

# *Study on Cultural Soft Power Promoting the Construction of International Communication Power in Shandong Province*

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**Abstract:** In the wave of the new era, China has made remarkable progress in many fields and gradually moved to the core stage of the world. At the same time, Shandong Province, with its profound cultural heritage and strong cultural strength, has gradually emerged on the international stage and won widespread praise and recognition from the international community. Under the background of the new era, in-depth research on how to enhance the international communication power of Shandong Province has far-reaching theoretical and practical significance for optimizing the shortcomings of cross-cultural communication. With the increasingly close connection between China and the world in politics, economy, culture and other aspects, the importance of cultural soft power has become increasingly prominent, and has become an important support for national development.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, Shandong's cultural industry has shown a sustained and rapid growth under the strong drive of large cultural enterprises. With the strengthening of foreign cultural exchanges and cooperation, the number of Shandong's "going out" cultural products is increasing, and its international influence is gradually expanding. As a landmark event, the International Confucius Cultural Festival has been successfully held for 39 sessions and is one of the "Top ten festivals with the most international influence in China". There are 476 Confucius Institutes in 127 countries and regions around the world, and there are not only Confucius Institutes in the world, but also 851 Confucius Institutes in primary and secondary schools, which is a manifestation of the influence of Chinese culture on foreign cultures, and the number is still growing. The "Confucius Institutes" all over the world have not only promoted the international influence of Shandong and China, but also played an important role in enhancing the cultural soft power of Shandong and China (Figure 1). It is worth mentioning that the wisdom of military science expounded by Sun Tzu's Art of War has also been favored by many countries. Many world military experts regard it as the "Bible", and the famous West Point Military Academy has listed it as a required reading textbook. This fully demonstrates the profound heritage and extensive influence of Shandong's cultural industry. Driven by large-scale

cultural soft power, Shandong's cultural industry has successfully promoted the international spread of culture and enhanced the international influence of Shandong and China by constantly strengthening cultural exchanges and cooperation with other countries.



Figure 1: Confucius Institute

## **2. The concept and connotation of cultural soft power**

### **2.1. Definition of cultural soft power**

Cultural soft power is a comprehensive concept, which refers to the attractiveness and influence of a country or region through cultural means. This strength comes from its rich cultural resources, innovative cultural vitality, effective means of cultural communication and developed cultural industry. Cultural soft power is not only reflected in the traditional cultural heritage and artistic expression, but also covers the values, lifestyles, social systems and other aspects of a country or region. In modern society, cultural soft power has become one of the important indicators to measure a country's comprehensive national strength, and it plays an irreplaceable role in promoting international exchanges and cooperation, shaping international image, and enhancing national competitiveness. Therefore, strengthening the construction of cultural soft power is of vital significance to the long-term development of a country or region.

### **2.2. Elements of cultural soft power**

The elements of cultural soft power mainly include cultural resources, cultural innovation, cultural communication and cultural industry. Cultural resources are the foundation of cultural soft power, including historical sites, traditional arts, literary works, etc. These resources provide rich materials and inspiration for cultural innovation. Cultural innovation is the key to promote the development of cultural soft power. Through continuous innovation, cultural products and services with the characteristics of The Times and national characteristics are created to meet people's spiritual and cultural needs. At the same time, cultural communication is also an important part of cultural soft power. Through various channels and means, the country's cultural ideas and values are disseminated to enhance the international community's sense of identity and favorable impression of the country's culture. The development level of the cultural industry is also one of the important indicators to measure the cultural soft power. By promoting the marketization and internationalization of the cultural industry, the competitiveness and profitability of the cultural industry can be improved, and the cultural soft power can be further enhanced. These four aspects are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, and together constitute the core elements of cultural soft power<sup>[1]</sup>.

### **2.3. The role of cultural soft power in international communication**

Cultural soft power plays a vital role in international communication. Cultural soft power is a key factor in shaping national image and international reputation. By showcasing unique cultural

traditions, artistic treasures and social values, a country can attract the attention of the international community and project an attractive international image. At the same time, cultural soft power can promote international mutual understanding and friendship<sup>[2]</sup>. By sharing cultural products, holding cultural activities and carrying out educational exchanges, people of different countries can have a deeper understanding of each other's cultures and enhance mutual friendship and trust. Therefore, cultural soft power is also an important driving force to promote international economic cooperation and the development of cultural industries. With the deepening of globalization, cultural industry has become an important part of the international economy. Through the display and promotion of national cultural products and services, it can attract the attention and demand of the international market, promote the development of cultural industry, and then promote the growth of national economy and the improvement of international competitiveness. Therefore, it is of great significance to strengthen the construction of cultural soft power to enhance the status and influence of a country in the international arena.

### **3. Analysis on the status quo of international communication power in Shandong Province**

The comprehensive index of national provincial cultural and tourism new media in terms of international communication power mainly consists of the communication power of four social media platforms, namely Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and overseas video platforms (including YouTube and TikTok international version). The weight distribution of these four parts is: Facebook accounts for 30%, X accounts for 20%, Instagram accounts for 20%, and overseas video platforms account for 30%<sup>[3]</sup>.

After a comprehensive evaluation of the international new media accounts operated and maintained by provincial cultural and tourism administrative departments across the country, the provinces and municipalities that ranked top in the comprehensive communication power index in November 2023 are: Jiangsu, Anhui, Shandong, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Shaanxi, Jiangxi, Chongqing, Jilin, Zhejiang and Beijing. These regions have excelled in the international dissemination of new media, effectively promoting the overseas dissemination of local culture and tourism resources.

#### **3.1. History and present situation of international communication in Shandong Province**

The history of international communication in Shandong Province can be traced back to the ancient Silk Road period. As one of the important trade ports in ancient China, Shandong Province played an important role on the Silk Road, conducting extensive trade and cultural exchanges with countries in Asia, Europe, Africa and other places. With the changes of The Times, the international communication of Shandong Province has gradually developed and expanded. Shandong Province has rich cultural heritage and tourism resources, such as Mount Tai, Confucius Temple, Qingdao, etc., which attract a large number of foreign tourists to visit and travel. At the same time, Shandong Province also actively carries out various cultural exchange activities, such as artistic performances, art exhibitions, etc., to deepen mutual understanding and friendship with people around the world. Shandong Province faces some challenges and opportunities in international communication. On the one hand, with the acceleration of globalization and the rapid development of information technology, the international communication environment is becoming increasingly complex and changeable. Shandong Province needs to constantly improve its communication ability and level to meet the international communication needs under the new situation. On the other hand, Shandong Province is also facing many opportunities, such as the in-depth promotion of international cooperation projects such as the "Belt and Road" Initiative, which provides a broader development space and opportunities for Shandong's international communication.

### **3.2. The main channels and ways of international communication in Shandong Province**

The main channels and ways of international communication in Shandong Province are various, aiming to show the achievements of Shandong's cultural, economic and social development to the world through different platforms and means. In recent years, Shandong Internet Communication Group has actively built a "one newspaper one network end and N platform" communication matrix, spreading the story of Shandong to all directions at the same time, but also created a "provincial - provincial - overseas" three-level communication pattern, so that the image of Shandong in the global scope to get better publicity. Through the construction of an international communication system of "channel - account - platform", media integration can become deeper and more extensive. In this way, the image of Shandong in the new era can be displayed in an all-round and multi-angle way<sup>[4]</sup>. In addition, in order to promote Shandong's scientific and technological innovation, strong Marine province, culture and other characteristics, Shandong Internet Communication Group founded a brand column of external publicity. These columns are like Windows, allowing the world to have a deeper understanding of Shandong's charm and stories.

In terms of building a cooperation matrix, Shandong Internet Communication Group has established a normal docking relationship with partners such as central media, out-of-province media, and commercial platforms. In this way, the channels for external publicity and promotion are not only wider, but also the mainstream voice can be transmitted further<sup>[5]</sup>.

### **3.3. Problems of international communication power in Shandong Province**

Shandong Province faces a series of problems and challenges in international communication. At present, Shandong's voice on the international stage is relatively weak, and the lack of media platforms and communication channels with global influence has led to low awareness of Shandong by the outside world. At the same time, the international communication content of Shandong Province is relatively simple, lacking diversity and innovation, and it is difficult to attract the attention and interest of international audiences, so it is easy to cause the lack of pertinence of the communication content and the lack of accurate communication according to the cultural differences of different countries and regions, resulting in poor communication effect. With the profound changes in the global media landscape, Shandong Province is facing fierce competition from other countries and regions in international communication, and needs to constantly improve its communication ability and level<sup>[6]</sup>.

### **3.4. Correlation analysis of cultural soft power and international communication power of Shandong Province**

There is profound interaction and influence between cultural soft power and international communication power of Shandong Province. Cultural soft power is an important national strategic resource, which covers culture, art, education, values and other aspects, and displays the charm and influence of a country through non-material means. For Shandong Province, cultural soft power is an important means for it to go to the world and show its unique charm<sup>[7]</sup>.

Shandong Province also has a strong strength in cultural education and scientific research. Shandong Province has a number of high-level universities and scientific research institutions, such as Shandong University and Ocean University of China, which have made remarkable achievements in personnel training and scientific research, providing strong support for Shandong's cultural soft power. By strengthening cultural exchanges and cooperation, Shandong Province can transform these resources into content for international dissemination and show its unique cultural charm to the world. At the same time, the international communication power of Shandong Province is also an important

embodiment of its cultural soft power. Through media communication and cultural exchange activities, Shandong Province can spread its culture and values to other parts of the world to enhance the outside world's cognition and understanding of it<sup>[8]</sup>.

Relevance analysis can help Shandong Province better understand its advantages and disadvantages in cultural soft power construction, and then work out more targeted strategies to enhance its international communication power. For example, the international dissemination of Shandong culture can be promoted by strengthening cultural exchanges and cooperation with other countries. Through innovative international communication methods, the effect of communication can be improved so that more people can understand and know Shandong<sup>[9]</sup>.

#### **4. The strategy of promoting Shandong's cultural soft power to promote the construction of international communication power**

Shandong Province is rich in cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage, such as world cultural heritage such as Mount Tai, Confucian Temple and Confucian Forest, as well as intangible cultural heritage such as Shandong cuisine, Lu opera and Shandong Fast book. These cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage are an important part of the cultural soft power of Shandong Province, which not only shows the unique charm of Shandong Province, but also provides rich resources for the development of Shandong's cultural industry. Through an active international communication strategy, Shandong Province can showcase its unique cultural charm, social progress and economic development achievements. This image building is crucial to enhance the international appeal of Shandong Province, which has won more opportunities and resources in international cooperation and exchanges.

##### **4.1. Strengthen cultural exchanges**

Shandong Province has made remarkable achievements in strengthening cultural exchanges. For example, in recent years, Shandong Province has successfully held a series of activities such as the "Sino-Foreign Culture and Art Exchange Exhibition" and "Shandong Culture Week", demonstrating the unique cultural charm of Shandong province in the international community. Through cooperation with cultural institutions around the world, Shandong Province has organized a number of influential cultural exhibitions and art performances, such as the "Shandong Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition" in cooperation with the China Cultural Center in Paris, France, and the "Shandong Contemporary Art Exhibition" co-curated with the Los Angeles Museum of Art. These activities not only show the rich cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage of Shandong Province, but also attract a large number of overseas audiences and enhance the influence of Shandong province on the international cultural stage<sup>[10]</sup>.

Shandong Province has also actively established long-term and stable cooperative relations with overseas universities and art groups. For example, Shandong University has signed cultural exchange and cooperation agreements with many well-known universities in the world to jointly promote the exchange of visits between teachers and students, academic discussions and other activities. These cooperation have injected new vitality into the cultural exchanges of Shandong Province and promoted cultural mutual learning and friendly exchanges between Shandong Province and other countries in the world.

##### **4.2. Organize cultural and artistic activities**

Shandong Province regularly holds international cultural festivals, art exhibitions and other activities, attracting the participation of cultural lovers from all over the world. For example, the



annual Shandong International Culture and Art Festival attracts a large number of overseas art groups and audiences. During the event, Shandong Province displayed its rich cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage and modern artistic achievements, such as Taishan Stone Dare Tang (Figure 2), Shandong cuisine, Shandong Fast books, etc., allowing the audience to appreciate the unique charm of Shandong Province<sup>[11]</sup>.

Shandong Province has actively invited world-renowned art troupes to perform in Shandong, such as the Russian Ballet and the American Symphony Orchestra, bringing a high-level artistic feast to the audience. These activities not only enrich the spiritual and cultural life of the people, but also provide a platform for the display and promotion of the cultural industry in Shandong Province.



Figure 2: Taishan Shigandang

#### 4.3. Promote Chinese language education and cultural experience activities

Shandong Province has also made remarkable progress in promoting Chinese language education and cultural experience activities. For example, Shandong Province has set up a number of Confucius Institutes and Chinese language promotion bases overseas, providing overseas students with opportunities for Chinese language learning and cultural experience. These institutions not only teach Chinese language courses, but also organize various cultural activities, such as Chinese culture experience camp and traditional manual art experience (Figure 3), so that overseas students can feel the cultural charm of Shandong Province.



Figure 3: Chinese culture experience camp

Shandong Province actively invites overseas tourists to Shandong to participate in various cultural experience activities. For example, the annual "Hospitality Shandong" cultural tourism festival attracts a large number of overseas tourists to participate. During the activity, tourists can visit the famous scenic spots in Shandong Province, taste authentic food, participate in traditional handicrafts, etc., and deeply experience the cultural charm of Shandong Province. These activities not only enhance overseas tourists' understanding and recognition of Shandong Province, but also promote the

friendly exchanges between Shandong Province and the international community <sup>[12]</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

In the context of globalization, cultural soft power has become an important aspect of international competition. As a large economic province in China, Shandong Province's international communication power construction is of great significance to enhance the national image and promote international exchanges. As the foundation of the construction of international communication power, cultural soft power plays a vital role in promoting the international influence of Shandong Province. By strengthening cultural exchanges and cooperation, holding cultural and artistic activities, and promoting Chinese language education and cultural experience activities, we can effectively enhance the cultural soft power of Shandong Province, and then promote the construction of its international communication power. The implementation of these strategies will inject new vitality into Shandong's cultural industry and international exchanges and cooperation, and promote cultural mutual learning and friendly exchanges between Shandong and other countries in the world.

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