

# Research on the Marketing of Non-Heritage Cultural and Creative Products on New Media Platforms: Take the Dali Bai Tie-Dye as an Example

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## **Abstract:**

Zhoucheng Village, the birthplace of Dali Bai tie-dye, has a long tradition of doing business. While the traditional offline sales model has caused it to gradually lose its vitality in the new media era. The current research still focuses on using new media as a means of transmission, lacking research on utilizing the marketing functions of new media platforms to expand sales. This research aims to explore the current situation of online marketing of Dali Bai tie-dye and the reasons for the decline in the vitality of Zhoucheng tie-dye, and then analyse the role of new media platforms in the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage. Through the use of textual analysis, the author compares the business practices of two shops, the famous shop A and the traditional family workshop B. Afterwards, it is concluded that the dilemma of Zhoucheng tie-dye is caused by the weak online marketing aspect, the information of the shops that are not easy to find and promote, and the price is not open and transparent enough. In response to this research finding, the author suggests that by capturing the unique local differences of the place of origin, as well as using the shop management system and evaluation system of new media platforms for online marketing, the influence and popularity of the place of intangible cultural heritage origin can be effectively expanded, resulting in wider dissemination of the non-heritage cultural and creative products and more considerable sales.

**Keywords:** Bai tie-dye; Zhoucheng village; new media platforms; non-heritage cultural and creative products; textual analysis.

## 1. Introduction

Bai tie-dye is one of the national intangible cultural heritages. It is a craft made by hand sewing and repeatedly impregnating with Radix Isatidis plant dye, and its products have bright colours and never fade. Zhoucheng Village in Dali, Yunnan Province, is known as the township of tie-dyeing for the Bai nationality, and tie-dyeing is even a universal business for the villagers. Alternatively, in the new media era, Zhoucheng tie-dye, which is mainly operated by local operators, still retains its traditional offline sales mode. This outdated sales method gradually weakens its competitiveness in the market and puts its development in a difficult situation [1]. The significance of this study is to provide a direction for the future development of family workshops in Zhoucheng village, using the integration of online and offline sales to improve their vitality. Interestingly, it is found that most of the shops located in Dali Ancient Town are good at using new media platforms for marketing, while Zhoucheng Village, as the birthplace, rarely has online marketing. Therefore, the author chose one shop in Dali Ancient Town and one shop in Zhoucheng Village respectively. The study mainly focuses on the comparison of the two shops' use of new media platforms for marketing and the role generated by new media platforms in the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage. Text analysis was used to crawl and analyse the online users' reviews of the two shops. The advantage of this method is that it can collect a large number of consumer's evaluation, intuitively feel the differences and weaknesses of the two shops' operation modes, which is conducive to the research.

The ultimate research goal is to provide new ideas for the future combination of non-heritage cultural and creative products with new media platforms, to expand the influence of intangible cultural heritage culture, and at the same time to increase the sales and popularity of non-heritage cultural and creative products. For the purpose of achieve this goal, the following series of studies were conducted.

## 2. Literature Review

By searching the literature of CNKI, the author found that the current studies by Chinese researchers on the development of Dali Bai tie-dye and its combination with new media platforms can be broadly classified into the following two categories.

One category focuses on the current state of development and the dilemma of tie-dye craft in Zhoucheng Village. In the 1980s, Zhoucheng Village was the earliest window for Dali to open up to the outside world, and the rapidly de-

veloping local tourism industry added vitality to the inheritance and development of Dali Bai tie-dye and expanded the market for sales of tie-dye handicrafts [2]. With the development of the times, Zhoucheng tie-dye has gradually become a business model mainly based on family workshops, but this kind of self-employed industry, which completes the production and sale of tie-dye products at home, is numerous and scattered, and the unchanging sales method makes the competitiveness of its products weakened, resulting in an extreme shrinkage of the market [1]. Qian Meijing also found in her work that most of the local producers do not conduct online business activities. Instead, some of the online market development carried out by foreign businessmen is little successful, but it is still pending a breakthrough due to the lack of professionalism in online operations [3]. The above shows that the business methods of Zhoucheng Village are still backward, and the vitality of the development of tie-dye crafts is gradually declining.

The other category focuses on the new media platform as a media communication medium in the new era to expand the popularity of Dali Bai tie-dye, and studies the strategies and improvement methods of Zhoucheng Village in terms of online marketing. For instance, Liu Jing et al. on the inheritance and protection of Bai tie-dye in Zhoucheng Village proposed to expand the influence of Zhoucheng tie-dye by encouraging young villagers to learn traditional tie-dye techniques and use live broadcasting to keep its innovative vigour and creativity [4]. Moreover, Leung Ka Wai et al. argued that traditional culture should be integrated into individual's daily lives through using short video promotion in order to sustain the development of tie-dye culture [5]. In addition, by analysing the characteristics of web users, Xu Wenting and Hou Ling suggested that brand promotion and brand marketing could be carried out by creating official accounts related to tie-dye and using web analysis tools [6].

The existing literature review shows that the current research still stays on the new media platform as a way to promote Dali Bai tie-dye to explore its transformational research. There is a lack of targeted research on the integration of online and offline sales of Bai tie-dye using the product marketing functions of the new media platform (such as the group-buying model of Meituan APP and Dianping APP, the e-commerce of TikTok APP and the shop of Xiaohongshu APP). Therefore, it is the significance of this research to explore the current situation of online marketing of Dali Bai tie-dye and the reasons for the decline in the development vitality of Zhoucheng tie-dye, as well as the role played by new media platforms in expanding the influence of intangible cultural heritage.

### 3. Research Design

#### 3.1 Research Method

This study mainly uses text analysis to analyse the evaluation of the two shops by users of Dianping APP and Xiaohongshu APP.

First of all, the author searched the “Dali DIY Craft Workshop Popularity List”, “Dali DIY Craft Workshop Praise List” and “Dali DIY Craft Workshop Sales List” rated by the Meituan APP. The famous Shop A in Dali Ancient Town, which was selected as one of the top three shops, was chosen as a sample for the study. In addition, due to the fact that Zhoucheng tie-dye is mainly operated by family workshops, these shops do not use group-buying as their main sales mode. Thus, the author selected a note that ranked first in terms of likes and collections under the topic of “Zhoucheng tie-dye” in the Xiaohongshu APP

and took the traditional family workshop B recommended by the note as another research sample.

#### 3.2 Data Acquisition

In this study, the Octopus Data Collector was first used to crawl a total of 1,410 evaluations (data as of 2 July 2024) of the famous shop A from consumers on the Dianping APP. Using ROST CM6 to clean, segment, and perform word frequency analysis (extracting the first 72 words after filtering irrelevant information) on the obtained evaluations, a total of 1367 effective evaluations were obtained. Then, the author crawled the notes of the top five likes of the traditional family workshop B on the Xiaohongshu APP (Table 1), with a total of 833 comments under the notes (data as of 8 August 2024), and finally obtained 336 valid comments after the text processing of cleaning, segment, and perform word frequency analysis (extracting the first 50 words after filtering irrelevant information).

**Table 1. Notes on the top five likes of the family workshop B**

Rank	Title	Likes
1	Super beautiful and affordable tie-dye dresses hidden in the Zhoucheng vegetable market.	11,000
2	Do not buy tie-dye products in Dali Ancient Town! I bought two scarves for just 50 yuan in Zhoucheng.	1,968
3	If you want to experience making tie-dye in Dali, I only recommend this store.	1,781
4	The tie-dye products I bought for over 700 yuan are really amazing.	369
5	Dali   Shopping Guide for Zhoucheng Tie-Dye, the hometown of tie-dyeing for the Bai ethnic group.	259

#### 4. Comparison of Two Shops Using New Media Platforms for Marketing

##### 4.1 The Famous Shop A in Dali Ancient Town

The famous shop A in Dali Ancient Town is good at using new media platforms for marketing, which can be reflected in the following aspects.

In the first place, the famous shop A effectively uses the group-buying mode to integrate online and offline sales. Meituan APP and Dianping APP are the main ways for the shop A to use the new media platform for marketing. Using the group-buying mode, shop A displayed twenty-nine kinds of products, vouchers, Meituan coupons, and other preferential information (Table 2), with considerable annual sales figures.

About 66.67 percent of items with an annual sales volume

of 1,000 or more were below RMB 51. This shows that consumers prefer to buy smaller items that offer better value for money. The author analyses the reasons for two points. Firstly, the consumer group of Dali Bai tie-dye is mainly tourists, who tend not to spend too much time on the tie-dye experience. Instead, they would prefer to buy finished products directly or goods with shorter experience time. Secondly, the shop A focuses on developing more practical necessities during people’s daily life [7].

In terms of price, because of the use of group-buying on the Meituan APP to mark up the price, there is no hidden consumption, and consumers only need to buy the goods they want and experience the service according to their own wishes. As a result, transparent price becomes a big advantage for the shop A to compete.

The source of data in the table is about Store A on Meituan and Dianping, manually collated by the author.

**Table 2. Annual sales of the famous shop A on Meituan APP and Dianping APP**

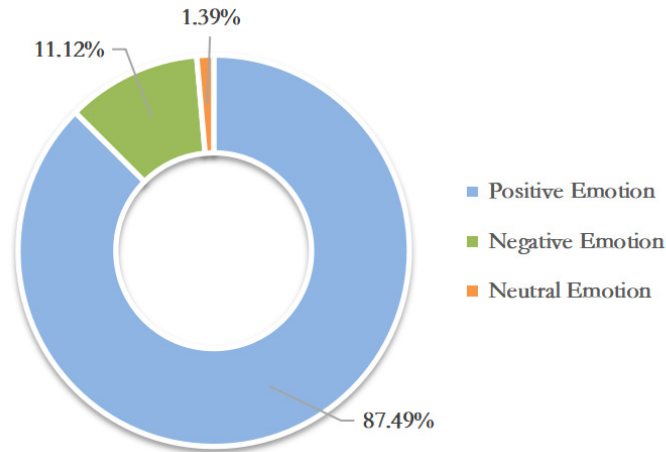
Trade name	Favourable prices (RMB)	Group buying prices (RMB)	Store prices (RMB)	Annual sales (RMB)
A Pendant	/	2	10	1000+

A carrying case	/	10	18	1000+
A scrunchy	/	10	38	5000+
A sock	/	15	28	1000+
A drawstring bag	/	18	58	800+
A square scarf/A head scarf	/	20	58	8000+
A hairband/A Belt	/	28	68	900+
A cell phone bag/A tote bag	/	38	88	2000+
A tote bag	/	38	108	900+
A canvas bag(small)	51	58	98	500+
A traditional Tie-Dye square scarf	61	68	108	200+
A hat	61	68	108	500+
A classic canvas bag	61	68	108	800+
A pillow cover	71	88	108	70+
A drawstring tote bag/A double-layered tote bag	81	88	108	700+
A Batik square scarf	81	88	98	90+
An apron	91	98	108	100+
Year of the Dragon Limited Edition	91	98	188	100+
A T-shirt/A scarf	91	98	128	1000+
A bunny rag doll	91	98	188	1000+
A cross-body bag	91	98	108	400+
A decorative painting	81	108	128	100+
A short sleeve/A long sleeve	109	128	188	20
A child's skirt	119	128	188	500+
A sweatshirt	156	168	188	100+
Couple's Package:2 T-shirts	176	188	256	200+
A Tie-Dye skirt	186	208	338	2000+
Parent-child package:3 T-shirts	253	268	384	50+
A skirt and a shirt	283	298	598	3
Voucher	/	90	100	500+

In another, online users conduct evaluations publicly so that shops can target their shortcomings offline. In this research, MODEL SAIL was used to analyse the sentiment of 1,367 valid reviews on the Dianping APP, and the proportions were calculated to obtain a circle graph (Fig. 1), in which positive sentiment accounted for 87.49%, neutral sentiment accounted for 11.12%, and negative sentiment accounted for only 1.39%. It can be seen that consumers have an overall positive attitude towards the tie-dye experience in the famous shop A, mainly reflected in their interest in the tie-dye experience, their love for the tie-dye

work, and their recognition of the shop assistant's service attitude. The negative attitude is mainly due to the lack of introduction of the tie-dye process by the shop staff.

These two aspects show that using the evaluation systems of Meituan APP and Dianping APP, consumers are able to clearly understand the strengths and weaknesses of the shops, and shopkeepers can also identify the problems that arise in the operation of the shops and take timely measures, thus laying the foundation for the continuous and high-quality development of the shops.



**Fig. 1 Sentiment analysis of users' comments on the Dianping APP (Photo credit: Original)**

#### 4.2 The Traditional Family Workshop B in Zhoucheng Village

Compared to the Shop A's prosperity on the Meituan APP, family workshop B's online marketing is somewhat less impressive.

In terms of store marketing, it is not easy to promote and search for information about the family workshop B that focus on offline sales. Based on the word frequency statistics of the users' comments under the five notes (Table 1) about Family Workshop, feature word visualisation

was achieved by drawing a word cloud map (Fig. 2). Keywords such as "Granny" and "Auntie" indicate that the shopkeepers of the family workshop B are middle-aged and old people who are not good at using new media platforms for marketing. Blogger C also pointed out in the comment section of her notes, "There is no online shop. If you need it, I can help you purchase. Aunties are very simple locals who do not know how to operate online." In the comment section of blogger X's notes, many users ask the shopkeeper's WeChat.



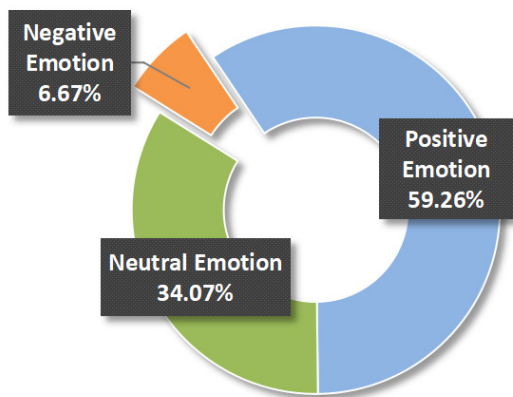
**Fig. 2 Word cloud map of the comments under 5 notes about the family workshop B on the Xiaohongshu APP (Photo credit: Original)**

This information that is not easy to promote and find, then leads to a decline in the market competitiveness of family workshop B. It can only rely on consumers to spontaneously rate the shop on new media platforms after consumption to increase the shop's popularity.

In terms of pricing, the prices have not gone through the platform leading to mixed reviews from online users. The keyword "Haggling" in the word cloud map (Fig. 2) illustrates that traditional family workshops do not use similar new media platforms to mark up prices, so the final price

depends on the consumer's ability to haggle, and the price is not transparent and fluctuates greatly. Sentiment analysis made into a circle diagram (Fig. 3) found that about 6.67% of the negative sentiments in the reviews of Xiaohongshu App users are mainly due to the price is too expensive and the poor attitude of the shopkeeper when bargaining. Importantly, the proportion of negative sentiments in shop B is significantly higher than the proportion of negative sentiments in the reviews of shop A.

To summarize, the fluctuating prices and the poor attitude of the shopkeeper when bargaining caused a lot of consumer dissatisfaction, resulting in the loss of a lot of consumers to the family workshop B.



**Fig. 3 Sentiment analysis of users' comments on the Xiaohongshu APP (Photo credit: Original)**

## 5. The Role of New Media Platforms in the Dissemination of Non-Heritage Culture

Above all, the functionality of data analytics has been utilised to improve marketing. As a non-heritage cultural and creative product, Bai tie-dye products should conform to the development trend of the Internet era for modernization transformation. The traditional marketing methods of Dali Bai tie-dye have not been improved, and very few merchants conduct marketing planning using data analysis. While the shop management system of the current e-commerce platform is becoming more and more powerful, and the difficulty of learning is gradually reduced. Shopkeepers can use the sales system of the new media platform to release products and preferential information, and they can also use the evaluation system to understand important information, including consumer demand, feedback from the market, competitors' strengths and weak-

nesses, and their own optimisation direction [8].

Furthermore, the use of new media platforms helps to develop brand differentiation and weaken some disadvantages, such as geographical location. Many intangible cultural heritages are originated from folklore, and the geographical location of the originating place is mostly far away from the prosperous cities. With a view to weakening the difficulty of dissemination brought about by geographic location, it is necessary to make good use of the marketing and promotion functions of the new media platform. Nevertheless, the disadvantages of the originating location can also be advantages. The experience of more traditional and authentic non-heritage cultural and creative products is an important brand differentiation, and promoting localised uniqueness can attract more consumers.

In short, through using live broadcasting, short video promotion and other online communication methods, as well as vigorously promote the differentiation, can effectively expand the influence of the origin, and many consumers will come to the name.

## 6. Conclusion

With the continuous development of the new media era, the vitality of Zhoucheng tie-dye has gradually declined, while the combination of Dali Bai tie-dye and the online operation of new media platforms has also gradually exposed shortcomings. Through the study, it was found that because of the traditional business model and the more remote location of family workshop B, the focus on offline sales resulted in low consumer traffic, fluctuating prices, and mixed reviews. The famous shop A, however, has not only used new media platforms for promoting the online market and collecting consumer reviews but also used the group-buying model of the Meituan APP to clearly display product prices. In the end, shop A gained a lot of love from consumers, and its development vitality is increasing day by day. As a consequence, using the shop management system and evaluation system of the new media platform to vigorously develop online marketing, while seizing the unique localised brand difference of the birthplace, is an effective way to expand the visibility of the birthplace of intangible cultural heritage.

The main contribution of this study is to provide direction for the future development of family workshops in Zhoucheng Village in the era of new media. As an intangible cultural heritage, Bai tie-dye can also provide ideas for the future development of non-heritage cultural and creative products, making them shine with more innovation and vitality.

Finally, this study did not adequately consider consumer evaluations from other new media platforms (e.g., the

e-commerce of TikTok APP and Taobao online shops), and only used text analysis as a research method. To gain a more intuitive understanding of the difficulties in the development of intangible cultural heritage, the author suggests that future research can start with other platforms to collect a large number of consumers reviews or use questionnaire surveys and interviews to study the businesses of Bai tie-dye.

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