

# A Preliminary Study on the Promotion Way of Sports Intangible Cultural Heritage in China in the Era of Social Media

—Take the Chinese dragon boat competition as an example

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**Abstract:** With the development of the times, the competition for soft power has gradually become the major trend of competition among nations. The development and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage are an important part of soft power. Sports Intangible Cultural Heritage is an important part of the intangible cultural heritage. At the same time, social networks have developed rapidly and replaced traditional media as the most frequently encountered form of media in modern life. Therefore, the integration of the two is the trend of the times. Taking Dragon Boat Race in China as an example, this study investigates and analyzes the current integration of sports intangible cultural heritage and social media in our country, finds out the existing problems and countermeasures, and provides reference for the future cooperation between the two.

## 1. The Current Situation of Social Media Development in China

The term social media stems from English translation social media. The following definitions are given in Wikipedia: "The virtual community and web platform that people use to create, share, exchange ideas, opinions, and experiences." Social media research began in the late 1980s in the international world. With the rise of social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, the research continues to deepen. At present, the main forms of social media in China are Weibo, WeChat, Forums and so on. According to The Analysis for China's Social Media Industry Market Status and Development Prospects in 2016, China's digital media users surpassed television media users for the first time in 2014 and became the largest crowd of all media users and continued to widen the gap in 2015. The penetration rate of internet in our country was 30% in 2010 and this number increased by 47% in 2014. Weibo's Q4 2015 and FY2015 financial reports show that by the end of the fourth quarter, microblogging monthly active users reached 236 million, an increase of 34% and daily active users reached 106 million, an increase of 32%.

Due to the large amount of users, social networks have become an important marketing platform. According to eMarketer data, advertising revenue worldwide on social networks will reach to \$36 billion in 2017, accounting for 16% of the total digital advertising share. Advertising is the "highlight" of the revenue of major social platforms. In 2015, Weibo's advertising revenue accounted for 84.2% of the total revenue.

It is not hard to see from the above that the effective use of social media for the sports intangible cultural heritage promotion is an essential part of contemporary succession work.

## 2. Chinese Dragon Boat Race Development Status

Dragon boat is an important part of China's sports intangible cultural heritage. The form of competition is a group boating competition. Due to race boats were decorated with dragon-shaped so icalled it "dragon boat". Chinese dragon boat race is co-held by the Social Sports Center of State Sports General Administration, China Dragon Boat Association and CCTV Sports Channel. Chinese

Dragon Boat Race is currently the China's highest level, the highest total prize and the most influential dragon boat race.

Chinese Dragon Boat Contest was founded in 2011.

### **3. The Status of Social Media Promotion of Chinese Dragon Boat Race**

Information will be collected on the promotion of the official Weibo, WeChat public number, and Baidu Post Bar of the Chinese Dragon Boat Race, so as to understand the promotion of the Chinese Dragon Boat Race on the social media platform.

#### **3.1 Official Weibo**

Weibo, short for MicroBlog, this new form of media pioneered by Twitter in the United States. China's first website was created in May 2007, and it ceased operations in July 2009. In August 2009, Sina Weibo became the first Weibo product under the portal website. Subsequently, the other three major portal websites (Tencent, Netease, Sohu) also launched their Weibo products. In June 2017, Sina Weibo's monthly active users (MAUs) was 361 million, an increase of 28% over the same period of last year, 92% of which were mobile users; daily average active users (DAUs) was 159 million, compared with the previous year. The growth rate was 26% over the same period. The term "weibo" in this study specifically refers to "Sina Weibo".

The official Weibo of the Chinese Dragon Boat Race was opened in April 2011, and the first Weibo was released on the 25th of the month. As of May 30, 2017, a total of 1258 microblogs were published, with 84,420 fans.

From January 1st, 2017 to May 30th, 2017, the official Weibo of Chinese Dragon Boat Contest released 50 microblogs, including 14 unmanned interactive microblogs, and 4 microblogs was commented over 10 people, among which the highest comments one got 49 comments.

In terms of contents, it is mainly related to the events, such as schedule, representative team introduction, urban scenery promotion, and a small number of Weibo will explain the history of the dragon boat project.

#### **3.2 WeChat**

"WeChat" was launched by Tencent on January 21, 2011. The main service content is instant messaging. According to the financial report of second quarter in 2017 released by Tencent, by the end of June 2017, the number of monthly active accounts of Weixin and WeChat reached 963 million, an increase of 19.5% over the same period last year. WeChat has surpassed Weibo and become the most important social media platform in China.

By August 2017, the "Chinese Dragon Boat Race" official WeChat platform has more than 20,000 users. In addition to the basic functions of push notification, it also has seven sub-partitions activities: event news, live video, historical news, real-time information, dragon boat campus, dragon boat impression, prized event. Among them, "Event News" can browse the news of the events over many years, and divide the block for news according to the year; "Video Record" lists the video clips of all the races; "Dragon Boat Impression" section introduces the landscape and humanities of all the venues where the event takes place.

Through the "previous news", it can be seen that during the season, the public platform push frequency exceeds 1 per day, and in the offseason it stops updating. In the discussion area, the operators basically do not interact with the discussants.

#### **3.3 Baidu Post Bar**

Baidu Post Bar is an independent brand owned by Baidu (baidu). It was officially launched on December 3, 2003, is a keyword-based theme exchange community that covers social, regional, life, education, entertainment stars, games, Sports, business.

The "Chinese Dragon Boat Race" post bar was established in April 2013. By the end of August 2017, it has 1,804 users and 4002 posts. The main discussion contents are the contest schedule and the

sharing of the broadcast situation, the knowledge of the professional dragon boat and the introduction of the landscape and humanities. In terms of the frequency of interaction, the number of responses to the relevant introduction posts of the professional dragon boat team is significantly higher than other content.

#### **4. Current Problems and Related Countermeasures**

##### **4.1 Insufficient social function**

The interaction between netizens and event organizers is the main role of social media. However, through the investigation of the interaction between the official Weibo, WeChat public platform and Baidu Post Bar of the Chinese Dragon Boat Race, it was found that the social function was not fully reflected.

Among them, the main contents of the official Weibo and official WeChat platform are all the official news, while the participation of netizens and the communication between the operators and netizens are very scarce. Actually, the problem of insufficient social function does not only exist in the promotion process of the Chinese Dragon Boat Race.

China Professional Basketball League (CBA) is the top three local professional leagues with comprehensive influence. By August 2017, the number of official Weibo fans is 880,000, while the number of official Weibo fans of the US professional basketball league (NBA) in the same period is 33.44 million. The reason for this apparent gap is that in addition to its own influence difference, the organizer's operation form of the official Weibo also directly affects the social function. Although 20 clubs in the CBA League have their own official Weibo, only 8.5% of the interactive information is for the team. In fact, strengthening the interaction with each team's Weibo will not only increase the content of CBA's official Weibo, but also help to maximize its influence through the fan resources of each club's Weibo.

Similarly, all participating teams in the Chinese Dragon Boat Race have their own official Weibo. However, there is no interaction between Weibo, which has resulted in a waste of fan resources and content information.

In addition, neither the official Weibo nor the public Wechat ID, the operator has received any response to comments or questions from netizens. This has affected the enthusiasm of netizens to participate in interaction, and the social function of social media has been greatly weakened.

##### **4.2 Inefficient Information Update**

Either the official Weibo or the official WeChat public platform, the average frequency of news notification during the season is 1 per day. However, in the offseason, there is a three months information gap.

In fact, as the most mature professional sports and intangible cultural heritage projects in China at present, even in the offseason, the dragon boat teams still maintain training. Therefore, appropriate promotion of relevant content helps to maintain the familiarity of netizens with the Chinese Dragon Boat Race.

With the rapid development of mobile clients, the main carrier of social media has been transferred from computers to smartphones. The development of smartphones has made users more responsive to receiving information. Therefore, improving the information notification frequency of the official social media operation platform of the Chinese Dragon Boat Race will help users to better understand this sports intangible cultural heritage professional competition and make the function of social media more effective.

##### **4.3 Insufficient content innovation**

Through the content research on all three social media forms of the China Dragon Boat Race, we can find that the main content is limited to the results of the event report, the promotion of the venue, and the traceability of the dragon boat project. In this way, the audience's enthusiasm for the platform

will be greatly reduced, affecting the promotion efficiency.

Studies have shown that entertainment can effectively improve the interactive tendency of the audience, and the content published on the social media in the China Dragon Boat Competition is obviously different. As one of the most well-known sports intangible cultural heritage projects in China, Dragon Boat has a certain number of audiences in the world. Therefore, it has superior promotion conditions. Through the content research on the official microblog of the National Professional Basketball League (NBA), it can be found that in addition to the information related to the event, reprinting the player's (team) Weibo and posting relevant comments, players' daily life reports, high-quality game picture sharing, etc. will get a high amount of interaction. And these contents are lacking in the official social media platform of the China Dragon Boat Race.

In addition, the "Dragon Boat Campus" section can be seen from the WeChat public platform of the China Dragon Boat Race. Promoting the exchange between sports intangible cultural heritage projects and students is an important way to promote and develop sports intangible cultural heritage in the current era. However, this part of the content has not been displayed in Weibo and Baidu Post Bar, resulting in wasting of resources.

## 5. Conclusion

In the context of the booming social media, the intangible cultural heritage of sports should not and cannot ignore the great influence of social media. The Chinese Dragon Boat Race is the traditional sports professional with the highest level, the highest total prize amount and the greatest influence in China and has a unique advantage to become the leader among them. However, due to starting late and lack of entertainment, the promotion efficiency of the China Dragon Boat Race on social media platforms is not satisfactory. Therefore, it is very meaningful to investigate the existing operations and analyze the characteristics of social media and sports intangible cultural heritage, and propose solutions to the current problems.

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