

A Study on the Empowerment of Traditional Chinese Time-Honored Brands Through Digital Intelligence Technology in Branding Communication Representation and Pathways

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Abstract: With the rapid advancement of digital intelligence technology, brand design is undergoing significant transformations, presenting both unprecedented opportunities and complex challenges in cross-cultural communication. The integration of cutting-edge technologies such as virtual reality (VR), artificial intelligence-generated content (AIGC), and blockchain is redefining how traditional brands engage with global audiences, providing innovative solutions for cultural communication and value dissemination. These technologies not only facilitate deeper consumer interaction but also enhance brand authenticity and heritage preservation, enabling brands to establish stronger emotional connections with diverse markets. This study examines the impact of digital intelligence on traditional branding, focusing on its potential to empower long-established brands by integrating digital tools into their strategic development. Using the renowned Chinese brand Hengyuanxiang as a case study, this research explores its intangible cultural heritage, specifically the Shanghai-style wool weaving techniques, which represent a rich legacy of craftsmanship. By analyzing the brand's current positioning and developmental trajectory within the digital and globalized landscape, this study reveals how digital intelligence technologies contribute to personalized content creation, immersive consumer experiences, and emotionally resonant storytelling. Furthermore, it highlights the role of digital platforms in safeguarding and revitalizing intangible cultural heritage, ensuring its continuity and relevance in the contemporary era. Through a comprehensive strategic framework, this research provides valuable insights into how heritage-rich brands can maintain cultural authenticity while leveraging digital intelligence to enhance their competitiveness and expand their global influence.

Keywords: Digital Intelligence Technology, Time-Honored Chinese Brands, Brand Communication, Cross-Cultural Communication

1. Introduction

As a crucial carrier of corporate culture and values, brand design has always played a fundamental role in establishing connections with consumers through emotional resonance. However, with the advancement of the digital intelligence era, brand communication is no longer confined to traditional static media but has instead evolved into a more diverse and dynamic form through the integration of emerging technologies. From immersive virtual spaces to personalized interactive experiences, these

innovations have injected new vitality and possibilities into brand design. By leveraging these technologies, brands can not only engage consumers in more innovative and engaging ways but also transcend geographical and cultural boundaries, fostering a deeper integration of cross-cultural communication. This transformation provides an entirely new developmental pathway for brand design within the context of globalization, enabling brands to enhance their cultural adaptability and expand their influence in an increasingly interconnected world.

2. The Value of Empowering Brand Design through Digital Intelligence Technology

2.1. Practical Value: Enhancing Brand Communication Efficiency

The world today is undergoing a deep integration of the digital and physical realms, a transformation that has changed the way people interact with the world and significantly altered their perceptions of time and space [1]. Amid current opportunities and challenges, brand design must find a balance by skillfully applying digital intelligence technologies, focusing on innovation and marketing. This shift moves from traditional offline research to real-time data analysis. By analyzing big data on consumer behavior, brands can understand users' needs, purchasing habits, and scenario preferences in real time, and develop precise communication strategies based on these insights. This approach enables businesses to transition from a product-centered to a consumer needs-centered value orientation, catering to the diverse demands of the market [2].

The rapid development of digital intelligence technology, especially artificial intelligence-generated content (AIGC), has significantly enhanced the agility and ecological development of brand communication. By quickly generating customized advertising materials, brands can better adapt to changes in the domestic market, while also providing strong support for international brand communication, facilitating brand "going global" [3]. For example, Meta's generative AI function can automatically adjust the color scheme, background, and language of materials for different markets, ensuring that the same material presents a visual effect that is more aligned with local cultures and aesthetic preferences in various regions, thus greatly enhancing the precision and effectiveness of advertising communication. Additionally, the uBrand AI platform offers businesses one-stop services such as logo design, brand visuals, and resource management, helping them rapidly create brand images that meet market demands within a short period. Through AI technology, brands can quickly adjust design elements based on consumer feedback, improving brand communication efficiency while ensuring consistency and flexibility of brand image across global and diverse markets.

2.2. Cultural Value: Achieving Cross-Cultural Brand Communication

In the era of smart media communication, digital intelligence technology serves as a strategic resource, driving the transformation of information resource construction through the deep integration of emerging technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things. This marks the transition from "datafication" to "digital intelligence," enriching the forms of brand design expression, promoting the multicultural spread of culture, and endowing brands with deeper cultural connotations and values [4].

Through efficient data processing and intelligent analysis capabilities, digital intelligence technology not only enables precise adaptation in cross-cultural communication but also helps brands break down cultural barriers [5]. For example, in the process of cultural heritage transmission, digital intelligence technology is immersive, interactive, and experiential, allowing for the digital reconstruction of traditional cultural content. Through efficient scanning, restoration, storage, and dissemination functions, digital intelligence technology transforms both material and intangible cultural elements into sustainable cultural resources. This form of digital and systematic archival

record not only improves the efficiency of cultural communication but also expands the reach of brand culture.

Digital intelligence technology infuses new vitality into the excellent traditional culture of China through data intelligence and innovation-driven approaches. For instance, when Coca-Cola entered the Chinese market, it launched AI-generated advertisements centered around the Chinese New Year, incorporating elements such as the character “福” (fortune) and zodiac animals. This not only demonstrated the brand’s respect for traditional Chinese culture but also strengthened the local consumers’ cultural identity. Furthermore, Nike, when promoting its Air Max Scorpion sneakers, utilized the virtual character Ruby in its digital marketing campaign. By switching between the virtual and real, Nike showcased various styles, highlighting the innovation and diversity of the product, while also conveying the brand’s core values of individuality and innovation. This case further demonstrates that digital intelligence technology not only enhances a brand’s cultural adaptability in global markets but also deepens the emotional connection between consumers and the brand through innovative forms of expression. It enables real-time interactive communication of brand values, thus enhancing the brand’s cultural expressiveness and influence while driving the transformation, upgrading, and cross-industry integration of the cultural industry.

3. Digital Intelligence Technology Empowering Brand Communication Performance

3.1. New Productive Forces: Efficient Integration of Marketing Resources

The widespread application of digital intelligence technology has brought unprecedented productivity to brand design and marketing, particularly excelling in integrating and optimizing marketing resources. With the help of intelligent technology, brands can quickly generate creative content, significantly reduce labor costs, and achieve large-scale market communication. This efficiency not only enhances the brand’s exposure but also strengthens its market influence, providing more opportunities for the brand in a competitive environment [5]. By intelligently integrating various resources, digital intelligence technology helps brands establish smooth connections across multiple communication channels. Through cooperation across social media, e-commerce platforms, and offline events, brands can rapidly expand their communication reach while ensuring the consistent transmission of information. This excellent integration technique provides brands with more flexible strategies to cope with intense market competition.

On the occasion of the fourth anniversary of its independence, Honor launched a brand theme song titled GO BEYOND by combining the employee ID badges of 14,000 staff members with AI technology (as shown in Figure 1). Honor’s official Weibo account posted 14,000 singing videos over the course of three days, quickly attracting widespread attention. Through AIGC technology, Honor incorporated the voices of each employee into the videos, creating “singing ID badges” that infused the brand with innovation and humanistic elements, while also meeting the need for efficient content production. This marketing campaign not only highlighted the brand’s collective spirit but also showcased the efficiency of digital intelligence technology in large-scale content production, greatly enhancing the frequency of interaction and engagement between the brand and consumers.

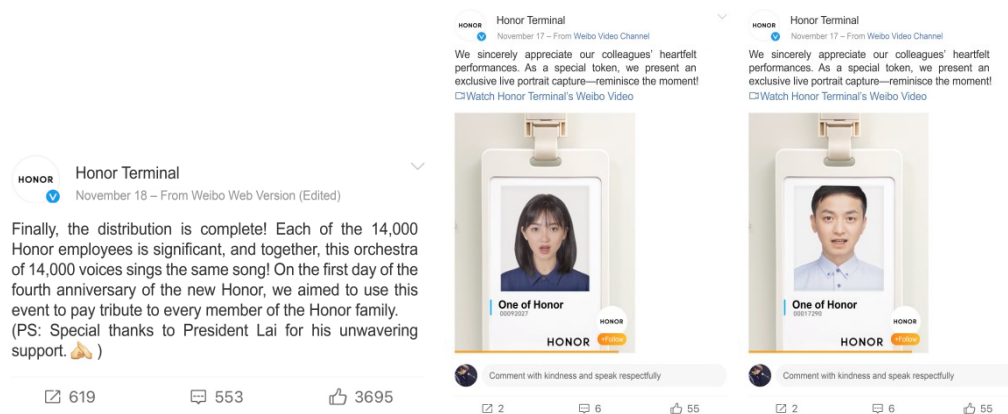


Figure 1: Honor’s “Work Badge Singing Video”
Image Source: Weibo Huawei·Honor Official Account

3.2. Deep Integration of Digital Technology and Brands

The rapid development of digital intelligence technology, especially the widespread application of artificial intelligence and generative technologies, has significantly enhanced the efficiency of brand marketing. These technologies not only create more innovative and immersive marketing experiences but also drive the deep integration of brand design, making advertising content more culturally valuable. Through intelligent data analysis and content generation, brands can precisely reach their target audience, provide personalized experiences, and thus enhance consumer participation and identification. In this context, brand marketing is no longer merely about conveying information, but rather about cultural fusion and value creation, showcasing entirely new possibilities [6]. The advertising content empowered by digital intelligence technology not only carries profound cultural significance but also evokes emotional resonance from consumers through dynamic and visual means, thereby earning deeper recognition and influence for the brand in various cultural contexts. This deep integration of technology and culture not only promotes the advancement of brand design but also brings a fresh perspective to brand marketing.

In 2023, Coca-Cola created an advertisement using artificial intelligence, employing Stable Diffusion technology to present dynamic versions of famous paintings (as shown in Figure 2). In this innovative Coca-Cola ad, the brand skillfully combined live-action footage with digital effects, fully harnessing the potential of artificial intelligence, especially AIGC technology, to dynamically display multiple world-renowned paintings. This cross-industry fusion not only broke the limitations of traditional advertising but also delivered an unprecedented visual impact to the audience. By combining classic works of art with modern technology, Coca-Cola not only showcased its brand’s artistic sense but also conveyed richer cultural connotations. This advertisement was not only an enhancement of Coca-Cola’s brand value but also a bold exploration of new forms of advertising creation, reflecting the perfect combination of technology and art and sparking deeper reflection among the audience on the brand and its culture. Through this unique approach, Coca-Cola demonstrated its respect and love for art, setting a new trend in advertising creation, while infusing the brand with new vitality and creativity.

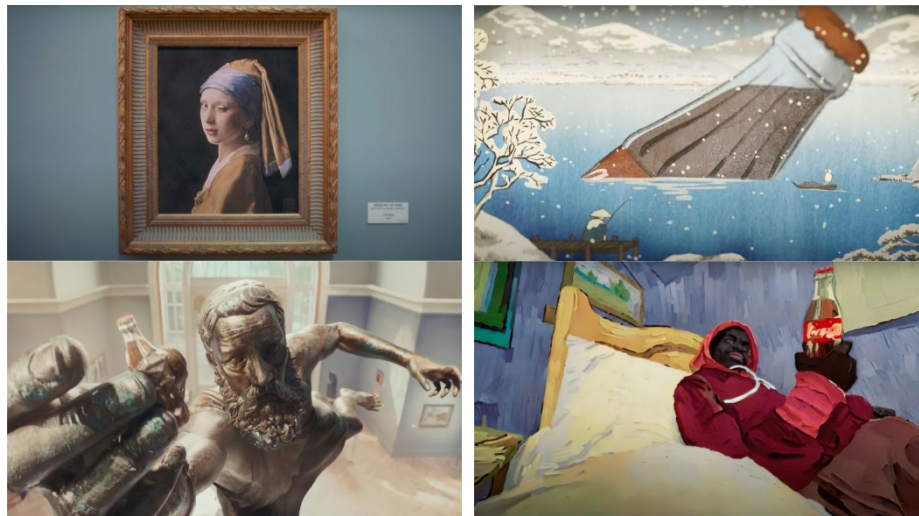


Figure 2: Coca-Cola and Stable Diffusion Technology in Advertising Creation
Image Source: NetEase, <https://www.163.com/dy/article/HVQCSL1L05561HF3.html>

In 2024, Coca-Cola launched its first-ever AI-generated Christmas advertisement (as shown in Figure 3), actively applying AI technology in brand marketing. By utilizing advanced AI models such as Leonardo, Luma, and Runway, Coca-Cola successfully created over 10,000 images and 5,000 video clips. These AI tools not only enhanced the efficiency of ad production but also significantly improved visual effects, making the ad content more eye-catching to consumers. Thanks to Leonardo's image generation capability, Luma's animation effects, and Runway's editing features, Coca-Cola was able to quickly respond to market changes, creating more creative and impactful advertising work. This efficient production process allowed the brand to stand out in the fiercely competitive market and also provided a valuable example for other companies, demonstrating the immense application value of AI in brand marketing. Coca-Cola's successful case not only highlights the combination of technology and creativity but also marks an important step in driving the advertising industry toward digital and intelligent transformation.



Figure 3: Coca-Cola and Stable Diffusion Technology in Advertising Creation
Image Source: YouTube, Coca-Cola Official Account

3.3. Virtual IP and New Interactive Paths in Cultural Communication

With the rapid development of digital intelligence technology, virtual IPs have gradually become an important channel for brand cultural communication. Through interactions between virtual spokespersons and consumers, brands can deepen emotional connections and enhance brand value. Compared to traditional brand communication methods, virtual IPs possess immersion, fun, and flexibility, which not only make the brand's image more dynamic and attractive but also open up new paths for multicultural communication in a globalized environment. In the context of deep integration

between technology and culture, virtual IPs, as digital platforms for brand culture, are gradually transforming into key links and emotional connections between consumers and brands [7].

“Shanghai Soap,” a domestic brand with a century-long history, successfully launched the virtual spokesperson “Ala ALA” (as shown in Figure 4). The virtual image “Ala ALA” cleverly combines the brand’s traditional culture with modern technology, interacting with young consumers through social media to convey deep brand values. This innovative approach not only attracted the attention of young people but also promoted emotional resonance, breathing new life into the brand in the new era. Ala ALA’s appearance allowed traditional culture to be better inherited and developed in the digital age, becoming an important bridge connecting the brand with its consumers.

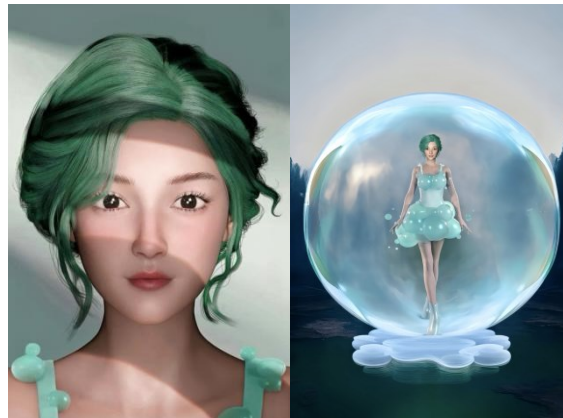


Figure 4: Shanghai Soap’s Virtual Spokesperson, ALA

Image Source: WeChat Official Account - Shanghai Soap Factory Co., Ltd.

On April 29, 2023, during the global live broadcast of the “55 Shopping Festival” on Dragon TV, Ala ALA made its debut with a time-traveling song-and-dance show, showcasing the brand’s innovative spirit and exploration of the metaverse (as shown in Figure 5). This debut not only increased the brand’s visibility but also brought it closer to young consumers. Through a virtual spokesperson, the brand was able to break the limitations of traditional communication methods, creating a new interactive experience and strengthening emotional connections with consumers. This digital transformation allows the brand to maintain vitality and appeal in a fiercely competitive market.



Figure 5: ALA’s First Appearance on Dragon TV

Image Source: WeChat Official Account - Shanghai Soap Factory Co., Ltd.

4. Empowering Brand Design Innovation with Digital Intelligence Technology: A Case Study of the Time-honored Brand “Hengyuanxiang”

Hengyuanxiang, founded in 1927 in Shanghai, China, is a time-honored brand with a long history (as shown in Figure 6). Its products cover a wide range of fields, including yarn, knitwear, apparel,

footwear, and home textiles, with brands such as “Hengyuanxiang,” “Caiyang,” and “Xiaonan” under its umbrella. In terms of inheritance and innovation, Hengyuanxiang is committed to protecting and promoting intangible cultural heritage. Among these efforts, “Haipai Yarn Knotting Techniques” is recognized as a representative project of Shanghai’s intangible cultural heritage. This technique originated over 100 years ago, introduced from Europe to coastal cities in China. Chinese artisans combined Eastern traditional knotting methods with yarn knotting techniques, enriching the stitching, patterns, mediums, and applications of yarn knotting. These techniques developed in Shanghai and gradually formed the unique Haipai Yarn Knotting tradition. In 2009, the technique was included in Shanghai’s Intangible Cultural Heritage list. In the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics and Winter Paralympics, Hengyuanxiang handcrafted award bouquets using Haipai Yarn Knotting Techniques, which were dubbed “The Everlasting Olympic Flowers.” These bouquets were presented alongside medals at the awards ceremonies, showcasing the unique charm of traditional craftsmanship. Each bouquet included roses, china roses, lilies of the valley, hydrangeas, laurels, and olive branches, symbolizing friendship, resilience, happiness, unity, victory, and peace. It took 35 hours to make a single exquisite bouquet, reflecting the craftsmanship and spirit of the artisans. Through the protection and innovative application of this intangible heritage, Hengyuanxiang not only inherited traditional culture but also integrated rich cultural connotations into its brand design, thereby enhancing its brand value. This focus on and practice of intangible cultural heritage has provided a solid cultural foundation for the brand’s sustainable development.



Figure 6: Time-Honored Brand “Hengyuanxiang”
WeChat Official Account: Hengyuanxiang Group

4.1. Telling the Chinese Story Well

How can the Haipai Yarn Knotting Technique leverage digital intelligence technology for the creative transformation and innovative expression of culture? This has become key to telling the Chinese story well.

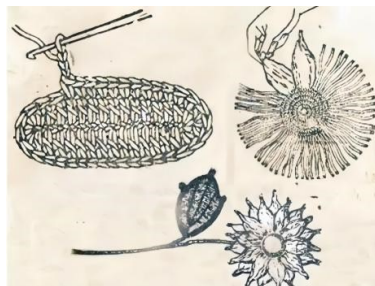


Figure 7: Shanghai-Style Wool Yarn Weaving Craft
Image Source: WeChat Official Account: Hengyuanxiang Group

4.1.1. Digital Presentation of Intangible Heritage

Through the digital reconstruction of the “Haipai Yarn Knotting Technique” using digital intelligence technology, an immersive interactive experience can be created to attract users and allow them to feel the charm of intangible heritage culture. (1) Weaving Experience Game: Using Augmented Reality (AR) or Virtual Reality (VR) technology, design an interactive game themed around weaving [8]. Users can learn the basic skills of yarn knotting through simple gestures and complete their own “weaving works” in a virtual environment. (2) Reward Mechanism: After completing the tasks, users can receive Hengyuanxiang’s limited-edition digital badges or win coupons, exchange gifts, or earn other practical rewards to encourage continuous participation. (3) Cultural Element Integration: The game’s level design incorporates Chinese traditional cultural stories. By completing specific weaving patterns, users unlock historical background knowledge, further transmitting the cultural value of the intangible heritage techniques.

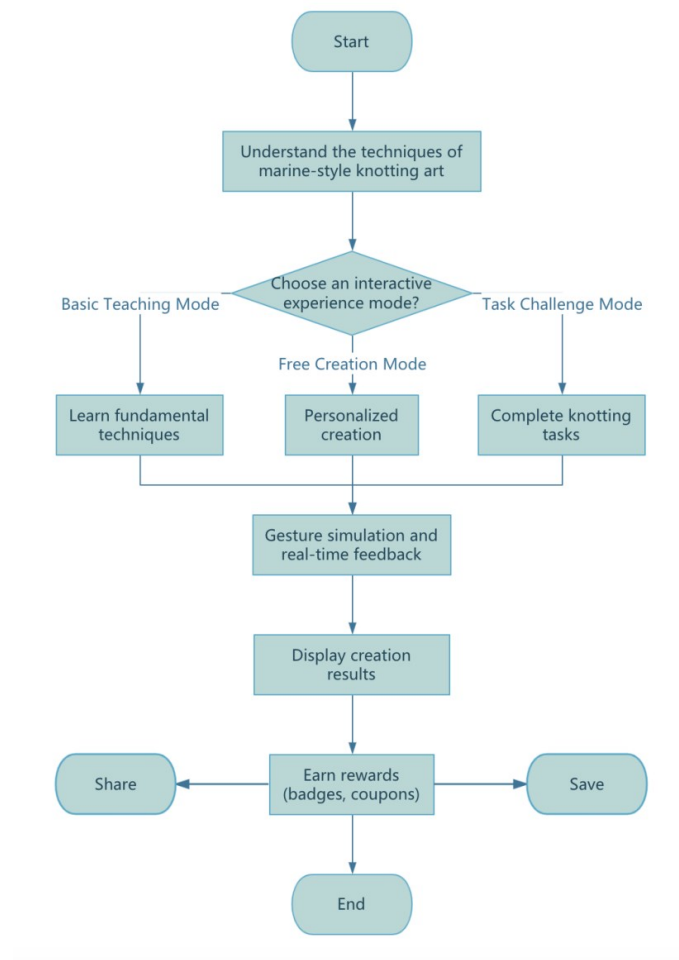


Figure 8: Shanghai-Style Wool Yarn Weaving Craft Interactive Experience
Image Source: Self-made

4.1.2. Global Interactive Platform

To better meet the demands of the international market, Hengyuanxiang can create an interactive platform for intangible cultural heritage that supports multiple languages and utilizes digital means to spread these cultural heritages: (1) Cross-Cultural Weaving Experience: The platform can launch

weaving themes adapted to different cultural backgrounds, such as designs inspired by the distinctive elements (e.g., colors, patterns) of various countries, and feature challenges like the “Sino-Japanese Fusion Weaving Challenge” or “Silk Road Cultural Theme Works.” (2) International Competitions and Prize Mechanism: A global virtual weaving competition can be held, with winners receiving Hengyuanxiang customized gifts or the opportunity to collaborate on brand design, thereby enhancing the brand’s global recognition. (3) User-Generated Content (UGC) to Drive Engagement: The platform can encourage users to upload their personal weaving works to the platform or social media, creating a “digital artwork exhibition” and promoting wider engagement.

4.1.3. Effortless Communication and User Experience

In the context of globalization and digitalization, if the transmission of traditional culture is too singular or serious, it may diminish audience interest and acceptance [9]. To better spread the “Haipai Yarn Knotting Technique” as an intangible cultural heritage, Hengyuanxiang can leverage digital intelligence technology to communicate in an enjoyable, interactive, and fun way. This approach would allow users to subtly experience the brand’s culture through pleasant experiences, achieving effortless communication. Collaborating with social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, Hengyuanxiang can launch a “Finger Weaving Challenge” short video template. Users can share their completed weaving works through short videos, while incorporating Hengyuanxiang’s brand story, creating viral engagement and attracting international consumers to learn about and experience intangible heritage culture.

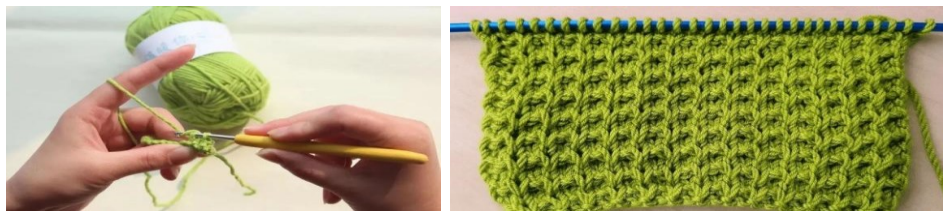


Figure 9: “Hengyuanxiang” Finger Weaving Craft
Image Source: WeChat Official Account: Hengyuanxiang Group

To further enhance the user experience, Hengyuanxiang can leverage mixed reality (MR) technology to create an immersive “Brand Story Interactive Theater” that combines the virtual and real to expand the reach of the brand’s cultural communication [10]. For example, in an immersive experience centered around the “Chinese Village Tour,” when viewers wear MR devices, they can immerse themselves in a virtual historical context, exploring the brand’s growth from the traditional yarn workshop at its inception to the modern production base. Additionally, viewers can freely choose various styles of clothing models, explore the design philosophy that merges tradition and modernity, and participate through social interactions such as liking or commenting, thereby strengthening their emotional connection with the brand.



Figure 10: Co-creating an MR Interactive Theater with HoloLens 2
Image Source: Xiaohongshu, NEOCAST

4.2. Integrating Cross-Cultural Festivals and Emotions

In the context of globalization, using festive elements to establish emotional resonance with consumers has become one of the key strategies in cross-cultural communication [10]. Hengyuanxiang's yarn knotting technique not only showcases exquisite craftsmanship but also carries profound cultural symbolism. For example, embroidered zodiac patterns express the uniqueness of ethnic symbols. Based on this, Hengyuanxiang can combine festive traditions from different cultures with digital intelligence technology to design cross-cultural interactive experiences. This not only facilitates the global dissemination of brand culture but also enables deeper emotional connections with consumers within diverse cultural contexts.



Figure 11: “Hengyuanxiang” Weaving of the Twelve Zodiac Animals
Image Source: WeChat Official Account: Hengyuanxiang Group

4.2.1. Merging Traditional Festivals to Strengthen Brand Cultural Identity

The novelty factor is regarded as a key influence on brand attitudes [11]. By designing an interactive experience game that integrates augmented reality (AR) technology, Hengyuanxiang can tap into the Chinese New Year celebration. For example, by scanning the packaging of Hengyuanxiang's Spring Festival product series, consumers can see dynamic designs of the character “福” (fortune) on their mobile phones (Figure 12), or generate exclusive digital yarn patterns based on their “personal zodiac” (Figure 13). This digital content, combining the “Haipai Yarn Knotting Technique,” preserves the warmth of traditional festive culture while offering an immersive New Year's blessing experience for users. This enhances consumer engagement and strengthens the festive atmosphere. Additionally, tasks such as unlocking zodiac weaving patterns not only stimulate the consumer's sense of novelty but also deepen the cultural connection with the brand.

4.2.2. Cross-Cultural Festival Interactions for International Market Adaptation

Consumers with a high tendency toward nostalgia are more concerned with a brand's heritage and authenticity, while those with a lower nostalgia inclination are more open to innovative product designs[12]. This insight suggests that in cross-cultural festival design, it is important to balance tradition and innovation by considering the cultural inclinations and emotional needs of target consumers [13]. For Western holidays like Christmas, Hengyuanxiang can explore designs that combine Chinese traditional crafts with Western festive elements. For instance, the brand could launch an interactive “Christmas Tree Decoration” activity through a virtual app, where users can choose virtual decorations like yarn snowflakes or woven gift boxes, reinterpreting the aesthetics of Christmas decorations with a “Chinese craftsmanship” twist (Figure 14).



Figure 12: AR “福” Character

Image Source: (1) Self-made, (2) Xiaohongshu, XOSMO



Figure 13: Zodiac “Rabbit”

Image Source: Self-made



Figure 14: Weaving a Christmas Tree

Image Source: Self-made

4.3. IP Image — Virtual Humans

With the rapid development of digital and virtual reality technologies, virtual humans, as brand ambassadors or interactive mediums, have brought new ways of communication and marketing opportunities for brands. Hengyuanxiang can also enhance its emotional connection with consumers and elevate its innovative image by creating a virtual human IP.

Designing a virtual human image centered around core yarn themes, such as “Rongjin” or “Henny” (a play on “Heng”), combines traditional brand elements with modern virtual representations. These virtual humans can be anthropomorphized yarn art figures (Figure 15), endowed with unique personalities and charm to represent Hengyuanxiang’s brand culture and innovative spirit. Through these virtual characters, Hengyuanxiang can not only enhance the brand’s appeal but also build a deeper emotional connection with consumers through emotional expression.



Figure 15: “Hengyuanxiang” Virtual Human IP Simulation
Image Source: Self-made

Furthermore, virtual humans can interact with consumers via short videos and social platforms. By launching a virtual human short video series on platforms like Douyin and Weibo, such as “Rong Xiaoxiang Teaches You How to Knot in One Minute” or “Virtual Human Takes You on a Tour of Hengyuanxiang’s History,” Hengyuanxiang can establish a more direct and vivid interaction with younger users. Through these short video contents, virtual humans can not only spread the brand story but also convey the brand’s values and culture to young consumers in an engaging way, thereby strengthening the emotional connection between the brand and its audience.

5. Conclusion

In the context of cross-cultural communication, the application of digital intelligence technologies has become a significant force in driving innovation in brand design. By integrating technologies like virtual reality, artificial intelligence-generated content (AIGC), the Internet of Things (IoT), and blockchain, brands can effectively enhance the efficiency of cultural communication and precisely establish emotional connections with consumers from different cultural backgrounds [14]. However, this study has some limitations. For example, the research mainly focuses on the application of “Haipai Yarn Knotting Techniques,” and the generalizability of the conclusions still requires further validation. Additionally, as the research methodology is predominantly based on online experiments and lacks real-world testing, this may limit the applicability of the conclusions in real-world settings. Consumer trust in time-honored brands significantly impacts their acceptance of brand innovation. Future research could explore how to better address cultural differences and consumer trust challenges by designing cultural market adaptations and enhancing brand heritage. It may also investigate the diverse expressions of technology and culture integration and improve external validity by combining experiments with field tests. As digital intelligence technologies continue to evolve, brands need to strike a balance between globalization and localization in cultural adaptation. Through innovative design, they can create an inclusive and diverse global brand ecosystem, achieving breakthroughs in cultural communication and the sustainable enhancement of brand value.

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