

Research of Development Path from Chinese Traditional Handicraft Industry to Cultural Creative Industry

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Abstract

As industry-led economic growth mode has gradually transferred into economic growth mode led by cultural creative industry of higher creativity and vitality, Chinese traditional handicrafts, as an important content of cultural industry, is encountered with huge development space and opportunity. However, due to the shortage in aspects of talents, management, innovation, and brand building, it is difficult to enter into growth mode of cultural creative industry and achieve a broader development. In this paper, we tried to explore path and method for traditional handicraft industry developing into cultural creative industry according to existing problems of handicraft industry.

Keywords

Traditional Handicraft; Cultural Creative Industrial Path

1. Introduction

Chinese traditional handicraft is the crystallization of arts and wisdom for Chinese 5000-year history, which does not only reflect our long history, but also represent national features and cultural images of China. As entering into 21st century, traditional industries, which used to lead world economy, are undergoing a huge unprecedented industrial structural reform—some outdated productivities have been replaced by intelligent, green and environmental cultural industries. In this new industrial environment, "culture" and "creativity" has entered into people's vision as abstract and intangible assets and become a key section of industrial chain. It changes conventional concept that only entity industries can produce and manufacture. Such change directly shows huge enrichment of social material civilization, and thus enhances the need and consumption for cultural products. According to data statistics, China's cultural industry will gain a rapid growth by at least 20% annual increasing rate from 2004-2020. [1] In this process, as a key component of cultural industry, traditional handicrafts which incorporate national culture will be further industrialized, commercialized and globalized.

2. Research of current status of domestic and foreign cultural industries

To overcome long-term economic downturn, British government started cultural creative industry trend in 1997, and Cool Britannia has become a brand new national image and driving force for economic development. In 2000, creative industry became the second largest industry after financial industry, and then became top industry in 2003. In the sphere of Asia, South Korea is the one which has genuinely achieved great results. In 2001, South Korea's ministry of culture and tourism released cultural and creative industrial program to develop "South Korea trend". By officially naming it as "south Korea trend", this country has paid whole national effort to promote the developments in aspect of cultural and creative industry such as movies, TV show, cartoon, internet products, and mobile phone products, launched a "South Korea wave" sweeping the world, and then increased the output of other related industries such as tourism, agriculture, South Korean cuisine, and cosmetic industry. [2] As a small country lacking of natural resources, South Korea revived national self-confidence and improved national soft competence under policy motivation of cultural and creative industry. In short few years, it has influenced the whole world as a major exporter of culture. In the level of theoretical analysis, foreign researches on cultural and creative industry are relatively mature, wherein the most representative one is the 3Ts creative index released by Professor Richard Florida from America. 3Ts means talent, technology and tolerance. Chris Smith, secretary of UK's

ministry of culture, proposed his idea in Creative UK that creativity can be fostered and developed via education system. These research demonstrations have become the secret for extraordinary creativities bred in actual cultural industrial practice of various countries.

Through deliberation of executive meeting of the State Council in 2009, China's first Cultural Industry Promotion Plan was released. Being different from UK's creativity and US's copyright, China will base culture especially traditional national culture as the development direction and source of China creative industry. Each province and city also accelerate the development course of cultural creative industry based its own cultural resource. In Nanyang of Henan province, excellent designing talents are gathered to form "master group" phenomenon, making Nanyang becoming China's jade carving town with worldwide reputation. Jingdezhen of Jiangxi province explores its domestic and foreign markets in a comprehensive and diversified way using cultural and technological creative means. Regarding Qingyang tongue in Jiangxi province, effort was paid to explore a new development approach of this traditional drama in this modern society by combining with other types of culture. Fujian province regards its tea industry as the pillar industry. Based on government as leading role, tea industry of Fujian province is greatly promoted, making this local culture set down root and develop in an inside-out way, so as to increase cultural awareness of Fujian tea industry and its economic value added. With the innovation of interpreting Chinese traditional poetry or calligraphy by western modern dance, Taiwan dance group "Cloud Gate" is crowned as a world class modern dance group.

Although facing such close opportunity, Chinese traditional handcraft industry is still subjected to many problems. The first problem most traditional handcrafts lack of industrialization production and planning, some, which although have been remained in cultural industry level, have not been transferred into cultural creative industry level of higher vitality and creativity. Most researches on traditional handcraft cultural and creative industry are merely remained in theoretical level basically without systematical practice. The second problem is that as current major production forms of traditional handcrafts are familial inheritance or small private workshop-style factory, which are inferior for small scale and weak competence, and thus leading to low technological content, low efficiency, varying product quality; Due to the lack of top-level designs and creative talents, lower awareness of interdisciplinary collaboration, few creative products, disconnection between subjects and forms of products and contemporary aesthetic styles and social life, low sensitivity to market operation and customer needs, China's traditional handcraft industry suffers unreasonable industry structure, low overall grade, severe product homogeneity. Taking jade carving as example, Liaoning hsiuyen jade is crowned as one of four China famous jades for its long cultural history and world top resource reserve. However, currently most processing and designing personnel are local residents, who have low cultural and artistic level and weak designing ability. Products with outdated designing subjects account for 90% of total market. As lack of period feel of advancing with current society and the spirit of mixing with other classes of arts, mid-low hsiuyen jade products, which have been produced in large quantity for long and known as cheap and lousy products, can be seen everywhere in domestic market. The third problem is weak or no brand consciousness. Beijing Yansha porcelain gallery collects top brands from all over the world such as Doulton, WEDGWOOD, and Bernardaud. However, in millennium porcelain capital Jingdezhen, there is not a single world famous Chinese brand. The fourth problem: single product category and lack of innovative thoughts. Traditional handcrafts, especially Jade products are produced at the expense of resource consumption. Weak consciousness of interdisciplinary and multi-industry cooperation is negative to marginal product development and sound sustainable development of this industry.

3. Development path of China traditional handcrafts to cultural creative industry

Accelerating development of cultural creative industry of high added value, low energy cost, and low pollution has become a major goal for China's governments at all levels to develop local economy. China traditional handcrafts, known for long cultural history and wide geographical distribution, are

characteristic cultural resources incorporated with intensive knowledge, broad creative space, and flexible interdisciplinary collaboration. With unique cultural attributes and creative conditions, China traditional handcrafts are suitable to be developed into cultural creative industry. Transformation into cultural creative industry can overcome and improve defects or shortage in traditional handcraft industry, enhance inheritance and development of traditional culture, promote integration of local superior resources, drive manufacturing enterprises, research institutes, and decision making departments conduct collaboration to adjust overall industrial running system and design creative products. By enlarging talents cultivation and accumulation scale, increasing regional economic and cultural level, local resources can be finally converted into economic strength.

The first tip for industrial transformation: cultural creative industry must be creativity-oriented, just as its name implies. Based on creativity as the role of engine, creative resources chain of handcrafts is extended. Although China traditional handcrafts have been subjected to extrication of times and enjoys a integration of exquisite workmanship, aestheticism, and practical function, their subjects and contents have still been archaistic or ancient styled as of now without innovations and changes. Through updating subjects and expressing forms of China handcrafts, it can make people's focus out of rare and precious materials (such as gem and jade handcrafts). Enriching the styles of products, incorporating contemporary esthetic culture and giving each handcraft distinguished feature is a good strategy to grasp market opportunities and make good sales. In addition to base on creativity as core, we should stress interdisciplinary across- industry collaboration and develop products categories. In contemporary production, category development is no-doubt a key measure to enhance product vitality. In the process of collaborating with other industries, it can further broaden horizon and draw on each other's strength, so as to develop some promising unknown product categories and marketing areas. Secondly, collaborating with other industries can enhance the creation of new ideas and thoughts, which are the inspirations for new creative products. In addition to incorporation of creativity and innovation, we should also focus on sustainable deepening of cultural content of traditional handcrafts, because all creativities and innovation in handcrafts are to realize higher cultural pursuit and imagination. Handcraft is not only merchandise but also a carrier of cultural art. Through combing handcraft with cultural elements, it can change the position of handcraft which has been long regarded as art merchandise, and increase its artistic level, and thus getting access into high-end market and recognized by scientific market. Therefore, we should base on creativity-oriented principle, combine economic and technological elements, motivate cooperation of related departments, complement each other's advantages and make joint innovation, so as to realize transformation from traditional handcrafts into cultural creative industry.

The second tip for industrial transformation: Traditional handcrafts cannot be developed without the support of local colleges, manufacturing enterprises, and governmental sectors. We should try to incorporate advantageous resources and build symbiosis development platform with incorporation of research, culture, and education. In terms of cooperation with local colleges, we can hold design and creativity contest on local handcrafts, stimulating focuses and interests of students and teachers from local arts colleges on local traditional handcrafts and exploring excellent designing talents and creative solution. Also, we can collaborate with college characteristic specialty and manufacturing enterprises, making seamless connection of research, talent cultivation, products development, so as to realize advantageous resource integration. In addition, government should provide aids on market information, consultancy, product recommendation, marketing approach expansion, get involved into coalition of college and enterprise, and exert as guiding and managing role. On other hand, government should pay attention to cultural atmosphere construction of the whole society, forming breeding ground for talents accumulation, increase of common people's cultural qualities, and cultivation of explicit and tacit customer groups.

The third tip for industrial transformation: modern industry should be developed by fully using technologies and network information technology. Traditional handcraft industry cannot grow without development mode which is in consistent with characteristics of the times. We should focus technological upgrading and reform, improve product quality and quantity while reduce production

cost. For example, by incorporating 3D print and PRO/E techniques into designing and processing of handicrafts, it can improve production process, accelerate design flow, secure design quality, save resources, and realize interaction between designer and customer. Network information technology can also be used to construct information network system for product design and marketing, which guarantees a more convenient data collection and establishes obstacle-free communication among designer, seller, manager, and customer. Future marketing approach will more and more tend to be network platforms. By applying this network platform into business promotion, it can make traditional handicrafts gain more attentions and expand marketing approaches.

Traditional handicrafts are symbol and continuation of Chinese culture. Its prosperity and development are of positive effect to transmission and inheritance of cultures in different regions. As modern life leads to gradual loss of folk-custom, the development and prosperity of traditional handicrafts are greatly impacted, and some handicrafts are subjected to problem of no inheritor. China traditional handcraft industry is facing a new opportunity by relying on the rise of tourism and cultural industry. It is an effect approach for traditional handcraft industry to develop into cultural creative industry by concluding existing problems and finding out solutions.

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