgrading industries.

In response, many local cultural departments initiated the registration and filing of local traditional villages. For example, Shengli Village in Wulaga Town, which is the only Ewenki ethnic settlement village in Yichun City, is located 82 kilometers southwest of Jiayin County. To understand and experience Ewenki's history, culture, and customs, one can visit Shengli Village in Wulaga Town, Jiayin, to immerse in the cultural atmosphere and experience the folk traditions. Another example is Aihui Village in Aihui Town, Aihui County, Hegang City, which was awarded titles of "China's Historical and Cultural Village" and "National Cultural and Scenic Tourist Village." This village is home to two national intangible cultural heritages: the "Shangyuan Festival" cultural heritage and the traditional technique of birch bark manufacturing. Many similar examples exist, and the Heilongjiang Provincial Government is also vigorously promoting the preservation of ethnic characteristic villages. Comprehensive research and investigation have been conducted on the overall cultural development of local villages, the traditional customs of local ethnic groups, ancient local cultural traditions, as well as unique ethnic languages and traditional cultural knowledge. Specific guidelines for preserving the cultural heritage of ancient villages have also been proposed.

5 Characteristic cultural tourism Promote rural revitalization

5.1 Delving into the essence of ethnic culture

Achieving the unity of traditional folk art and the spirit of ethnic culture in Heilongjiang is based on the in-depth exploration of the regional cultural essence. Only through comprehensive and thorough excavation of historical connotations can the spiritual core that reflects local values and styles be better summarized and condensed. From the perspective of exploring the overall connotations of Chinese traditional culture, the promotion of Heilongjiang ethnic culture must pay attention to the integration of traditional ancient culture and modern culture, traditional folk culture and modern official culture, as well as traditional surface culture and modern spiritual culture. In the process of exploring Chinese culture, it is essential to inherit and shape culture with universality and authenticity, inheriting and developing it through critical succession.

From the early 20th century to the present, with the deep integration of ethnic culture and tourism resources, the unique and charming ethnic culture has played an increasingly crucial role in tourism in China. Take the Ewenki ethnic village as an example. In terms of folk cultural performances, while preserving the traditional folk cultural performance characteristics, efforts are made to combine them with modern mass aesthetic culture, establish attractive ethnic cultural performance features, and promote positive cultural exchanges with tourists, providing them with a culturally immersive experience. During important festivals, such as the Gu'ermu Festival, which is the most famous among the Ewenki people and designated as China's national intangible cultural heritage, the festival's content is rich and diverse. Activities with high public participation, such as sports, performances, and entertainment, should be added to the festival to allow visitors to fully experience the authentic Ewenki ethnic customs.

5.2 Emphasizing the Protection of the characteristic Villages' Resources

The three major indicators for evaluating traditional villages highlight that the establishment of the traditional village list is based on protection, with the core objective of avoiding the extinction of villages during the modernization process while seeking continuous development. From the perspective of the development and utilization of ethnic cultural resources, the primary strategy is to comprehensively preserve and inherit ethnic characteristic tourist resources. In the current situation in China, although folk village resources are in high demand, there is a serious issue of resource homogenization in specific development and utilization, which can dampen tourists' enthusiasm for consumption. Therefore, in the practice of resource development and utilization, maintaining uniqueness and emphasizing originality are essential.

The Heilongjiang region is rich in ethnic resources, housing over ten indigenous ethnic groups, including the unique Hezhe ethnic minority. Hence, its ethnic minority culture possesses an advantage that cannot be replicated, and the same applies to folk art resources. Developing unique tourism products based on characteristic culture will

undoubtedly make these products stand out in the vast field of cultural tourism, and corresponding cultural and creative products can avoid homogenization issues. In projects involving the development and utilization of natural resources, grasping the industry characteristics and ethnic features of natural resources while rationally developing and utilizing them according to the purposes of ethnic and cultural heritage preservation are crucial to fully utilize and showcase Heilongjiang's abundant cultural and tourism resources.

5.3 Emphasizing participation and appreciation in ethnic cultural tourism projects

Focusing on the participation and appreciation of ethnic cultural tourism projects will bring about more significant value. From practical research, the observability of ethnic cultural tourism resources is manifested in two aspects. Firstly, the appreciation aspect allows tourists to perceive the cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities through actual observation during cultural tourism activities. Secondly, the participation aspect enables tourists to actively engage and experience the cultural elements of the tourism project. In the development of ethnic cultural tourism resources, it is essential to define cultural tourism service projects based on observability and participation. More challenging ethnic cultural tourism activities should be treated as performances to be studied and promoted. On the other hand, more widely accessible and interactive activities, such as participating in Evenki reindeer breeding or experiencing Hezhe fishing, should be implemented to enhance tourists' experiences. By combining both types of programs, tourists can enjoy and actively participate, enriching their cultural experience and forming distinctive folk tourism characteristics.

5.4 Creating theme-oriented village scenic areas

The integration of online and offline markets and the use of big data marketing has become a trend. In this context, theme-oriented scenic areas have taken the lead in exploring and developing popular IP products and expanding sales channels to online platforms, creating a powerful revenue stream. This "outreach-oriented business" model transforms "destination-based consumption" into "real-time consumption." For example, the establishment of the "Palace Museum" official online shop within the Forbidden City's scenic area sells products at the same price as those available in physical shops inside the museum. Leveraging e-commerce marketing methods and product innovation, this approach bridges the gap with younger generations, leading to significant revenue and influence.

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