

A Study on the International Communication Strategies and Their Effectiveness of Ceramic Culture in the Context of Jingdezhen's World Heritage Application

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Abstract: While the Jingdezhen's pursuit of World Heritage status emphasizes the need for effective communication strategies, it also presents a significant opportunity for the global dissemination of the city's ceramic culture. This study explores the strategies and their effectiveness in promoting Jingdezhen's ceramic culture internationally. Through case studies, surveys, and interviews, the research identifies successful approaches and evaluates their impact on cultural awareness, economic benefits, and international cooperation. The findings offer practical guidance to enhance the global influence of Jingdezhen's ceramic culture and support its World Heritage application. Specifically, the case studies reveal the success of various communication strategies, the surveys provide quantitative data on the effectiveness of these strategies, and the interviews offer qualitative insights from key stakeholders. The data analysis confirms the effectiveness of the communication strategies in enhancing cultural recognition and economic gains, and the insights from the interviews highlight areas for further improvement.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Jingdezhen, known as the "Porcelain Capital," boasts a ceramic heritage spanning over 1,000 years, making it a significant cultural landmark in China. As the city seeks World Heritage status for its ceramic culture, it faces the challenge of promoting its rich traditions on a global stage. The effort to gain World Heritage recognition emphasizes the need for effective international communication strategies that can highlight the cultural, historical, and economic significance of Jingdezhen's ceramics.

With the consideration of the situation that Jingdezhen's application for World Heritage status presents a unique opportunity for the global dissemination of its ceramic culture, this study explores the communication strategies employed by the city to promote its heritage internationally, assessing their impact on cultural recognition, economic growth, and international collaboration. By

evaluating these strategies, the research aims to identify the most effective approaches for enhancing the city's cultural influence and supporting its World Heritage application.

1.2 Domestic and International Research Status

1.2.1 Domestic Research Status

Domestic academic research on Jingdezhen ceramic culture is relatively rich, covering multiple dimensions from historical archaeology, art appreciation to modern industrial development. In recent years, with the promotion of the 'Belt and Road' initiative, domestic scholars have begun to pay attention to the international dissemination of Jingdezhen ceramic culture, such as Xu Yue (2022) [1], Rao Xin (2022) [2], Chen Deming (2023) [3], Zhong Chunxia (2023) [4], etc. Zhong Chunxia (2023) explores the integration of modern technological means in analyzing communication mechanisms, highlighting how digital platforms can enhance the dissemination of Jingdezhen ceramic culture (Du, 2024) [5]. They have explored the dissemination of ceramic culture from different perspectives. The studies mostly focus on how to use the 'Belt and Road' initiative to promote Chinese traditional culture, and how to enhance China's cultural soft power through international communication, or how to integrate modern technological means to analyse the communication mechanism, such as Ye Haihong (2023) [6]. Yating (2023) [7] also emphasizes the role of technology in cultural communication, advocating for innovative approaches to promote Jingdezhen ceramics internationally. However, most of the existing studies remain at the level of theoretical discussion, and there are not many empirical studies on the specific international communication strategies and their effects in the process of bidding for heritage.

1.2.2 International Research Status

International research on Jingdezhen ceramic culture has focused on its artistic value, historical heritage, and dissemination in the context of globalisation (Zhao, 2022) [8]. Some studies have emphasized the role of Jingdezhen ceramics in global cultural exchanges and how its international influence can be enhanced through international exhibitions and cultural festivals (Liu, 2024) [9]. In September 2021, I had the privilege to participate in the online conference of the 49th International Academy of Ceramics (IAC) Congress, at which conducted by Tapio Yli-Viikari, Professor of Aalto University, and others, with discussions including the promotion of cultural activities, the use of ceramics in health research, and the integration of environmental research and ceramic practice, laying the groundwork for practical experience in the development of this article.

1.3 Historical and Current Status of Jingdezhen Ceramic Culture

Jingdezhen's ceramics are not only an important symbol of ancient Chinese civilization but also occupy a significant place in international cultural exchanges. Since the Tang Dynasty, Jingdezhen's ceramics have been spread to all parts of the world through the Maritime Silk Road, becoming an important carrier of Sino-foreign cultural exchanges.

Jingdezhen has been a center for porcelain production since the Tang Dynasty, and its ceramics are often regarded as a representation of Chinese artistic achievement (Mingqing, 2022) [10]. The intricate designs and high-quality craftsmanship of Jingdezhen ceramics have made them highly sought after, not only within China but also in international markets. This demand has facilitated cultural exchanges, as these ceramics are often used as diplomatic gifts and cultural artifacts in exhibitions worldwide (Jiasong, 2023) [11]. Furthermore, the unique aesthetic and historical narratives associated with Jingdezhen ceramics contribute to their status as cultural ambassadors for China, fostering greater understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture abroad.

Currently, the city's ceramics industry has shifted from a "single-center" to a "multi-center" model, facilitating a more diversified industrial structure. This evolution is attributed to various factors, including historical, technological, and policy influences, which have collectively fostered an environment conducive to industrial agglomeration and growth (He et al., 2023) [12]. Furthermore, the emergence of new markets and consumer bases has been pivotal in revitalizing traditional crafts, allowing for greater innovation and creativity within the ceramic sector (Jiasong, 2023) [11].

The industrial development trend is positive, forming a cluster of industries dominated by ceramic manufacturing, ceramic trade, and ceramic cultural tourism. However, it also faces some challenges, such as the dilemma of traditional skill inheritance, insufficient innovative design capabilities, and fierce international market competition. Under the Belt and Road Initiative and the World Heritage application, the international communication of Jingdezhen's ceramic culture faces new opportunities and challenges.

The BRI's emphasis on cultural industries aligns with the need to integrate cultural heritage into broader economic strategies, thereby enhancing the visibility and impact of Jingdezhen ceramics internationally (Bian, 2023) [13]. (Liang et al., 2021) [14] and Chen (2022) [15] highlight that World Heritage designation can bring substantial political and economic benefits, including increased tourism and international recognition. The successful inscription of Jingdezhen ceramics as a World Heritage site would not only validate its cultural significance but also enhance its global profile, attracting international interest and investment in the region. This reciprocal relationship between cultural promotion and World Heritage status is crucial, as the visibility gained through the BRI can facilitate the necessary support for the application process.

2. Research Procedures and Research Methods

2.1 Research Procedures

Figure 1 briefly shows the research procedures in the following:

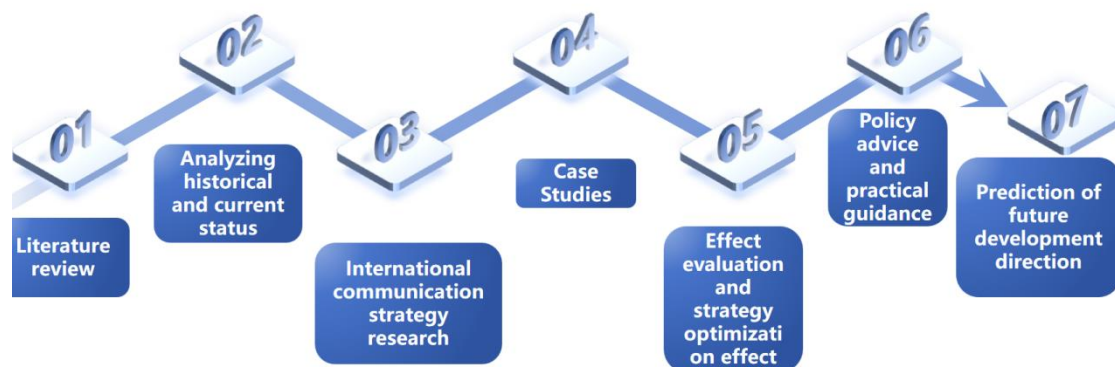


Figure 1: Research Procedures

Specifically, this study is structured around seven interconnected steps. Initially, an in-depth analysis of existing literature will be conducted, encompassing both domestic and international studies on Jingdezhen ceramic culture. Subsequently, the research will delve into the historical and current situation of Jingdezhen ceramic culture, examining its historical development and contemporary manifestations, as well as the role of the "Belt and Road" initiative in promoting its international dissemination. The study will then explore various international communication strategies, including the use of digital technology, brand building, marketing, cross-cultural communication, and talent team building. Case studies will be employed to analyze successful

communication cases both domestically and internationally, highlighting the characteristics and advantages of Jingdezhen ceramic culture. Following this, the effectiveness of international communication will be evaluated in terms of cultural identity, economic benefits, and international cooperation, with strategies being optimized based on these findings. Policy suggestions will be formulated to guide the international dissemination of Jingdezhen ceramic culture, with a focus on translating research outcomes into practical applications. Finally, the study will predict the future development direction of Jingdezhen ceramic culture under the “Belt and Road” initiative, exploring avenues to enhance its international influence and cultural soft power. This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough and systematic exploration of the subject matter.

2.2 Research Methodology

To address the research problems, a multi-method approach was adopted, incorporating three primary research methods: case studies, surveys, and interviews.

2.2.1 Case Studies

The study selected several representative cases of international communication of Jingdezhen's ceramic culture, including successful brand promotions, cultural festival activities, and cross-cultural exchange projects. These cases were chosen based on their visibility, impact, and relevance to the BRI and World Heritage application.

Brand Promotion Campaigns: Initiatives that have successfully branded Jingdezhen's ceramic products for international markets.

Cultural Festivals and Events: International events such as the Jingdezhen International Ceramic Fair, have promoted cultural exchange.

Cross-Cultural Exchange Programs: Collaborative projects between Jingdezhen and other cultural hubs worldwide.

Each case was analyzed in depth to explore the strategies employed, the execution process, and the effectiveness of the communication efforts, with a focus on empirical data to validate theoretical frameworks of cultural communication. The analysis was based on publicly available data, reports, and media coverage, as well as interviews with key stakeholders.

2.2.2 Survey

A survey was designed using Question Star, targeting key stakeholders in Jingdezhen's ceramic industry, including: ceramic manufacturers in Jingdezhen, cultural institutions involved in international cultural exchange and international partners engaged in collaborations with Jingdezhen's ceramic industry. The survey aimed to assess the awareness and implementation of international communication strategies, evaluate their perceived effectiveness, and collect feedback on the strategies' impact on cultural recognition, economic growth, and international cooperation. The data was analyzed to generate statistical insights. The analysis focused on the frequency of responses, mean scores, and correlations between different variables. The results were presented in tables and figures to enhance clarity and understanding.

2.2.3 Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with representatives from various sectors, including industry leaders, cultural experts, international collaborators, and government officials involved in cultural heritage promotion. A total of 20 interviews were conducted, with each interview lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The interviewees were selected based on their expertise and

involvement in the international communication of Jingdezhen's ceramic culture. The specific interviewees included:

Industry Leaders: 5 CEOs from leading ceramic manufacturing companies in Jingdezhen.

Cultural Experts: 5 (associate) professors from the Foreign Language Institute of Jingdezhen Ceramic University.

International Collaborators: 5 representatives from international cultural exchange organizations.

Government Officials: 5 officials from the local cultural heritage department.

The analysis focused on the stakeholders' perceptions of the effectiveness of communication strategies and their suggestions for future improvements. The interviews, conducted in December 2024, provided qualitative data on the subjective experiences of participants and their views on the effectiveness of the communication strategies. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and the data were analyzed to identify themes and patterns, complementing the quantitative data from the surveys.

3. Results

3.1 Case Study Findings

The case studies revealed several successful strategies in the international communication of Jingdezhen's ceramic culture. One prominent case, the Jingdezhen Ceramic Expo, successfully attracted international participants and media attention, enhancing the city's cultural recognition. As one of the largest and most influential ceramic exhibitions in China, it serves as a platform for international cultural exchange and business collaboration, aligning closely with the goals of BRI. Over the years, the Expo has become an essential part of Jingdezhen's global outreach strategy, attracting a growing number of international participants and reinforcing the city's position as the "Ceramic Capital" of China.

3.2 Survey Results

The survey yielded 300 responses from various stakeholders. The following key findings were identified:

Recognition of Communication Strategies: 75% of respondents were aware of the international communication strategies employed by Jingdezhen.

Perceived Effectiveness: 60% of respondents believed that these strategies had a moderate to high impact on improving Jingdezhen's international reputation.

Economic Impact: 55% of manufacturers reported an increase in orders from overseas markets due to the implementation of these communication strategies.

As shown in figure 2:

Figure 2 presents the survey results regarding the perceived effectiveness of the communication strategies employed by Jingdezhen, based on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale measures effectiveness as follows: 1 (Very Ineffective), 2 (Ineffective), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Effective), and 5 (Very Effective). According to the survey data, 5% of respondents rated the strategies as very ineffective (1), and 10% rated them as ineffective (2). A further 20% rated the strategies as neutral (3), indicating a moderately positive but inconclusive perception. The largest proportion, 40%, rated the strategies as effective (4), while 25% rated them as very effective (5), reflecting a largely favorable view. The bar graph demonstrates that the majority of respondents perceive the communication strategies as either effective or very effective. However, the 20% of neutral ratings suggests that there is still potential for refinement. Overall, only 15% of respondents considered the strategies to be ineffective or very ineffective, underscoring a generally positive reception of the communication

efforts.



Figure 2: Survey Results on the Effectiveness of Communication Strategies

3.3 Interview Insights

The interviews provided deeper qualitative insights into the effectiveness of the strategies. Key themes from the interviews included:

Cultural Diplomacy: Participants emphasized the importance of cultural diplomacy in fostering international relationships and promoting Jingdezhen’s ceramic culture. One industry leader stated, “Cultural diplomacy is not just about sending products abroad; it’s about building relationships and understanding. We need to engage more in international forums and cultural exchanges to truly make an impact.”

Brand Identity: Several interviewees noted that Jingdezhen’s success in international markets could be attributed to the strong brand identity built through consistent communication efforts. A cultural expert mentioned, “Jingdezhen’s brand is its heritage. We must continue to emphasize our thousand-year history and unique craftsmanship to stand out in the global market.”

Challenges in Implementation: Despite the successes, interviewees also highlighted challenges such as limited funding and inconsistent execution across different regions. An international collaborator said, “While we have seen growth, funding remains a significant challenge. We need more consistent support to maintain and expand our efforts.”

4. Results and Discussion

The research findings suggest that Jingdezhen’s international communication strategies have had a positive impact on both cultural recognition and economic development. Successful case studies, particularly the brand promotion campaigns and cross-cultural exchange programs, have shown tangible results in enhancing Jingdezhen’s international visibility.

The survey and interview data support the hypothesis that well-executed communication strategies can significantly influence both cultural diplomacy and economic growth. However, challenges such as resource limitations and the need for more coordinated efforts across different sectors remain.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of strategic international communication in promoting Jingdezhen's ceramic culture and supporting its World Heritage application. The findings reveal the need for comprehensive and targeted communication strategies that integrate cultural, economic, and diplomatic dimensions. Future efforts should focus on strengthening international partnerships, enhancing brand visibility, and securing sustained funding to further elevate Jingdezhen's status as a cultural hub.

To build on these findings and further elevate Jingdezhen's status as a cultural hub within the Belt and Road Initiative, future efforts should focus on the following recommendations:

The study strengthens international partnerships and expands and deepens cooperation with international cultural and economic institutions to enhance mutual understanding and support.

This study promotes brand awareness and continues to promote Jingdezhen's unique traditions and craftsmanship through continuous innovative communication efforts.

This study ensures on going funding, advocates for and secures on going funding support to sustain and expand international communication activities.

This study addresses implementation challenges, develops strategies to overcome resource constraints, and ensures consistent implementation of communication strategies across different regions and sectors.

In conclusion, this study provides actionable insights for Jingdezhen in the context of Jingdezhen's world heritage application. By implementing the recommended strategies, Jingdezhen can further enhance its global influence and successfully navigate the World Heritage application process, ultimately securing its place as a leading cultural and economic center on the international stage.

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