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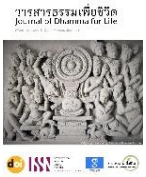

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Digital Marketing Communication to Enhance Cultural Soft Power in Gansu, China

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the current digital marketing strategies utilized for cultural promotion in Gansu Province, China, with a focus on evaluating their effectiveness in enhancing the region's cultural soft power. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to gain a comprehensive understanding of digital marketing communication's role in promoting Gansu's cultural identity. The study was conducted through three primary stages: the development of a research proposal, implementation of research procedures, and completion of a final report.

Findings reveal that while digital marketing efforts in Gansu have achieved measurable progress, significant opportunities for improvement remain. Future strategies should prioritize the innovative use of online platforms, the creative dissemination of cultural and tourism-related content, and broader promotion of local cultural products. Gansu's cultural soft power is notably strong in traditional domains such as natural landscapes and culinary heritage, where digital media has played a pivotal role. However, challenges persist in increasing public engagement and awareness, as cultural products still suffer from limited popularity and reach.

The study concludes that to effectively strengthen its cultural soft power, Gansu must address these challenges by diversifying digital communication channels, enhancing cultural product marketing, and optimizing digital content formats. These improvements will not only raise public recognition of Gansu's cultural assets but also position the province more favorably within the global cultural landscape of the digital era.

Introduction

The historical heritage of Gansu Province has become a focal point in digital marketing communication, showcasing the province's rich legacy as a cornerstone of its cultural strategy. The history of the Silk Road, Buddhist art, and unique folk traditions form a significant part of Gansu's cultural identity. These narratives are presented through digital platforms, not only attracting audiences but also enhancing the region's global image.

The Dunhuang Academy has utilized modern technology to establish the country's first multi-disciplinary coupling laboratory in the field of cultural heritage preservation. It has completed the digital collection of 290 caves, covering 26,000 square meters, at the Mogao Caves, and built the "Digital Dunhuang Open Database." It has also created the world's first multi-temporal, immersive museum, the "Digital Cave." Furthermore, Gansu has preliminarily completed a monitoring and early-warning system and network operation for six grottoes (Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China, 2023). The increased digital dissemination of Gansu's historical heritage highlights the importance of preserving cultural memory in the new media era. The province's ancient temples, majestic fortresses, and historic trade routes serve as vivid testimonies to history, providing a genuine connection to the rich fabric of Chinese civilization for a broad audience. Digitally expressing these historical elements has evolved from simple information sharing to strategic brand building, enhancing the perception of the region's cultural value.

Integrating this historical narrative into digital communication is essential as it contributes substantially to Gansu's cultural soft power. This study proposes that by continually showcasing Gansu's historical assets through various digital channels, the province's cultural influence can be amplified on the international stage. The research emphasizes the potential of digital storytelling, which can not only inspire global imagination but also foster an appreciation for Gansu's cultural heritage, thereby promoting tourism and cultural exchange.

The study also highlights the opportunities for reconstructing historical heritage in the digital transformation, making it relevant in modern society. Through strategic information delivery and targeted promotional activities, Gansu's traditional narratives can be innovatively designed to attract modern audiences while retaining their authentic essence. This approach provides a blueprint for regions with rich historical cultures on how to enhance and communicate their cultural significance through digital practices.

The ultimate goal of this study is to expand cultural narratives through digital marketing communication and ensure their seamless integration into the digital domain, developing a structured approach that highlights Gansu's unique cultural image. This enhancement aligns with the broader objective of realizing cultural soft power. The research findings are expected to make a significant contribution to the existing knowledge base, offering insights into how digital marketing communication can be optimized to promote cultural dissemination. The insights from this study aim to guide policymakers and marketing professionals in refining regional cultural branding, thus advancing Gansu's soft power on the global stage.

In January 2022, the Gansu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism released the "14th Five-Year Plan for Smart Culture and Tourism Development in Gansu Province," outlining the goals for smart culture and tourism development during the 14th Five-Year Plan period. These goals include a more comprehensive cultural and tourism framework, completed infrastructure, and further enhanced brand influence. The document proposes promoting the

application of 5G, big data, cloud computing, AI, IoT, and blockchain technologies in the province's culture and tourism sector. It aims to improve the entire chain's smartness and promote the full-scale somatization of cultural and tourism creation, production, consumption, service, and management, enriching digital cultural and tourism products and formats, and expanding cultural and tourism consumption space (China Tourism News, 2022).

Gansu's integration of cultural tourism initiatives with digital mechanisms fully reflects the region's commitment to embracing technological advancement while preserving its history. The region's digital presence serves as an important gateway for the global recognition of its unique cultural assets. The intrinsic value of Gansu's historical heritage is not only displayed through traditional media but is increasingly narrated through digital storytelling, allowing international audiences to engage in a more dynamic and interactive manner.

However, the study points out certain inconsistencies between Gansu's digital content and the principles of cultural branding. These inconsistencies are an inevitable growing pain in the coupling process of digital marketing communication to enhance Gansu's cultural soft power. This study aims to articulate a structured approach that comprehensively analyzes the correlation between digital marketing communication and the enhancement of Gansu's cultural soft power, ensuring consistency and coherence in the online presentation of Gansu's cultural identity. By examining the current digital marketing communication methods and strategies in Gansu, the study evaluates their effectiveness in relation to enhancing Gansu's cultural soft power.

The study also recognizes the growing role of social media and other digital channels as powerful tools for cultural diplomacy, effectively expanding Gansu's soft power reach. To harness this potential, the research proposes an analytical framework to identify specific elements of Gansu's culture that are particularly suited for digital presentation, thereby establishing a strategic roadmap for future digital marketing communication. Through this exploration, the research elucidates how Gansu can transform its rich cultural heritage into engaging digital dialogues, fostering international exchange and enhancing its cultural soft power on the world stage.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The research framework describes how to achieve the goal of enhancing Gansu's cultural soft power through digital marketing communication. This goal is achieved by integrating the SMCR communication model agenda setting theory and cultural identity theory. These theories collectively establish the logical relationships between the components of the framework, corresponding to processes such as information transmission, agenda setting, and the impact on cultural perception. As shown in Figure 1.

Conceptual framework

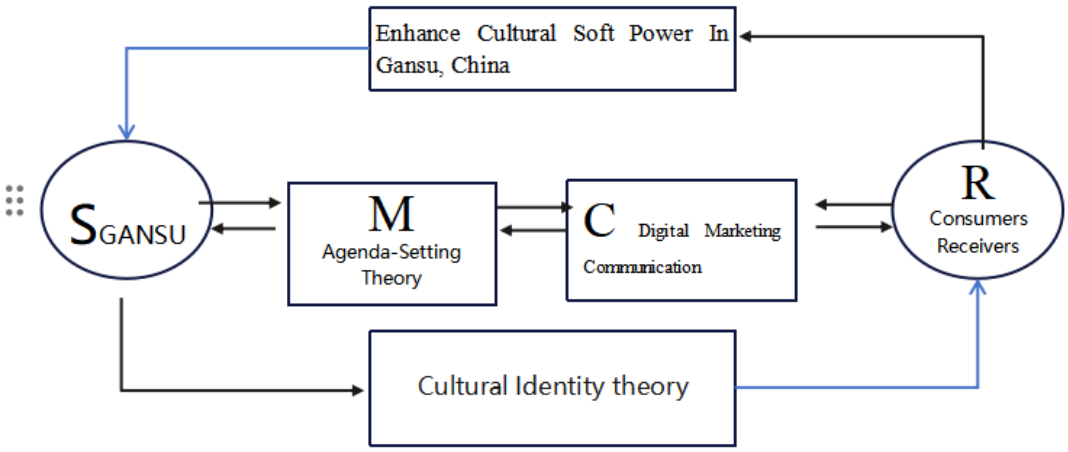

Figure 1 Conceptual framework of this research.

Objectives

1. Exploration of the Current Digital Marketing Strategies for Cultural Promotion in Gansu Province.
2. Assessment of the Existing Level of Gansu's Cultural Soft Power.
3. Identification and Analysis of Challenges in the Effective Use of Digital Marketing Communication for Gansu's Cultural Promotion

Research Methodology

1. Population and Sample

The research objects of this study include ordinary people in Gansu, Internet users using Internet tools, staff of relevant departments, such as staff of the Tourism and Culture Department of Gansu Province, professors of universities in Gansu Province, staff of museums in Gansu Province, tourists who have been to Gansu, staff who have consumed cultural products in Gansu Province, etc.

2. Research Scope

The scope of qualitative research focuses on the people in Gansu Province, as well as the Internet users who know about Gansu Province through the Internet and various electronic information channels.

The scope of quantitative research is aimed at expert members of the Gansu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, professors and professionals from universities in Gansu Province, staff members of museums in Gansu Province, tourists who have visited Gansu Province, and consumers who have consumed cultural products in Gansu Province.

3. Research Tools

The sources of literature review include books, articles, and previous research papers, mainly from CNKI and Google Scholar. Open ended and closed ended questions are used for data collection, with closed ended questions rated on a 5-point scale. This study utilizes the Project Objective Consistency Index (IOC) of five experts in the field to ensure clarity, appropriateness, and accurate measurement of issues. This issue will be evaluated by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to mitigate potential risks for participants, with a particular focus on ethical and moral issues related to the privacy of female respondents in the digital age. The statistical analysis of questionnaire data includes Cronbach's alpha coefficient, frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation (s.D.), and analysis of variance (ANOVA) using Packaged program. China uses the online survey tool "Wenjuanxing" for data collection.

4. Data Collection

The process of data collection and analysis was carried out in accordance with the research methodology and objectives outlined in this study.

Data Collection Steps

To understand Gansu Province's historical and cultural background, cultural tourism resources, and the main approaches and methods of digital marketing communication. This step also involves identifying the quadrants and dimensions for measuring and evaluating cultural soft power.

4.1 Designing Interview Questions and Questionnaire: Based on the findings of the literature review, formulate in-depth interview questions and design the questionnaire. Expert Consultation and Review: Consult experts for IOC testing and submit the research for IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval. In-depth Interviews: Conduct in-depth interviews with 15 experts and respondents.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Interview Results: Analyze the results of the interviews descriptively. Online Questionnaire Survey: Conduct an online questionnaire survey with 400 valid responses. Before data collection, thoroughly review and revise the questionnaire to ensure the accuracy and validity of the questions, thereby enhancing the quality and reliability of the research.

4.3 Digitization of Survey Data: Input the raw data from the questionnaire into a computer database. Statistical Analysis Using Packaged Program: Perform statistical analysis of the questionnaire data using Packaged Program.

5. Analysis Process

Descriptive Analysis of Interview Data: Perform a descriptive analysis of the in-depth interview responses to interpret the results. This analysis focuses on the current digital marketing communication strategies employed in Gansu Province, the current level of cultural soft power, and the evaluation of whether digital marketing communication has contributed to the enhancement of cultural soft power in the implementation of policies related to cultural tourism. Statistical Analysis of Questionnaire Data: The statistical analysis includes values such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. This analysis evaluates the perceptions of consumers and information recipients regarding Gansu Province's cultural soft power, particularly in terms of cultural tourism consumption and revenue generation, as well

as their feedback and assessments of digital marketing communication strategies and their effectiveness. Results are presented in narrative form, as well as in tables and charts. Additionally, internal consistency reliability of the scale was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess correlations between items on the scale. In this study, the reliability coefficient for the "Evaluation Scale for the Application of Digital Marketing Communication in Enhancing Gansu's Cultural Soft Power" was 0.941, indicating high reliability, as it exceeds 0.8. This suggests that the data is of high quality and suitable for further analysis. Validity testing was conducted using the KMO and Bartlett's tests. The KMO value was 0.649, within the range of 0.6 to 0.7, indicating that the research data is reasonably suitable for information extraction.

Results

Result of Research Objective 1: Exploration of the Current Digital Marketing Strategies for Cultural Promotion in Gansu Province

Based on the content and data from the survey, the digital marketing strategies used in Gansu Province's cultural promotion exhibit several key points worth analyzing:

1. Dominance of Online Channels

The data indicates that 65% of respondents obtain information about Gansu through the internet, demonstrating the dominant role of online communication in today's society. This suggests that Gansu's digital marketing strategies have achieved broad coverage on online platforms, making them a crucial avenue for cultural promotion. However, 22% of respondents still rely on interpersonal communication to acquire information, indicating that Gansu should also focus on enhancing offline word-of-mouth promotion, particularly through influencers or community activities, to strengthen the effectiveness of interpersonal communication.

2. Importance of Tourism Information

With 49% of respondents learning about Gansu through tourism-related information, it is evident that tourism holds a central position in the province's cultural promotion. Digital marketing strategies should emphasize the promotion of tourism-related content, utilizing innovative methods such as virtual reality (VR) experiences, interactive maps, and visitor video sharing to attract more potential tourists.

3. Cultural Perception of Gansu

The survey reveals that landscapes and cuisine are the primary impressions the public associates with Gansu, providing a clear direction for digital marketing. Gansu can further reinforce the dissemination of these cultural features through multimedia content, such as short food videos and landscape photography contests, while also considering the integration of other unique aspects (e.g., historical culture) into the overall promotional strategy.

4. Perception of Economic Level

Public perception of Gansu's economic level is relatively high, with 38% of respondents rating it at 3 and 30% rating it at 4 on a scale of 1 to 5. This perception can be leveraged as a strength in promoting cultural tourism, highlighting the positive connection between economy and culture to attract more investment and tourists.

5. Awareness of Tourist Attractions and Cultural Policies

Although 57% of respondents are aware of Gansu's tourist attractions and cultural policies, 43% remain unaware, indicating that cultural promotion still requires further reinforcement. Digital marketing strategies could enhance collaboration with popular tourism

platforms and social media, using targeted advertising and recommendations from travel key opinion leaders (KOLs) to increase public awareness.

6.Effectiveness of Cultural Tourism Information Dissemination

While 31% of respondents have encountered Gansu's cultural tourism information, 68% expressed interest in learning more after seeing it. This suggests that existing digital marketing efforts have successfully sparked public interest to some extent. However, there is still room to expand the reach of these efforts, particularly on social media and interactive platforms, to improve visibility and engagement.

7. Acceptance of Cultural Products

Only 34% of respondents have experienced Gansu's cultural products, indicating that these products have low penetration and acceptance rates. This suggests that Gansu needs to focus more on promoting cultural products within its digital marketing efforts, possibly through e-commerce platforms and live-streaming sales to increase their visibility and market penetration.

8. Public Impression of Gansu's Culture

Although 39% of respondents rated Gansu’s culture with the highest score of 5, 21% gave it a score of 3, with many others giving lower scores. This indicates that public recognition of Gansu’s culture varies widely, suggesting that Gansu needs to more systematically showcase its rich cultural heritage in its digital marketing, using content marketing approaches such as documentaries and interviews with cultural figures to enhance its overall cultural image.

9.Through in-depth interviews with industry experts, relevant staff of the tourism department, and key survey subjects such as tourists, the following conclusions were drawn

The average annual investment and application level of digital marketing have been increasing year by year, with significant effects, especially in attracting young people and international tourists. The shortcomings include insufficient resource integration ability and urgent need to improve content innovation.

In summary, while Gansu’s current digital marketing strategies have achieved some success, there is still significant room for improvement. Future strategies should focus more on the deep utilization of online platforms, the innovative dissemination of cultural tourism content, and the expanded promotion of cultural products to more comprehensively enhance Gansu Province's cultural soft power.

Result of Research Objective 2: Assessment of the Existing Level of Gansu's Cultural Soft Power

Based on the content and data from the survey, Gansu Province's cultural soft power can be analyzed from the following perspectives:

1. Dominance of Information Dissemination Channels

The data indicates that 65% of respondents acquire information about Gansu Province through the internet, highlighting the central role of digital platforms in the province's cultural communication. However, 22% of respondents obtain information through interpersonal communication, suggesting that traditional word-of-mouth still holds some influence. Therefore, in enhancing its cultural soft power, Gansu should continue to strengthen online communication while also optimizing interpersonal channels.

2. Public Impression of Gansu

In the survey question, "What are the main characteristics of Gansu Province that you are aware of?" the public's impressions primarily centered on landscapes (36%) and cuisine (29%), with 27% identifying Gansu's geographical location as a significant feature. This indicates that Gansu's natural scenery and culinary culture have high visibility and have become important components of its cultural soft power.

3. Cultural Popularity and Public Awareness

Although 57% of respondents indicated they were aware of Gansu's tourist attractions and cultural policies, 43% reported being unaware, suggesting that there is still considerable room for improvement in cultural dissemination. Furthermore, 66% of respondents stated that they had not experienced Gansu's cultural products, highlighting shortcomings in the promotion of these products and in public awareness.

4. Public Evaluation of Gansu's Economy and Culture

In the survey assessing Gansu's economic status, 38% of respondents rated it a 3, and 30% rated it a 4 out of 5, reflecting a generally high level of public recognition of the province's economic development. However, evaluations of Gansu's culture were more varied; while 39% rated it a 5, 21% gave it a 3, and a non-negligible portion rated it a 1 or 2. This suggests that while Gansu's cultural image is generally positive, there is still room for improvement.

5. Effectiveness of Cultural Communication and Public Engagement

A significant 68% of respondents expressed interest in learning more after encountering information about Gansu's cultural tourism, indicating that the province's cultural dissemination has been somewhat effective in sparking public interest. However, 31% of respondents reported not having seen any related information, implying that Gansu needs to further enhance its media and social platform outreach.

6.Through in-depth interviews, the following conclusion was drawn

The current level of cultural soft power in Gansu can be evaluated as having a certain influence nationwide, especially in the promotion of Silk Road culture, which has significant advantages. However, it is necessary to further enhance international recognition and strengthen the identification and attractiveness of Gansu cultural brands.

In summary, Gansu Province's cultural soft power has certain strengths in traditional cultural areas such as natural landscapes and culinary culture, with digital communication channels playing a key role in dissemination. However, the popularity and acceptance of cultural products are low, and public awareness of Gansu's culture still needs improvement. This analysis suggests that while Gansu has established a foundational level of cultural soft power, further optimization and expansion in the depth and breadth of cultural communication are needed to enhance its overall cultural soft power.

Result Research Objective 3: Identification and Analysis of Challenges in the Effective Use of Digital Marketing Communication for Gansu's Cultural Promotion

Challenge 1: Limitations of Information Dissemination Channels

The survey indicates that 65% of respondents obtain information about Gansu through the internet, while 22% rely on interpersonal communication. Although the internet is the primary channel, the significant role of interpersonal communication cannot be overlooked.

Challenge: Despite the internet being the main information channel, there may be limitations in the reach and depth of information dissemination, particularly when it is not

sufficiently integrated with other forms of information access. The quality and appeal of online content may not be sufficient to effectively engage the audience.

Analysis: There is a need to further optimize the quality and format of online content, integrating it with social media and word-of-mouth marketing to enhance the reach and impact of information dissemination.

Challenge 2: Limited Effectiveness in Communicating Gansu's Cultural Characteristics

In the survey on "What are the main characteristics of Gansu Province that you are aware of?" food and landscapes were mentioned by 29% and 36% of respondents, respectively. However, these represent only a portion of Gansu's cultural features, with many other cultural elements not effectively communicated.

Challenge: Currently, the communication of Gansu's cultural characteristics is somewhat narrow, focusing mainly on food and landscapes, while other rich cultural elements (such as history and folklore) are not adequately highlighted.

Analysis: There is a need to diversify content marketing strategies to emphasize Gansu's unique cultural heritage and diversity, attracting a broader audience.

Challenge 3: Low Popularity and Acceptance of Cultural Products

Data shows that 66% of respondents have not experienced Gansu's cultural products, indicating low market penetration and acceptance.

Challenge: The promotion of cultural products is insufficient, leading to limited market penetration and a lack of opportunities for the public to directly experience Gansu's culture.

Analysis: Efforts should be intensified to promote Gansu's cultural products, particularly through digital platforms, to increase consumer interest and engagement with these products.

Challenge 4: Ineffective Communication of Cultural Tourism Information

In the survey, 43% of respondents reported being unaware of Gansu's tourist attractions and cultural policies, suggesting that current promotional efforts have not fully reached the target audience.

Challenge: The dissemination of cultural tourism information is not sufficiently effective, resulting in a lack of public awareness of Gansu's cultural policies and attractions.

Analysis: There is a need to enhance the precision of promotional efforts, utilizing data analytics and personalized recommendation technologies to improve the accessibility and impact of information, ensuring that cultural tourism information reaches the target audience more widely and effectively.

Challenge 5: Insufficient Interactivity and Depth in Digital Marketing

While 68% of respondents expressed interest in learning more after encountering information about Gansu's cultural tourism, 32% were not influenced, indicating a lack of interactivity and depth in the digital marketing content.

Challenge: Existing digital marketing content may lack sufficient interactivity and appeal, failing to effectively engage all segments of the audience.

Analysis: There is a need to enhance the interactivity and creativity of digital marketing content, using methods such as virtual reality experiences and user-generated content to increase user engagement and loyalty.

These challenges indicate that Gansu Province faces certain shortcomings in leveraging digital marketing communication to enhance its cultural soft power. Overcoming these challenges requires a broader integration of different communication channels, strengthened market promotion of cultural products, and optimization of digital marketing content and

formats. By doing so, Gansu can improve public awareness and recognition of its culture, thereby effectively enhancing its cultural soft power and securing a more favorable position in the global cultural landscape in the digital age.

Through in-depth interviews, it was found that the challenges of effectively applying digital marketing in cultural promotion in Gansu mainly include: the balance between cultural heritage protection and tourism development, insufficient development of cultural industries, gaps between resource integration and technological innovation, the need to improve internationalization level, and differences in policy implementation due to regional reasons. In the face of these challenges, according to in-depth interviews, experts in relevant fields suggest: strengthening the cultivation of cultural talents and enhancing innovation capabilities; increasing support for the cultural industry, improving the industry chain, and promoting integration with the tourism and technology fields; 3) improving the quality and market competitiveness of cultural products, and creating cultural brands with Gansu characteristics; establishing a stronger international cultural exchange platform to enhance Gansu's cultural influence on a global scale..

Discussion

The findings from the study underscore both the progress and the limitations of Gansu Province's current digital marketing strategies for cultural promotion. This discussion reflects on key aspects such as the dominance of digital platforms, the selective portrayal of cultural features, the challenges in promoting cultural products, and the overall state of Gansu's cultural soft power.

Firstly, the study highlights the dominance of online channels, with 65% of respondents acquiring cultural information about Gansu via the internet. This affirms the findings of previous studies which emphasize that digital platforms, particularly social media, have become essential in cultural marketing due to their broad reach and cost-effectiveness (Hays, Page, & Buhalis, 2013; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). However, 22% still rely on interpersonal communication, reflecting that traditional word-of-mouth and community-based promotion remain relevant. This duality suggests the necessity of an integrated marketing communication strategy that combines digital outreach with offline engagements (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2015).

The centrality of tourism-related content in public knowledge about Gansu—particularly landscapes and cuisine—reveals a content imbalance. While these elements are valuable entry points for cultural engagement, they represent only a fraction of the province's rich heritage. This supports the view of Kim, Agrusa, and Chon (2014), who argue that superficial or narrowly focused representations may limit the perceived authenticity and depth of cultural destinations. Hence, a broader storytelling approach that includes historical narratives, folklore, and intangible cultural elements is required.

Moreover, the low penetration and acceptance of Gansu's cultural products, with only 34% of respondents having experienced them, reveals a significant challenge. This aligns with Wang and Zeng's (2020) observation that regional cultural products in China often suffer from weak branding and lack digital visibility. E-commerce integration, influencer partnerships, and experiential marketing—such as live-streaming or VR demonstrations—could be pivotal in enhancing product appeal and public engagement (Li, Robson, & Coates, 2013).

The variability in public perceptions of Gansu's culture, with scores ranging from 1 to 5, reflects inconsistent cultural identity messaging. While some respondents rated the cultural value highly, others were indifferent or unaware. This mirrors the concept of "fragmented branding" in destination marketing, where inconsistent narratives weaken overall cultural soft power (Anholt, 2010). Therefore, constructing a coherent and inclusive cultural brand narrative is critical.

Regarding cultural soft power, the findings show promising but uneven development. The public's general awareness of Gansu's cultural policies and attractions is moderate (57%), suggesting that communication strategies have some effectiveness but lack comprehensive reach. Previous research underscores the need for sustained, multi-platform dissemination to embed cultural awareness more deeply (Nye, 2004; d'Hooghe, 2015). In particular, the study corroborates the notion that cultural soft power must be built through consistent communication, authentic engagement, and global outreach.

In terms of challenges, the study identifies a lack of content diversity, low product engagement, and ineffective dissemination of policy-related cultural information as critical bottlenecks. These findings support the work of Sigala (2011), who emphasizes that the success of digital cultural marketing depends not just on access to technology, but on the ability to craft compelling, multi-layered narratives and interactive content. Furthermore, interviews with tourism professionals revealed that although digital marketing investment is increasing, weaknesses in content innovation and resource integration persist—an issue echoed by Huang and Su (2022), who highlight the importance of creative strategy and cross-sector collaboration in cultural tourism promotion.

In summary, the research indicates that Gansu's digital marketing strategies are evolving but remain limited in scope and execution. The province has succeeded in establishing a digital presence and generating some public interest, but there is a pressing need to broaden its cultural representation, improve product accessibility, and refine communication strategies to enhance both domestic and international cultural soft power.

Conclusion

Firstly, while Gansu's current digital marketing strategies have achieved some success, there remains significant room for improvement. Future strategies should place greater emphasis on the in-depth utilization of online platforms, the innovative dissemination of cultural and tourism content, and the expanded promotion of cultural products. These efforts aim to comprehensively enhance the province's cultural soft power.

Secondly, Gansu's cultural soft power demonstrates certain advantages in traditional cultural domains such as natural landscapes and culinary heritage, where digital communication channels play a pivotal role in dissemination. However, the popularity and acceptance of cultural products remain relatively low, and public awareness of Gansu's culture still needs to be improved. This analysis indicates that although Gansu has established a foundational level of cultural soft power, further optimization and expansion of cultural exchange in both depth and breadth are necessary to elevate its overall cultural influence.

Finally, the aforementioned challenges and shortcomings suggest that Gansu has room to enhance its efforts in leveraging digital marketing communication to bolster cultural soft power. Addressing these challenges requires a broader integration of diverse communication

channels, strengthening the market promotion of cultural products, and optimizing the content and formats of digital marketing. By doing so, Gansu can improve public awareness and recognition of its culture, effectively enhancing its cultural soft power and securing a more advantageous position in the global cultural landscape of the digital era.

Recommendations

To enhance the impact of digital marketing communication on cultural promotion, it is essential to strengthen the formulation and implementation of digital cultural policies while establishing multi-level support systems for digital cultural communication. Simultaneously, promoting the establishment of cultural soft power evaluation standards is crucial for assessing progress effectively. From a practical perspective, the comprehensive use of online platforms should be deepened, and innovative approaches to disseminating cultural tourism content must be developed. Additionally, increasing the market promotion of cultural products can further elevate cultural visibility and engagement. Future research should focus on exploring the effectiveness of digital marketing communication strategies, examining their adaptability in multicultural contexts, and investigating the long-term impact of digital transformation on cultural promotion. These integrated efforts will provide a robust framework for advancing cultural soft power in the digital era.

By implementing these policy, practical, and research recommendations, Gansu Province can systematically and effectively utilize digital marketing communication methods to comprehensively enhance its cultural soft power, laying a solid foundation for future cultural promotion efforts.

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