

A Study on the Current Situation of the Brand Marketing of the Nixing Pottery

Jiaqian Leng^{1,2}, Pastrapom Thipayasothorn^{1,2}, Jinye Wei*,^{1,2}

¹Architectural Education and Design, Industrial Education and Technology, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Bangkok, 10520, Thailand

²College of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Nanning University, Nanning, 530299, China

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Abstract: As one of the "four famous brands of potteries " of China, the Nixing Pottery is an intangible cultural heritage of China, a national product of geographical indication, and the "city card" of Qinzhou City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Actively spreading the brand of the Nixing Pottery and expanding its market is an important prerequisite for the sustainable development of the Nixing Pottery. This paper examines the current state of brand marketing of the Nixing pottery in China and identifies the current problems facing the brand marketing of the Nixing pottery. The research was conducted through extensive reading of the materials, brand marketing, and policy or documents concerning the Nixing Pottery. The first objective of this paper is to investigate the history of the development of the Nixing Pottery together with the economic and cultural value of this brand. The second objective is to analyse *The Three-Year Plan for the Development of the Industry of Nixing Pottery in Qinzhou City (2018-2020)* to figure out the fact that in the process of the brand marketing of the Nixing Pottery, technology is given emphasis while design and creativity are downplayed; the artistic excellence is highlighted while the market of daily goods is neglected; the positioning is limited, accompanied by the neglect of the market of other industrial products of the Nixing Pottery.

1. Statement of the project

This paper examines the current situation of the brand marketing of the Nixing Pottery in Qinzhou City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, China. Nixing Pottery which has a history of 1,300 years is one of the "four famous brands of potteries " of China, the intangible cultural heritage of China, a national geographical indication product, and the "city card" of Qinzhou City, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. By the end of 2021, according to the data of Qinzhou City Bureau of Industry and Information Technology, the annual output value of the Nixing Pottery is 1.56 billion RMB. The industry development report of the purple clay pottery of Yixing shows that the annual output value of purple clay pottery has reached 15 billion RMB in 2016. The annual output value of Rongchang pottery of Chongqing reached RMB 3.5 billion in 2016. The data from the Yunnan Provincial People's Government website demonstrates that Jianshui pottery achieved an output value of 1.347 billion RMB in the first half of 2018, and the annual output value is expected to exceed 2 billion RMB.

According to the data mentioned above, the market competitiveness of Nixing Pottery products is insufficient, which reflects that the brand marketing of Nixing Pottery is problematic. This study is the result of the extensive literature reading which includes the historical literature on Nixing Pottery, brand marketing and relevant reports on the work of the government. The content of this paper includes the cultural value, economic value, and relevant marketing policies of the brand of the Nixing Pottery. Based on the contents, critical information is extracted to analyze the key issues of the brand of the Nixing Pottery with a marketing mindset in order to provide a good basis for the development of cultural marketing policies for the brand of the Nixing Pottery.

2. Objective

The first objective of the paper is to investigate the history of the development of the Nixing

Pottery and relevant policies or documents in order to explore the history of the development of the Nixing Pottery together with the economic and cultural values of the brand. The second objective is to explore the marketing of the brand of the Nixing Pottery with the product as the core and public relations as the basis from the perspective of economic value. It also delves into the shortcomings of the brand marketing policies of the Nixing Pottery to make a guide for the development of the brand culture of the Nixing Pottery based on the "A theory" and "B theory" proposed by Al.Lies (Ries,A.,&Ries,L.2013) .

3. Conceptual Framework and hypothesis

Intangible cultural heritage has both cultural and economic values. The focus of this paper is, firstly, to sort out the cultural value, economic value and brand marketing policies of the Nixing Pottery by looking through policy documents and literature about intangible culture. The second is to analyze the problems of the government in the marketing strategies of the brand of the Nixing Pottery.



Figure 1. Research scope and research diagram (Source: drawn by the author)

After the investigation of the literature, the author maps the research scope of this paper and the research diagram (Figure 1). The author analyzes the current situation from two dimensions involving cultural value and economic value considering the Nixing Pottery is an intangible cultural heritage, aiming to explore the problems in brand marketing of the Nixing Pottery.

4. Research methodology

This study adopts literature research as the main method. The data are obtained through investigating, collecting and summarizing the research results of previous scholars, relevant historical documents and government reports and other materials. Qualitative research is adopted in the process of data analysis to summarize and analyze the data. Through decomposing the data from existing sources and filtering the important factors that are meaningful, interrelated, and relevant to the research questions under the constraints of some conditions, a more specific and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation will be obtained, and finally the main problems in the marketing of the brand of the Nixing Pottery will be summarized.

Research procedures of the history of the development of the Nixing Pottery

The author collects historical information and policy documents on the Nixing Pottery, summarizes and analyzes data using the qualitative method in order to explore the current cultural

value of the Nixing Pottery. The focus of the research is on the relevant honors and economic effectiveness of the Nixing Pottery, which is conducted to summarize the cultural value, economic value and the necessity of brand marketing of the Nixing Pottery.

Research procedures of the marketing of the brand culture of the Nixing Pottery

Based on the literature on brand marketing theory, the author, who focuses on the policies of brand marketing, employs the qualitative method to conclude and analyze the data in order to figure out the strategic problems in the brand marketing policy of the Nixing Pottery.

5. Result

The Nixing Pottery has rich cultural value and is a living fossil of national cultural history. According to the "*Records of Qin County*" (Chen&Zeng&Kong, 1946) published in the 35th year of the Republic of China, Qinzhou pottery was excavated from a tomb in the east of Qinzhou City in 1920, and a 133-cm-high Qinzhou pottery stele inscribed with the characters of the 20th year of the Tang Dynasty was found. In the Song Dynasty, the bricks used to build the city were 30 cm long, 18 cm wide, and 12 cm thick, thus it could be implied that Qinzhou pottery was invented before 618 AD, and that by 700 AD, the production techniques were already quite advanced. The Nixing Pottery of Qinzhou has a history of at least 1300 years.

According to the website of the Department of Commerce of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, in 1953, the Nixing Pottery, together with the Yixing Pottery, the Rongchang Pottery and the Jianshui Pottery, was named as the "four famous brands of potteries" in China; in 1997, it was listed as a key protected craft variety by the State Council; in 2006, the Nixing Pottery of Qinzhou "High Drum Flower Bottle" was awarded the "World's Outstanding Handicraft Badge Certification" by UNESCO; in June 2008, the firing technique of the Nixing Pottery was listed as the second batch of national intangible cultural heritage by the State Council, and in December, it was approved as a "National Protected Product of Geographical Indication" by the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine.

The economic value of the Nixing Pottery can be a productive industry that provides employment opportunities and generates economic benefits. The Nixing Pottery industry is an important part of industry and tourism in Qinzhou City and directly generates economic benefits as a cultural industry. The government has established systems, carried out policies and allocated funds to build factories to actively support the production of the Nixing Pottery. By the end of November 2021, data from an article in Qinzhou Daily named "*The Red Party Banner and the Prosperous Industry-the Documentary on How the Party Construction in Qinzhou Directs the Advancement of the Industry of the Nixing Pottery*" shows that the number of registered companies producing the Nixing Pottery is about 700, employing about 12,000 people, creating nearly 15,000 jobs in the surrounding area. The brand influence has gradually expanded, which gives birth to an industrial chain with an annual output value of nearly 1.56 billion RMB.

Intangible cultural heritage contains rich cultural resources. The Nixing Pottery is a great cultural asset with its long history, ancient craftsmanship, high artistry, and practicality which renders the firing skills of the Nixing Pottery passed down to the present. Only when conditional cultural resources in intangible cultural heritage are transformed into real economic development, cultural productivity, and bringing economic benefits, could a lasting and deep-based heritage to intangible cultural heritage emerge (Wang, 2020).

The "big steward" of intangible cultural heritage protection--the government department, is the main body to enact the government-led protective actions for intangible cultural heritage. It refers to those forces outside the inheritance circles which play an important role in promoting the transmission of intangible cultural heritage, despite the irrelevance to inheritance (Yuan, 2018).

In 2018, the People's Government of Qinzhou City issued the Three-Year Action Plan (2018-2020) for the Development of the Industry of the Nixing Pottery in Qinzhou City in accordance with the spirit of the Minutes of the Municipal Committee on the Study of the Development of the Industry of the Nixing Pottery. The action plan's work requirements on enhancing the culture and quality of the Nixing Pottery mentioned the need to deeply excavate and organize the history and

culture of the Nixing Pottery, create and protect the brand, strengthen the protection of the clay resources together with their development, and consolidate the driving force of product innovation. The requirements for marketing and promotion of the Nixing Pottery involve building the brand of an international culture and art festival and exposition centered at the Nixing Pottery, constructing a city image of "the Capital of the Nixing Pottery in China", improving the promotion of the Nixing Pottery culture, building e-commerce sales network, physical sales network, setting up the Nixing Pottery boutiques in key cities, and holding the Nixing Pottery event weeks in first-tier cities.

On December 11, 2020, the website of Guangxi Department of Finance (<http://czt.gxzf.gov.cn/>) published "Qinzhou City Finance Bureau: Boosting the "second venture" of the Nixing Pottery industry to let the thousand-year pottery art reappear its glory" , displaying that from 2018 to 2020, within the three-year action plan years, the government provided funds to support the improvement of the level of the pottery production process and the product quality, and raised a total of 6.85 million yuan to support the construction of a public service platform to improve the research and design of the pottery culture and creative industry. The government guided and encouraged the pottery enterprises to innovate in design, craft improvement, shape improvement and new technology applications, and supported enterprises to attract more young consumers through e-commerce and other new ways to expand the pottery products. It supported the cultivation of professional talents in order to strengthen the supportive role of industrial development and provide 4.58 million RMB to build a talent pool. It assisted the promotion of the brand of the Nixing Pottery to expand its influence and provided 3.25 million RMB to organize a series of promotional activities. It also gave support to the construction of a platform in the park to improve the efficiency of resource integration; it favored the development of the Nixing Pottery industry association to improve the management level of the industry.

6. Conclusion and discussion

Problem 1: Highlighting technology yet downplaying design innovation

The three-year development plan of the Nixing Pottery industry gives great policy and financial support to the research and development of the Nixing Pottery products. It encourages innovation in design creativity, process enhancement, shape improvement, and new technology application. In the summary of the 2020 Municipal Finance Bureau, the Nixing Pottery products receive great attention to their technical research and development together with the relevant people's active participation in various arts and crafts competitions. However, the traditional vessel shape and traditional decoration are always continued in the product design, which leads to the shortage of modern industrial design concepts and aesthetics. AI Ries and Laura Ries believe that a PR which is capable to establish a brand is to find an exciting product to talk about. The product design innovation and functional breakthroughs are the key to establishing a brand that can occupy the consumer's mind and market share in the competition with the rest of the four famous potteries.

Problem 2: Emphasis on fine art yet ignoring the market of daily goods

AI Ries and Laura Ries proposed Theory A and Theory B. Theory A (standing for "airplane") refers to an airplane-type launch. The brand glides slowly for 2,500 meters on the runway and then flies off the runway with a huge thrust. Theory B (standing for "big bang"), refers to an explosion that draws people's attention to the brand. It usually becomes a passing fad, but soon fades away. In the three-year plan, the government plans to set up a hundred boutiques of the Nixing Pottery in key cities such as Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Xiamen to occupy the vantage point of market sales; the government also plans to hold event weeks concerning Nixing Pottery in first-tier cities; it also plans to participate in national arts and crafts competitions, with fine art pottery and fine tea sets as the main promotional products. Marketing the brand culture of Nixing Pottery in B-theory mode requires a lot of long-term publicity to maintain influence. As a matter of fact, the plan of setting up 100 boutiques of Nixing Pottery was not completed as scheduled due to various factors such as the COVID 19, and the expected annual output value of 3 billion was not reached. The most effective brand marketing that can stand the test of market and time is based on the A-theory, which starts from the low-end market to establish a common consumer base, and

begins with common daily-use products and goes out from low end to high end in order to gain a stable and sustainable influence and occupy consumers' minds.

Problem 3: Positioning limitations, ignoring other ceramic industrial product markets.

It is recorded in the "Records of Qin County " that the ancient Nixing Pottery is famous for making monuments and bricks, and the walls built with the Nixing Pottery bricks can be preserved for 900 years without destruction, which proves the superior performance of Nixing pottery as a building material. At present, the main products of the Nixing pottery are tea sets and art pottery, and the products are designed with similarity to the rest of the four famous pottery products and especially imitating the Yixing Pottery tea sets for a long time, which hinders the enhancement the Nixing Pottery's competitiveness. Developing the market of construction materials of the Nixing Pottery is one of the important ways to establish new categories and create new culture and market for the Nixing Pottery brand.

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