

Cross-Cultural Communication Strategies and Effectiveness Evaluation of Museum Artifacts in the Era of Social Media

Sijia Hao

University College London, London, UK

Abstract: *With the accelerated advancement of global digitalization, social media has become an important platform for museums to conduct cross-cultural communication, playing an active role in showcasing China's outstanding history and traditional culture, as well as in spreading the Chinese voice. Centering on the context of the social media era, this paper analyzes the successful experiences and advanced practices of institutions such as the Erlitou Site Museum of the Xia Capital in Luoyang, the Shanghai Museum, and the Palace Museum, both in China and abroad. From the perspectives of content innovation, narrative methods, application of new technologies, resource integration, and cooperative promotion, it explores strategies for the cross-cultural communication of museum artifacts in the age of social media. At the same time, it attempts to construct an effectiveness evaluation framework based on the three dimensions of cognition, emotion, and behavior, in order to better test the outcomes of communication and provide a basis for further optimizing strategies.*

Keywords: *Museum Artifacts; Cross-Cultural Communication Strategies; Social Media; Effectiveness Evaluation Framework*

1. Introduction

With the rapid popularization of the global mobile internet, social media platforms worldwide are reshaping the new landscape of cultural communication. Social media has broken the boundaries of time and space, providing museums with direct channels to reach global audiences, transforming artifacts from static objects inside glass showcases into cultural carriers that transcend borders and evoke resonance. Relying on platforms such as social media to carry out cross-cultural communication activities can effectively resolve problems such as cultural discount and narrative barriers in traditional communication, enabling more Chinese artifacts and culture to go global. In recent years, some domestic museums have begun actively exploring cross-cultural communication activities. For example, the Shanghai Museum held a grand exhibition on Ancient Egyptian civilization, and the Erlitou Site Museum of the Xia Capital in Luoyang launched multilingual short videos of cultural relics, both achieving certain results. However, in practice, issues such as language barriers, cultural differences, and ideology still persist, leading to discounted communication effectiveness. How to scientifically evaluate the effectiveness of communication activities and provide strong support for improving strategies is likewise a problem requiring systematic research. Based on this, and under the background of the social media era, this paper—through typical domestic cases—conducts research from two dimensions, namely innovation in communication strategies and effectiveness evaluation, with the hope of providing a reference for enhancing the efficiency of the cross-cultural communication of museum artifacts and promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of outstanding traditional Chinese culture.

2. Opportunities and Challenges of Cross-Cultural Communication of Museum Artifacts in the Era of Social Media

2.1 Opportunities of the Era

In the era of social media, various digital information technologies provide strong support for promoting the cross-cultural communication of museum artifacts. By relying on different social media platforms, traditional temporal and spatial boundaries are broken. With just a mobile phone in hand, one can appreciate the Mona Lisa at the Louvre or A Panorama of Rivers and Mountains at the Palace

Museum anytime and anywhere, greatly lowering the threshold of cross-cultural communication. Social media communication is more interactive: through dialogue, comments, sharing, and re-creation, a “like,” a share, or a question marks the beginning of cross-cultural communication, while user feedback, check-in photos, and creative videos generate greater communication effects. Social media content is also richer and more diverse. Through personification and narrative storytelling, cold artifacts are brought to “life,” endowed with more cultural and emotional connotations, thus better bridging cultural differences and promoting cross-cultural communication. For example, the “Flying Apsaras” dance video by the Dunhuang Academy and the “adorable” Yongzheng by Palace Museum Taobao are successful cases of such “revitalization.” In addition, social media has a strong ability to “attract fans.” Museums can build global “fan communities” around specific artifacts, unleashing a fission effect.[1]

2.2 Challenges

At the same time, the cross-cultural communication of museum artifacts in the era of social media also faces considerable problems and challenges. The biggest challenge of cross-cultural communication lies in language and cultural barriers. Different countries may interpret culture differently, and the profound cultural, philosophical, or historical connotations of artifacts are difficult to perfectly convey through fast-paced, fragmented social media. This requires cultural creators to engage in deep reflection and thoughtful creation. Whether on domestic or international platforms, social media generally relies on algorithms for targeted content delivery, rather than wide dissemination, which may lead to a narrowing of audience reach. Some private museums, in the pursuit of traffic and “internet celebrity” effects, may excessively package or entertain artifacts, thereby weakening their historical seriousness and educational value.[2]

3. Strategic Innovations in Cross-Cultural Communication of Museums in the Era of Social Media

3.1 Upholding Content as the Core and Promoting Deep Reform and Innovation

In the era of social media, content remains the core carrier of cross-cultural communication. The cross-cultural communication of museum artifacts must always focus on content innovation, expanding more engaging and interactive content, lowering the threshold of cultural understanding, and stimulating audience participation. First, establish a multilingual communication model led by young people. Museums are advised to deeply explore and create content around their most representative artifacts and disseminate it through social media. For instance, the Erlitou Site Museum of the Xia Capital in Luoyang launched the “Hi! Erlitou” multilingual short video series on cultural relics, inviting foreign language students from Luoyang Foreign Language School to serve as translators and on-camera narrators. By telling the stories of artifacts and the Xia culture behind them in different national languages, this project not only provided a stage for Chinese youth to showcase themselves but also offered overseas audiences a window to understand Chinese civilization. Second, reshape historical artifacts with elements of fun. The State Hermitage Museum in Russia combined elements such as “cute” and “humorous” with world-renowned paintings like *Flora*, *A Secret Kiss*, and *The Dance*. This stark contrast between seriousness and humor quickly shortened the distance between young audiences and artifacts, enhancing their affinity and communicative power in cross-cultural contexts. Third, improve localization expression. Fully leveraging the cross-cultural communication capacity of museum artifacts requires strong localization skills.[3] The Shanghai Museum dedicated itself to creating the exhibition *On Top of the Pyramid: Ancient Egyptian Civilization*, exploring the harmony in difference and mutual appreciation between two ancient civilizations. Divided into online and offline parts, the exhibition systematically displayed various Chinese and Egyptian artifacts as well as the latest achievements in Sino-Egyptian joint archaeology. It achieved tremendous success, setting a new world record for participation in paid museum exhibitions.

3.2 Transforming Narrative Approaches and Strengthening Emotional Engagement

Cross-cultural communication of museum artifacts should emphasize the transformation of narrative methods, shifting from grand narratives of civilization to more humanized storytelling, which aligns more closely with the communication habits of social media platforms. Museums should deeply explore the stories behind artifacts to evoke emotional resonance, thereby breaking down barriers

among different cultures and better promoting cross-border communication. First, personalize the interpretation of historical artifacts. Personalized storytelling can bring artifact narratives to life, uncovering the cultural essence and historical value they embody, and expanding both the breadth and depth of cross-cultural communication. For example, interpretations such as “A 72-year-old man in Xi’an climbs the Giant Wild Goose Pagoda three times in one day” and “Visiting museums in Changsha has already reached the Next Level” have attracted domestic and international attention. The Deji Art Museum in Nanjing created the “Digital Art Exhibition of the Jinling Scroll,” which, through a first-person perspective, showcased daily life scenes of Song Dynasty commoners—such as winnowing grain, fishing, herding cattle and sheep, and drawing water for irrigation—effectively reducing cultural barriers and allowing more foreign visitors to experience the charm of Chinese culture. Second, highlight exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations. The success of the Shanghai Museum’s Ancient Egyptian Civilization Exhibition was rooted in the exchanges and mutual learning between two world-class civilizations: Chinese civilization and ancient Egyptian civilization. The exhibition adhered to the curatorial concept of equal dialogue. Through comparative analysis of historical artifacts and traditional cultures of China and Egypt, it explored similarities and differences in cosmology, perceptions of power, and ways of life, fully respecting the cultural orientations of each nation and making it easier to gain international recognition. Third, emphasize emotional guidance and support. Endowing “cold” artifacts with the “warmth” of emotions is an effective measure to promote their cross-cultural communication. For example, Pizza Hut collaborated with the Hermitage Museum to produce parody videos featuring characters from world-famous paintings. By attracting audience attention through humor and surprise, and then naturally introducing artifact knowledge, this emotional resonance strategy aligned with the communication logic of social media and effectively facilitated the transmission of cultural information.

3.3 Strengthening Technology Applications to Create Immersive Experiences

Digital technology is a key force driving the transformation of cross-cultural communication in museums. Technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) revive history and artifacts in virtual spaces, creating more intuitive and attractive vehicles for cross-cultural dialogue. First, gamified experiences. Games are among the most effective ways to enhance the appeal of cultural products and increase interactive participation, thereby improving communication outcomes. The China Grand Canal Museum launched the country’s first gamified VR large-space project, Miracle of the Canal, where visitors can instantly become emperors and, accompanied by the little river spirit “Anlan,” travel through different historical periods to immerse themselves in the Grand Canal’s long history. This attracted numerous domestic and international visitors. Second, immersive substitution experiences. The Deji Art Museum in Nanjing created the Digital Art Exhibition of the Jinling Scroll, using an interactive viewing mode of “characters entering the painting and following in real time.” Visitors could wander through a 110-meter-long scroll of Song Dynasty Nanjing city life, interact with 533 painted figures, and experience scenes of ancient urban life. The exhibition attracted spontaneous promotion from foreign bloggers from Syria, the UK, and elsewhere, and was later showcased in the United States and France, successfully achieving cultural dissemination abroad. Third, immersive digital exhibitions. The Hunan Museum, in collaboration with Harvard University, developed The Art of Life: Immersive Digital Exhibition of Han Dynasty Culture from Mawangdui. Using digital technology, the exhibition precisely recreated the structure of the Mawangdui Han tomb chamber and its rich unearthed artifacts, while integrating the concept of “yin-yang dispersal and convergence” to reveal the life philosophy underlying Han tomb design. The on-site setting was grand and deeply immersive, making it a striking name card for the international communication of China’s cultural heritage.[4]

3.4 Strengthening Resource Integration and Promoting Cross-Border Collaboration

In the era of social media, cross-cultural communication cannot rely on museums alone. It requires integrating diverse resources, fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration, and advancing cross-border partnerships to continuously expand communication penetration and influence. First, joint exhibitions between China and other countries. More than 40 museums and over 200 universities from 18 countries jointly built the Silk Road Digital Museum over two years. Integrating digital collections and exhibitions, it conveyed historical artifacts, traditional culture, and the concept of multicultural integration from countries along the Belt and Road to global audiences, and was successfully selected as a representative case of cultural heritage digitization at the 2025 World Internet Conference. Meanwhile, the collaboration between the Hunan Museum and Harvard University combined Chinese

and foreign academic strengths, enhancing the scholarly depth and international acceptance of the exhibition. Second, brand cross-border collaboration. The partnership between the Hermitage Museum in Russia and Pizza Hut opened up a new path for brand cooperation and cross-industry integration. Leveraging Pizza Hut's appeal and influence among young people, the museum expanded the impact of its artifacts through brand marketing channels, achieving mutual benefit and win-win outcomes. The Hermitage's model provided new ideas for the cross-cultural promotion of museum artifacts, sustainable development, and the exploration of market-oriented channels. Third, multi-party resource integration. TikTok collaborated with the National Museum of China, the Hunan Museum, and other domestic and international museums to create the themed IP Curiosity Museum Season. Through challenges, nationwide tasks, and influencer visits, the campaign attracted user participation and presented the cultural connotations behind artifacts in diverse forms. By leveraging TikTok's massive traffic platform, the cross-border communication of museum artifacts was significantly enhanced.

4. Research on the Evaluation Index System Framework for Cross-Cultural Communication of Museum Artifacts in the Era of Social Media

This paper attempts to construct an evaluation index system framework for the cross-cultural communication of museum artifacts from three dimensions: cognitive effect, emotional effect, and behavioral effect. This framework takes into account both the short-term influence and long-term impact of communication, and has strong feasibility and operability.[5]

4.1 Cognitive Effect Index Framework

Cognitive effect indicators mainly evaluate the effectiveness of museum artifact content in terms of coverage, information comprehension, and knowledge transmission, serving as the basic level of communication effect assessment. The indicators mainly include data such as views, impressions, reach, follower growth, likes, comments, shares, and reposts. Through statistical analysis of relevant data, a preliminary overall evaluation of communication effectiveness can be made. Cross-cultural communication should focus on indicators such as the proportion of foreign audiences and the characteristics of core audiences to improve evaluation accuracy. Analyzing indicators such as video viewing duration, completion rate, audience comments, and recognition rates of key cultural symbols can effectively measure the audience's awareness and understanding of artifact connotations. For example, interactive data from the Hunan Museum's Mawangdui Digital Exhibition collected on domestic and international platforms, combined with sentiment analysis of comments, can preliminarily reflect the degree of audience acceptance of the content.

4.2 Emotional Effect Index Framework

Emotional effect indicators mainly evaluate the influence of communication content on audience attitudes and emotions, aiming to measure the deeper impact of cross-cultural communication. By using natural language processing technologies to analyze foreign users' comments and discussion interactions, the effectiveness of communication can be assessed. For example, after visiting the Digital Art Exhibition of the Jinling Scroll at the Deji Art Museum in Luoyang, comments such as "amazing" and "incredible" reflected the high level of emotional acceptance among international audiences. For cross-cultural communication, sentiment analysis must also consider cultural differences in expression to avoid misinterpretation. Another dimension is measuring the degree of recognition of Chinese culture. For instance, after the Grand Canal VR project was showcased overseas, online surveys were conducted among foreign users to collect their interest in the Grand Canal and their views on traditional Chinese culture. Based on the results, improvements were made to the Grand Canal's promotional video for international audiences.

4.3 Behavioral Effect Index Framework

Behavioral effect indicators represent a higher-level dimension of communication assessment, focusing on the actual actions taken by audiences under the influence of cognition and emotion. They provide a direct reflection of conversion outcomes. Horizontal behavioral indicators include direct participation, derivative behaviors, and international evaluation. Direct participation is shown by the audience's direct responses to museum artifacts through external promotion. For example, foreign users visiting China after watching artifact promotional videos, producing and reposting videos, or creating

vlogs. Subsequent behavior assessment focuses on the audience's further actions after engaging with artifact content, such as searching for related cultural information, purchasing cultural and creative products, or participating in museum activities, reflecting the long-tail effect of communication. International evaluation refers to the cross-border influence of communication itself, including international awards received, international media coverage, foreign reposting and sharing, citations by overseas academic institutions, and invitations to international exhibitions. For example, the Hunan Museum's Mawangdui Digital Exhibition won the German iF Design Award, and the Silk Road Digital Museum was selected as a representative case of cultural heritage digitization at the 2025 World Internet Conference. These are important manifestations of the effectiveness of cross-border communication.

5. Conclusion

Social media has created unprecedented opportunities for the cross-cultural communication of museum artifacts, while also bringing new challenges. Through a comprehensive analysis of strategies and an evaluation framework for cross-cultural communication of museum artifacts, this paper reveals the pathways and methods for museums to achieve effective communication in the global digital era. In the future, as the epitome of Chinese civilization and culture, museums must actively adapt to the new normal of the social media era. With artifacts as carriers, they should continuously innovate communication forms, enrich communication content, expand communication channels, promote resource integration, and foster cross-sector cooperation. By doing so, museums can continuously enhance the cross-cultural communication capacity of artifacts, support more outstanding Chinese culture in going global, accelerate the construction of China's discourse and narrative system, and enhance the nation's cultural soft power.

References

- [1] Li Chunlin. *Exploration of Cross-Cultural Communication Strategies of Micro-Short Dramas from the Perspective of Media Convergence — A Case Study of Escape from the British Museum* [J]. *Comedy World (Second Half Month)*, 2025, (08): 85-87.
- [2] Yi Yongcheng. *Practice and Exploration of Museum Cultural Communication in the New Media Era* [J]. *Guilin Museum Anthology*, 2025, (01): 263-270.
- [3] Liu Jingjiao. *Research on Strategies for English Interpretation Work in Museums from the Perspective of Cross-Cultural Communication — A Case Study of the Dalian Martial Arts Culture Museum* [J]. *Cultural Relics Authentication and Appreciation*, 2024, (15): 57-61.
- [4] Meng Guibin. *Cultural Communication Strategies of Wuzhou Museum from the Perspective of Culture-Tourism Integration* [J]. *Jiaying Literature*, 2024, (06): 116-118.
- [5] Qin Lihui. *Exploration of Cultural Communication and Educational Strategies of Cultural Relics Museums* [J]. *Art Museum*, 2023, 4(05): 1-3.