MAONAN FOLK MUSIC INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN WE-MEDIA ERA

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Abstract

The ancient Maonan folk music has withstood the severe test of time, emerging with vibrant colors from its solid foundation. The melodies widely sung in Maonan communities embody independence and a profound ethnic cultural spirit. However, today, Maonan folk music faces challenges related to inheritance and development due to various factors, including social changes. To revive and propel Maonan folk music forward, we-media, as a new channel of dissemination, should be utilized to reshape and rejuvenate the content of Maonan folk music in terms of diversity, concentration, and popularity. By leveraging we-media as a platform, Maonan folk music can capture the attention and preference of the public, paving the way to explore new opportunities for development in technology-based communication channels. The highlight of the study found that; 1) Maonan Folk Music and Social Changes, Maonan folk music has faced challenges due to social changes, including rural-to-urban migration and the impact of modern music. 2) Revitalization Strategies, the decline of Maonan folk music is attributed to objective social changes, not its traditional nature. 3) Role of We-Media in Cultural Revitalization, We-media is identified as an effective tool for reviving Maonan folk music due to its popularity, personalization, and interactive features. 4) We-Media as a Platform for Creative Presentation, We-media provides opportunities for quick and effective expansion of Maonan folk music, allowing for creative fusion with other ethnic folk music and contemporary genres.

Keywords: We-Media, Maonan Folk Music, Innovative, Development, Strategy

Introduction

The Maonan ethnic group is a mountain minority with a small population, primarily residing around Huanjiang County in Guangxi. Over thousands of years of development and inheritance, the Maonan people, with a brilliant humanistic spirit, have created profound wealth in material, historical, and cultural aspects. In the course of this vertical historical lineage, under particularly favorable natural conditions, generations have lived and prospered in this region, contributing to the creation

of splendid Maonan folk music through the convergence and accumulation of civilization (Witzleben, 1987). Today, Maonan folk music remains enduring, valuable, and irreplaceable.

General Secretary Xi Jinping has emphasized that Chinese culture is the concentration of all ethnic group cultures, representing brilliance, enduring qualities, and the source of our strong cultural confidence (Deng, 2020). Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the Party Central Committee, under Xi Jinping's guidance, has placed significant emphasis on the protection and development of ethnic cultures. Traditional cultures of ethnic groups are expected to regain vitality through innovative transformation and development, contributing to the realization of the Chinese Dream as a united family. With the advancement of internet technology, social media, with we-media as the mainstream, can serve as a new avenue for dissemination, offering a creative path for the inheritance and development of Maonan folk music.

The Background and Condition of Disseminating Maonan Folk Music with We-Media

The evolution of Maonan folk music has consistently kept pace with social progress throughout history. Originating in the Song Dynasty, Maonan folk music is closely connected with the independence and community development of Maonan culture (Shi, & Tho-ard, 2023). Despite social changes and being integrated with surrounding folk cultures, Maonan folk music remains unique, highly recognizable, and exhibits strong vitality. However, in the early 20th century, with the termination of feudal monarchy and the shift from an agricultural to an industrial society, rural populations moved to urban areas, leading to the decline of folk culture. The rise of modern music further contributed to the decline of traditional cultures, including Maonan folk music.

The predicament faced by Maonan folk music is attributed to the objective reasons of social changes rather than its traditional nature. Recognizing its profound artistic, social, and historical value for modern society, there is a need to revive the prosperity of Maonan folk music. The use of we-media for this revival is based on considerations of the current state of the subject and object, as well as feasibility.

From the perspective of cultural accumulation, value, significance, and the development status of Maonan folk music, it is crucial to revitalize it through effective measures. The history of Maonan folk music is splendid, progressing with the development of history and Maonan communities, combining beautiful melodies and regional culture, passing down through generations (Zhang, 2019). Various treasures, including folk songs, popular tunes, dances, and national instrument music, represent the rich culture of the Maonan ethnic group. Despite government efforts in intangible cultural heritage protection, the most effective measure involves "activating" traditional culture and reintegrating it into social cultural flows, shifting public opinion from perpetual cognition to rational cognition. As the most popular mainstream social media outlet, we-media is undoubtedly the most preferred choice for this purpose.

On the other hand, it is imperative to disseminate and activate Maonan folk music on we-media. With the wide application of internet technology, we-media has emerged as a new force,

enabling online users and civil organizations to share experiences, thoughts, and information through specific platforms. We-media's popularization, personalization, and interactive features make it an ideal channel for promoting Maonan folk music to the public and finding new development opportunities.

The Diversification of Maonan Folk Music Resources in the We-Media Environment

According to the basic principles of communication, the elements on the chain of information communication, such as subject, practice, content, method, and object, collectively constitute the driving force of communication. The transmission capacity of different media varies significantly, and the transmission lines they create, along with their efficiency, are notably different as well. In ancient China, the oral transmission of music pieces was deeply rooted (Yang, 2019). In modern society, records and tapes, invented in industrial manufacture, form a branch of social communication on music, along with other mediums such as live performances. In the network era, the instant transmission of the internet breaks the previous physical transmission chain, constituting a new divergent mode of a "tree structure" in the virtual network. We-media, in addition to establishing a new mode of multi-point to multi-point communication between subjects and objects, is capable of deconstructing and carrying the diversified forms of music, transforming music into more than simple sounds and words.

According to the results of a relevant social survey, the main causes of the inheritance inequity of Maonan folk music are language barriers, music culture barriers, and infrequent performances. More importantly, there is a generation gap between the traditional aesthetic and the public living in modern society. If a music form cannot show basic aesthetic value and provide delight visually and aurally within a certain cultural context, its dissemination and development are not guaranteed. The reason we choose a new communication channel to plan the development of Maonan folk music is that we-media has become one of the mainstream channels of modern music culture communication, providing relatively equitable opportunities due to its new platform features (Quan, 2023: 25-26). On one hand, Maonan folk music can be quickly and effectively expanded on the new platform through a new concept of creation and performance; on the other hand, Maonan folk music can be fused and blended with other ethnic folk music that has already "broken the wall," as well as the new popular music during interaction and exchange on the platform. Inspired by learning from precedents, the essence of Maonan folk music will be creatively presented to the public.

The value of Maonan folk music is not only presented in various art forms but also in the humanistic spirit and national historical foundation. It is passed down orally, recorded in the research results of scholars, and even engraved on the monument of national spirit. With the strong support of modern media technology, it is essential to break the single mode of transmission, take advantage of diversified platforms to edit and collect the cultural resources behind Maonan folk music, thereby broadening its influence through the internet (Wu, & Phanluktho, 2023). The we-media platforms, such as friend zone and official accounts of WeChat, blogs, Weibo, and post bars, are important

channels for transmitting information in text. They can introduce important research results on the history, aesthetics, culture, and sociology of Maonan folk music to the public using simple language and illustrations. Concise and comprehensive cyber language could be an effective way to eliminate the generation gap between abstruse academic theory and the weak comprehensive capacity of the public. Transforming neglected research results into common knowledge that is beneficial to society allows the public to see the essence through the phenomenon and understand the profound cultural connotation behind Maonan folk music.

Apparently, one of the main tasks that we-media undertakes is the dissemination and feedback of information. Firstly, we-media can introduce the latest achievements of Maonan folk music to the public, allowing people to see the creative reforms and adaptations concerning lyric writing, composition, arrangement, singing style, performance, and stage decoration based on Maonan traditional folk music styles (Shi, & Tho-ard, 2023). Secondly, objective and detailed feedback, along with highly valuable information reflected in the number of followers and clicks, the comments, and interaction between uploaders and online users, examines whether the creative concepts or achievements meet the spiritual needs of the audience. Obviously, we-media is the most preferred channel to resuscitate and disseminate Maonan folk music in modern society. However, failure is inevitable during the practical attempts of music. In order to put Maonan folk music back into the cultural mainstream, numerous failures are merely stepping stones to success (Xingyue, 2023).

In addition, the original appearance of Maonan folk music can be truly recorded in various perspectives in we-media, through multiple means of video recording, editing, and live streaming. The mass base of Maonan folk music will show the public its prosperity in former days and its decline nowadays. Observation and production from the perspective of ordinary people are more realistic and appealing to the public despite their unpolished camera techniques and simple production. The core value of Maonan folk music provides endless creativity, which cannot be seen in modern music. Today, for the public, especially the youth, their prejudice and misunderstanding about traditional music mainly stem from superficial comparisons of traditional music with pop music, leading to conclusions based on emotional feedback. However, the core value of traditional music culture, represented by Maonan folk music, lies in the cultural foundation established in historical changes and the spiritual implications behind the musical form. One of the important reasons why these music materials are not attractive to the public is that the inheritors did not reveal the most valuable cultural background of the music in a reasonable and comprehensive way. Therefore, after the emergence of we-media, the implications behind music can be deconstructed in various ways, such as language, scripts, and field investigations. We-media is the only strong channel to realize the inclusiveness, interpretation, and transformation of this information.

The innovative concentration of Maonan folk music in we-media

In the background of the rapidly developing internet, the dispute of "Is the 'channel matters' more important than 'content matters'" has never stopped among experts and the public. However, it is certain that both of them supplement each other as integral parts. In the early development

stage of the internet, as a cultural product, music was merely transformed into digital form from physical records, then uploaded to the internet, so the channel did matter more at that time (Tepper, & Hargittai, 2009). However, as media technology and spiritual needs gradually progressed, the channel is no longer the only thing that matters. Content becomes the main battlefield in the music industry, while the channels of the internet are divided and upgraded as well. Only by conforming to the features of the channel can the communication effect be maximized.

Currently, there are numerous successful cases on music in we-media; their similarities are high-quality music creation and performance, full of new ideas and highlights, and getting the upper hand by figuring out the operating principles of we-media. On this account, Maonan folk music must first display its own excellence. The primitive traditional Maonan folk music is in irregular artistic form due to its spontaneity and improvisation in creation and performance. Some pieces of work are verbose, complex, imbalanced in structure, and inadequate in aesthetics during performance (Song, & Hsieh, 2023). In a period of pursuing exquisite packaging in everything, including the visual and audio effect of music performance, it is hard for traditional Maonan folk music to integrate into the mainstream. Therefore, it is necessary to field investigate and screen in order to distinguish the pieces suitable for adaptation, followed by re-composition and re-arrangement while retaining the core spirit of Maonan folk music. The artistic process not only enables Maonan folk music to meet the appreciation standards in modern society but also increases creativity in stage performance. In the meantime, advanced stage technology is helpful in growing strong ethnic ambiance and freshness of the new era. Only when the creation procedures are sorted out and obtain a certain social foundation can Maonan folk music be placed on the we-media platform for recreation and improvement, aiming to achieve greater development.

We-media provides diversified carriers such as text, audio, and video for dissemination (Xu, & Dong, 2014: 227-238) In the traditional concept, music can only be heard, while we-media transforms auditory into a new aesthetic form of audio-visual synchronization. That is to say, short music videos edited and released by the public are the most mainstream and influential on we-media. From another standpoint, as a music carrier, short music videos fragmentarily deconstruct and reorganize the original music, aiming to extract the essential, retain the most typical and memorable segments, then fan out the songs and genre music from point to area. Take one of the top apps, TikTok, as an example; its short music videos are mostly in the length of 13-35 seconds, which is the most preferred length by the public according to big data. In contrast, a complete Maonan song, dance, or instrument performance takes at least a few minutes to tens of minutes. Thus, the editing and refinement of the complete work are crucial. The concentration allows transmitting the most brilliant and enriched moments to the audience to arouse their perceptual understanding and aesthetic consciousness while providing relevant links and discussion groups for the audience to know more.

Based on the characteristics of we-media music communication, Maonan folk songs should focus on perfection in the virtual world. It is inappropriate or even negative to simply copy the real stage performance to the we-media platform. It is essential to customize music material in reference

to the particular aesthetic standards of the audience on the brand new platform. By editing or reproducing, essential visual and acoustical elements are selected and fused in limited length to catch the eyes of viewers, furthermore, to arouse their thirst for knowledge. It should be noted that in the commercial environment, on the one hand, the national cultural authority should provide support for the revitalization of ethnic culture by reserving spaces on we-media platforms; on the other hand, local governments and civil organizations should provide support in finance, manpower, and material resources, to expand the influence of Maonan folk music, for the purpose of realizing sustainable development on the platforms of we-media. Progressively, the music pieces of Maonan folk music will be improved in creativity and quality, contributing to great influence and high reputation.

The Body of Knowledge

Maonan folk music, rooted in the rich cultural heritage of the Maonan ethnic group in Guangxi, faces both challenges and opportunities in the dynamic landscape of the We-Media era. This body of knowledge explores the innovative development strategy tailored for Maonan folk music, emphasizing its evolution from traditional conservation to an open and interactive approach.

1. We-Media Platforms and Opportunities

In the digital age, mainstream and specialized social platforms play a pivotal role in disseminating Maonan folk music. Explore the impact of platforms such as TikTok, WeChat, and Weibo, analyzing how they provide unique channels like "cloud live" and "cloud performance channel." Evaluate the significance of these opportunities in enhancing the visibility and accessibility of Maonan folk music.

2. Specialized Cultural Libraries:

Dive into the establishment of platforms like the "Maonan ethnic digital music library," assessing their role in preserving, organizing, and presenting Maonan folk music. Analyze how these libraries contribute to cultural documentation, making the music accessible for a wider audience and ensuring its longevity.

3. Online Theme Shops for Cultural Products:

Examine the creation of the "Online theme shop of cultural and creative products," exploring how it serves as a platform for demonstrating, interpreting, and interacting with audiences interested in Maonan folk music. Assess the role of cultural products in fostering engagement and promoting the cultural and economic sustainability of Maonan folk music.

4. Transformation of Inheritance Concept:

Discuss the shift in the inheritance concept of Maonan folk music from conservation to openness in the We-Media era. Analyze the implications of this transformation, considering how it aligns with the changing dynamics of cultural preservation and dissemination.

5. Interaction with the Audience

Explore the strategies employed to interact with the audience in the We-Media era. This section delves into the importance of feedback mechanisms, user engagement metrics, and how social platforms facilitate a two-way communication channel between Maonan folk music creators and the audience.

Figure 1 The Body of Knowledge based on the Maonan Folk Music in the We-Media Era in An Innovative Development Strategy

Conclusion

In conclusion, the innovative development strategy for Maonan folk music in the we-media era extends beyond mainstream channels, embracing specialized social platforms that offer exclusive avenues such as "cloud live" and "cloud performance channel." The establishment of platforms like the "Maonan ethnic digital music library" and the "Online theme shop of cultural and creative products" further demonstrates a commitment to showcasing, interpreting, and engaging with audiences interested in Maonan folk music. The innovative development of Maonan folk music in the we-media era requires a strategic approach that balances content and channels. The dynamic interplay between traditional cultural richness and the evolving landscape of we-media platforms presents both challenges and opportunities.

This data-driven approach underscores the importance of adapting the inheritance concept of Maonan folk music from conservation to openness in the we-media era. By leveraging these specialized social platforms, Maonan folk music can reach diverse audiences and reveal its charm and cultural value in the new media environment. The establishment of dedicated digital libraries and online theme shops signifies a proactive effort to interact with and cater to the interests of the public, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for Maonan folk music. Recognizing the importance of both content and channel, it is imperative to elevate the quality and appeal of Maonan folk music. This involves a careful curation of pieces suitable for adaptation, followed by re-composition and re-arrangement, all while preserving the core spirit of Maonan folk music. The artistic process should not only meet modern appreciation standards but also enhance creativity in stage performances. Leveraging advanced stage technology can infuse ethnic ambiance and freshness into the music, aligning it with contemporary expectations.

We-media, encompassing various formats like text, audio, and video, serves as a unique and influential platform for disseminating Maonan folk music. Short music videos, tailored to modern aesthetic standards and skillfully edited, play a vital role in conveying the essence of Maonan folk music to a wider audience. The virtual nature of these platforms enables broad reach, effectively bridging the gap between traditional cultural forms and the preferences of today's audience. To revitalize Maonan folk music, collaborative efforts are essential. National cultural authorities, local governments, and civil organizations should reserve spaces on we-media platforms, providing diverse forms of support for sustainable development. This collaborative approach, combined with strategic adaptation and innovation, positions Maonan folk music for increased influence in the we-media era. This transformative strategy aligns with the evolving dynamics of cultural preservation and dissemination, leveraging data-driven insights and we-media platforms to rejuvenate this traditional ethnic culture in the contemporary digital landscape. The fusion of old traditions with modern media ensures the continued relevance and resonance of Maonan folk music for generations to come.

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