

Effect Analysis of Brand Empowerment to Promote International Exchange of Chinese Food Culture under Live Streaming Ecology - Based on Case Study of Overseas Chinese Restaurants

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Abstract: Overseas Chinese restaurants are widely distributed as a major venue for the dissemination of Chinese culinary culture. Based on literature research, the current situation of overseas Chinese restaurants and the international exchange of Chinese cuisine culture is understood through questionnaires distributed to overseas Chinese food practitioners and online interviews with overseas leaders in the industry. The analysis of the current live streaming ecology of overseas boutique agricultural brand empowerment on the international exchange of Chinese food culture is summarised in an economic perspective as the communication effect, the scale effect, the brand effect, and the synergy effect between the two. It can be said that brand empowerment under the live streaming ecology can effectively integrate brand resources and traffic resources, achieve digital transformation of brand development and promote the international exchange of Chinese food culture.

1. Introduction

With the promotion of the "One Belt, One Road" strategy, some Chinese food brands such as Yao Restaurant, Hai Dilao and Wu Fangzhai have landed overseas, bringing Chinese food culture closer to the common people than ever before. However, due to the overall economic downturn caused by the COVID-19, as well as the lack of self-construction and vicious competition from the same industry, the overseas Chinese food industry has suffered a major impact. Although the main difficulties faced by overseas Chinese restaurants have been alleviated through adjustments such as takeaway and delivery, with the economic recovery slowing down, operating costs increasing, as well as the impact of the "Japanese food trend" and "Thai food trend", coupled with misrepresentation in the local news media, the overseas Chinese food industry is experiencing bottlenecks.

In addition, the "new assimilation policies" introduced by some countries have challenged the international exchange of Chinese and foreign cultures against multiculturalism. Some even question the traditional self-centred Chinese cultural outreach policy from the perspective of cultural self-interest. In the light of this cultural opinion, it is urgent to explore an innovative path for the international exchange of Chinese culture through appropriate communication platforms and means.

2. Description of the Current Situation

Through literature research and case studies of overseas Chinese restaurants, we have learnt about the current situation related to the international exchange of Chinese food culture.

2.1. Current Status of Research

According to the World Federation of Chinese Cuisine, there were nearly 700,000 overseas Chinese restaurants in 2018 and their market size has long exceeded US\$250 billion, equivalent to half the volume of China's restaurant market. However, research on overseas Chinese food is far less than half the volume of domestic restaurant research, which is not commensurate with the real needs of the development of overseas Chinese restaurants and the historical role they have assumed.

Some scholars argue that Chinese restaurants should develop multi-brand operations for specific markets and enhance their brand value through strategic alliances [1]. In reality, however, in the view of some overseas media, Chinese restaurants, as "enclaves of Chinese culture" around the world, are often fragmented and self-contained [2], and do not have the advantage of brand communication.

Then, in order to realise "food as a medium", turn many overseas Chinese restaurants into a "never-ending" outreach platform and promote Chinese specialties [3], some scholars propose to form an industrial chain of Chinese catering with the large-scale operation of private capital [4], which poses more requirements for This has put forward higher requirements for brand empowerment and standardised management. Agricultural brands are more controllable and easier to manage in a standardised way than restaurant brands.

In summary, it is easy to see that while domestic experts and scholars currently have a focus on brand operation and enhancing brand value, few have studied innovative paths for international exchange of Chinese food culture in the context of live streaming ecology. It is therefore necessary to analyse the effect of agricultural brand empowerment on the international exchange of Chinese food culture in the context of the marketing and promotion methods commonly used overseas.

2.2. Status of International Exchange of Chinese Food Culture

Government-led projects such as the "Walking New Year's Eve Dinner" and other international food exchange activities have spread across five continents, frequently creating a Chinese food craze overseas. With the development of the internet and the widespread use of social media, folk creators, represented by food blogger Li Ziqi, have also gained a large number of overseas fans with their unique Chinese vernacular and idyllic atmosphere. "Chinese food" and the cultural symbolism behind it are gradually gaining more and more attention from overseas friends.

However, the impact of the COVID-19 has posed a huge challenge to the operation of Chinese restaurants overseas. Rent, labour costs and the price of ingredients are the biggest costs faced by Chinese restaurants overseas, and these costs have increased further in all countries due to inflation during the epidemic. Firstly, customer traffic plummeted, turnover plummeted, and then high

expenses made many large Chinese restaurants unable to carry the brunt of the epidemic and announced their closure.

While problems such as difficulties in running dine-in food and shrinking customer traffic can still be alleviated by takeaway delivery, declining revenue, as well as increased hard expenses, cannot be easily resolved. As a result, some overseas Chinese restaurants that have temporarily emerged from their operational difficulties are still facing an industry crisis. For the time being, taking the boutique route, empowering through agricultural brands, promoting further international exchange of Chinese food culture, and stabilising and gradually increasing the demand for Chinese food in overseas markets are the solutions to sustain the overseas Chinese food industry in the long run.

3. Analysis of Effects

Through an empirical study of overseas Chinese restaurants, we focus on the communication effect, scale effect, brand effect and the synergy effect between the two in the international exchange of Chinese food culture through the empowerment of boutique agricultural brands under the live streaming ecology.

3.1. The Cultural Communication Effect of Brands in the Wind of Live Streaming

With overseas social platforms such as Facebook, TikTok and Pinterest launching their online shopping functions one after another, e-commerce is gradually being incorporated into the commercialisation process of the major social platforms. Overseas e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Lazada, on the other hand, have opened up live shopping channels on top of their original online shopping functions. At the same time, a number of startups in the field of live e-commerce have also gradually expanded their categories horizontally from vertical areas to enter the market of live shopping. This is basically the same as the initial development of the domestic live-streaming industry. Based on this development trend, and combined with the successful testing of overseas platforms over the past year or so, it can be predicted that live-streaming with goods will become the next windfall for brand promotion, and its audience will be broader.

On the one hand, the current overseas live streaming market has great potential and is a good opportunity for China's boutique agricultural brands to empower themselves. As brands are in the early stages of overseas promotion, it is difficult and costly to gain visibility, but it coincides with the beginning of the overseas live streaming market and low saturation, other agricultural brands have not yet had time to enter the market, greatly reducing the pressure of competition in the same category. The cost of advertising is subsequently reduced through live-streaming, which also facilitates brand positioning.

On the other hand, the overseas live market is not easily controlled by the mainstream media in terms of public opinion. Live streaming is all about instant interactivity, and the impression a brand leaves on viewers is created subjectively during the interaction process, rather than instilled by politicians or the media. By telling the story of a fine agricultural brand, half of the cultural exchange of Chinese food is complete, leaving the rest to the product.

3.2. Scale and Brand Effects from Boutique Agricultural Brand Empowerment

By using boutique agricultural brands to empower domestic agricultural products, the sales and market share of domestic agricultural products overseas will be enhanced and overseas Chinese restaurants will be attracted to develop as a group. With a significant enough volume, the loss and waste of bulk transportation and storage of agricultural products will be greatly reduced compared

to fragmented transportation, which equates to a reduction in logistics and other related costs, enhancing economic efficiency and generating the so-called scale effect. It also means that boutique agricultural brand empowerment provides a larger exchange community for Chinese food culture, promoting both industrial development and cultural exchange.

The expansion of scale is often accompanied by the expansion of brand influence and the wide spread of brand culture. In the live streaming ecosystem, a good brand culture is more likely to build trust with viewers in the live stream. A high enough brand recognition can force the quality of the produce to improve and allow the brand to develop further [5]. For example, domestic regional public brands represented by " Lishui Mountain Farming" already have a certain market base overseas and have experience in live-streaming, so they can provide brand endorsement for local agricultural products exported overseas and expand new overseas user groups in live-streaming [6], sell their products through the brand effect and let the food culture go out. They will be able to sell their products through the brand effect and let the food culture go abroad.

In addition, the current countries due to the impact of the epidemic, home office groups pay more attention to the sense of experience and freshness, the brand live interaction can give users a sense of experience, and the combination of Chinese food ingredients and local cooking techniques, customized dining, to give users a sense of freshness. Let the agricultural products take a healthy, high-quality route, use the brand to attract traffic for overseas Chinese restaurants, and shape a more vivid and concrete image of Chinese food culture.

3.3. Synergy between the Empowerment of Boutique Agricultural Brands and the International Exchange of Chinese Food Culture

In the current overseas live streaming market, most anchors are more willing to endorse their own brands. Under this trend, it is more feasible for brands to live-stream on a per overseas Chinese restaurant basis. Then, the relationship between boutique agricultural brand empowerment and international exchange of Chinese food culture is no longer simply additive, but there is a synergistic effect between the two. Brand empowerment alleviates the problem of high costs faced by overseas Chinese restaurants and protects the window of Chinese food culture for foreign exchange. The smooth exchange between Chinese food culture and local culture will also enhance the brand's user stickiness and ensure the long-term development of brand empowerment.

In some countries in Europe and the United States, the price of vegetables is high, so the ingredients sourced from China are usually vegetable-based specialty produce. Whichever channel is used, the cost of sourcing ingredients is not low. However, the scale effect of brand empowerment can reduce the cost of sourcing ingredients from domestic sources, and through centralised and unified deployment, some of the manpower costs of ingredient sourcing are saved, and through live marketing, human and venue resources are fully utilised.

With the digital transformation, the integration of brand resources and traffic resources under the live streaming ecology can effectively build China's fine agricultural brands [7] and shape the external image of Chinese food culture. Chinese food culture will also act as the internal driving force of the brand culture, and its international exchange will ensure the long-term development of the boutique agricultural brand empowerment while promoting the creation of an international brand for Chinese food and beverage and the construction of a Chinese food standard system.

4. Conclusion

The international exchange of Chinese food culture is of great significance to the overall improvement of the overseas Chinese food industry and the promotion of cultural outreach work. On the basis of grasping the development trend of the overseas live market, and using overseas

Chinese restaurants as a base for cultural communication, we promote the international exchange of Chinese food culture through the empowerment of high-quality agricultural brands, better serve the work of foreign propaganda, contribute to the construction of brand digitisation, build international brands and construct a Chinese food standard system with Chinese characteristics. At the same time, the theories related to the empowerment of agricultural brands are used to promote industrial development and cultural exchanges.

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