

Research on Promotion Strategies and Brand Innovation of Diabolo Sports in the New Media Environment

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Abstract: Diabolo sport is one of the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage items in China, carrying profound cultural connotations and fitness values. However, in the context of the new media era, it faces challenges such as the aging of its inheritor group, fragmentation of communication content, unbalanced regional development, and a lack of brand construction. Based on the framework of "integration of multiple scenarios - new media empowerment - brand value co-creation," this study systematically analyzes the current promotion status and core problems of diabolo sport in the new media environment, proposes precise promotion strategies, and constructs a brand innovation plan. The study argues that building a data-driven collaborative development mechanism and integrating resources from multiple stakeholders can resolve the inheritance dilemma, achieve value enhancement, and provide a reference for the transformation of traditional sports.

Keywords: new media environment; diabolo sport; promotion strategies; brand innovation

1. Introduction

Diabolo sport is a traditional folk art with distinctive sports characteristics in China, integrating entertainment, fitness, and art into one, and it was included in the national intangible cultural heritage list in 2006. It has a large participation scale and a broad consumer group, with a wide mass foundation. Under the intangible cultural heritage protection policies, diabolo sport faces both opportunities and challenges.

With the rapid development of information technology, new media has become an important carrier for information dissemination, cultural exchange, and commercial promotion in contemporary society. The rise of new media formats such as short-video platforms, social media, and live-streaming e-commerce has profoundly changed the communication modes of traditional culture and the acceptance habits of audiences. In this context, how to leverage the power of new media to promote the inheritance and development of diabolo sport, and how to build a diabolo cultural brand with contemporary characteristics and market competitiveness, have become important issues that urgently need to be studied. At present, the dissemination of diabolo sport on new media platforms exhibits problems such as content homogenization, audience gap, and insufficient interaction, while brand construction is still at the primary stage of "having activities but no brand," which seriously restricts the sustainable development of diabolo sport.

This paper takes the framework of "integration of multiple scenarios - new media empowerment - brand value co-creation" as its basis, analyzes the current promotion status and existing problems, explores promotion strategies, constructs a brand innovation plan, and promotes the transformation and upgrading of diabolo sport.

2. Analysis of the Current Promotion Status of Diabolo Sport in the New Media Environment

2.1 The Pattern of New Media Communication Platforms for Diabolo Sport

Currently, the new media dissemination of diabolo sport is concentrated on short-video platforms, social media, and professional sports platforms. Among short-video platforms, Douyin and Kuaishou are the main arenas, featuring content such as skill demonstrations and instructional tutorials. In terms

of short-video content types, skill demonstration accounts for the highest proportion, reaching 45%, with its main characteristics being the display of exquisite skills and fancy moves, and its communication effects manifesting as high view counts and high like counts. Instructional tutorial accounts for 25%, with content focusing on basic introductions and advanced techniques, and its communication effects are medium view counts and relatively high collection counts. Competition and performance accounts for 20%, mainly covering event recordings and team performances, which can gain relatively high attention. Fun challenge accounts for 10%, characterized by creative playstyles and challenge activities, and is particularly popular among younger audiences.

In terms of social media, various platforms assume the function of disseminating diabolo sport. WeChat Official Accounts publish news, cultural knowledge, and event notifications, serving community communication; Weibo mainly focuses on topic discussions and hotspot dissemination; Xiaohongshu emphasizes the lifestyle attributes of diabolo sport, attracting urban white-collar workers; professional sports platforms set up special columns to provide teaching and event information, but their influence is limited.

2.2 Audience Characteristics of Diabolo Sport Dissemination via New Media

Through audience analysis, the audience groups of diabolo sport exhibit distinct structural characteristics. The age group above 45 accounts for the highest proportion, reaching 55%, mainly consisting of retired individuals with ample leisure time, and their primary concerns are fitness, health preservation, and cultural inheritance. The age group between 25 and 45 accounts for 25%, mostly office workers with limited time, who mainly focus on fitness, leisure, and cultural experience. The age group between 18 and 25 accounts for 15%, primarily composed of school students who pursue novelty and are interested in visual performance and social attributes. The age group below 18 accounts for 5%, belonging to the younger generation, who represent a potential future force and are concerned with fun learning and skill development.

In terms of geographical distribution, the audience of diabolo sport is mainly concentrated in North China, East China, and Southwest China, while the development in Northwest China, Northeast China, and other regions lags behind, with small scale and limited influence, which is related to historical inheritance, economic development, and cultural policies.

2.3 Evaluation of the Communication Effects of Diabolo Sport via New Media

The communication effects exhibit the characteristics of "high exposure and low conversion rate." Although high-quality videos achieve high view counts and like counts, demonstrating strong communication potential, the conversion rate from attention to actual participation remains low, failing to effectively increase the number of actual participants. In terms of content quality, there is a problem of homogenization, with instructional content lacking systematic and professional guidance and insufficient interactivity. In terms of brand construction, there is a lack of unified image and strategy, resulting in a failure to form synergistic efforts, and both brand awareness and reputation still need to be improved.

3. Dilemmas and Problems Facing the Promotion of Diabolo Sport

3.1 Aging of the Inheritor Group and Talent Gap

The primary dilemma facing diabolo sport is the aging of its inheritor group; the main participants and inheritors are concentrated among middle-aged and elderly groups, with low participation from the younger generation, and the development of a succession talent pipeline lags behind. Elderly inheritors lack experience and energy in new media communication and other aspects, while young people's insufficient enthusiasm is related to their indifference toward traditional cultural cognition and the image of diabolo sport itself. The development of diabolo sport faces many problems:

First, a talent gap exists. A questionnaire survey shows that among college students participating in diabolo sport, only a small proportion are motivated by an interest in the culture of diabolo; many students only have a superficial understanding of it and consider it lacking in fashion appeal, thus showing low enthusiasm for participation. In terms of inheritance, the traditional master-apprentice model in individual inheritance faces challenges, as young people are unwilling to seek apprenticeship; school teaching remains at the level of basic skills, lacking in-depth exploration and systematic

cultivation; and online teaching cannot replace face-to-face instruction, leading to a vicious cycle in talent cultivation.

3.2 Fragmentation of Communication Content and Lack of Systematicity

Under the new media environment, the communication content of diabolo sport is fragmented, its cultural connotations are diluted, and its technical system is split apart, making it difficult for audiences to form a holistic understanding. In terms of the lack of systematicity, new media platforms lack a systematic and professional teaching content system, the quality of instructional videos is uneven, and content in theoretical research and other aspects is insufficient, which negatively affects communication effects and the exploration of cultural value.

3.3 Unbalanced Regional Development and Dispersed Resources

The development of diabolo sport is unbalanced across regions. Cities such as Xingtai, Shenyang, and Jinan each have different developmental limitations, while traditionally advantageous areas like Beijing and Tianjin have developed relatively well. Resources are dispersed among various stakeholders, lacking effective coordination and collaboration. Through research and analysis, the following findings are identified:

a. Schools: They currently serve as the main channel for curriculum-based teaching, but the main problem is the disconnection from extracurricular activities. The optimization directions include strengthening club development and school team cultivation.

b. Communities: They are the primary form of spontaneous activities, yet they lack professional guidance. The optimization directions include promoting the construction of activity sites and improving the training system.

c. Associations: As coordinating organizations, they face the problem of limited resource integration capabilities. The optimization directions include promoting cross-regional collaboration and resource sharing.

d. Enterprises: Their participation is relatively low, and market-oriented operation is insufficient. The optimization directions include exploring business models and carrying out brand cooperation.

3.4 Lagging Brand Construction and Insufficient Value Transformation

Diabolo sport suffers from the situation of "having activities but no brand," as the activities lack a unified brand image and sustained operational strategies, and new media communication lacks a consistent brand positioning and strategy, resulting in a vague brand image. The brands of diabolo sport are scattered, making it difficult to establish a clear and profound brand recognition. Insufficient value transformation is a direct manifestation of the lagging brand construction. Although diabolo has cultural and fitness values, these have not been effectively converted into market value and social influence. In 2022, the market size of diabolo in China was approximately USD 300 million, accounting for 60% of the global share. However, the development of cultural and creative products lags behind, the integration of culture and tourism is not sufficiently advanced, and commercial operation capabilities are inadequate. Consequently, diabolo sport lacks self-sustaining financial capacity and relies on government support and social donations, which limits its sustainable development capability.

4. Promotion Strategies for Diabolo Sport in the New Media Environment

4.1 Building a Hierarchical and Categorized Precision Promotion System

Constructing a precision promotion system tailored to the characteristics and needs of different audience groups is key to enhancing effectiveness. For the youth group, a "gamified" promotion strategy is adopted, integrating diabolo sport with elements such as games, developing campus courses and activities, holding challenge competitions, and creating derivative content to cultivate interest. For the office worker group, a "fragmented" promotion strategy is adopted, developing short-duration and high-efficiency fitness courses that highlight the physical and mental health benefits of diabolo sport. For the elderly group, a "health-oriented" promotion strategy is adopted, offering wellness courses in

communities and other venues, combining traditional Chinese medicine health theories to explore the fitness and health preservation value.

4.2 Creating a Multi-Scenario Integrated Promotion Model

The integration of sports and education is an important path for the promotion of diabolo sport, driving its entry into the school physical education curriculum, developing teaching materials and resources for different educational stages, and establishing clubs and school teams. Community sports serve as the core foundational base, giving full play to the role of community organizations, establishing activity stations, and carrying out teaching and exchange activities. The integration of culture and tourism represents an innovative direction, combining diabolo sport with local cultural and tourism resources, developing cultural tourism products, setting up performance and experience programs, and creating immersive experience scenarios. The appeal of immersive cultural tourism projects is becoming increasingly prominent. During the Qingming Festival holiday in 2025, the search popularity of sports-related cultural tourism activities surged by 48% year-on-year. For example, scenic spots relying on immersive experience models, such as the Zhengzhou Yinji International Tourism Resort, saw a cumulative increase of 6.59% in visitor numbers during the holiday, and Kashgar Old City also attracted over 170,000 visitors on the first day of the holiday through its immersive projects, fully demonstrating its attractiveness.

4.3 Innovating the Content and Forms of New Media Communication

Content innovation is the core of enhancing the effectiveness of new media communication; it should break through the single model of skill demonstration and develop diversified communication content. This includes storytelling content, which explores the historical stories of diabolo sport to enhance emotional appeal; instructional content, which establishes a systematic teaching system to meet the needs of different learners; entertainment-oriented content, which combines popular elements to create relevant works that attract younger audiences; and knowledge-based content, which popularizes knowledge about diabolo sport to improve audience awareness.

Form innovation is required to adapt to the laws of new media communication. It should rely on the technical characteristics of new media to innovate diversified communication forms. These include serialized short videos, which produce a series of diabolo instructional videos to cultivate audiences' viewing habits; regular live streaming, which conducts various live broadcasts periodically to enhance interaction with the audience; topic marketing, which plans topical events related to diabolo to expand the reach of communication; cross-sector cooperation, which collaborates with multiple parties to create distinctive cultural IPs and expand the audience; and technological application, which utilizes AR, VR and other technologies to develop virtual experience products and provide immersive experiences.

4.4 Establishing a Data-Driven Collaborative Development Mechanism

Data-driven approaches are a scientific guarantee for improving promotion strategies. It is necessary to establish a data monitoring system for the promotion of diabolo sport, track various types of data, accurately allocate promotion resources through big data analysis, build evaluation models, and regularly assess and optimize strategies.

Collaborative development is a way to overcome the predicament of dispersed resources. It is necessary to establish a collaborative development mechanism involving multiple stakeholders, integrate resources from all parties, and form a synergy. Specifically, a resource-sharing platform with the diabolo brand IP at its core can be established, with clear definitions of rights, responsibilities, and benefit distribution; a cross-regional collaboration mechanism can be set up to promote experience exchange and resource sharing; and a tripartite synergy mechanism involving government, market, and society can be built to construct a sustainable development ecosystem.

5. Brand Innovation Plan for Diabolo Sport

5.1 Brand Positioning and Core Value Shaping

Brand positioning is the foundation and prerequisite for brand construction. The brand positioning

of diabolo sport should be grounded in its unique cultural attributes and fitness values, highlighting the core elements of "intangible cultural heritage inheritance, fitness and health preservation, and cultural experience," and positioning it as "the perfect integration of traditional Chinese culture and modern healthy living." This approach not only inherits cultural roots but also aligns with contemporary health pursuits, demonstrating market adaptability and communication potential.

Core value shaping is the soul of brand building. The core values of diabolo sport can be shaped from three dimensions:

- a. Cultural value: the core content is historical inheritance and cultural identity; the value expression is representing the fine traditional Chinese culture; and the target audience is the general public.
- b. Health value: the core content is physical and mental well-being and lifestyle; the value expression is a high-quality choice for nationwide fitness; and the target audience is fitness enthusiasts.
- c. Social value: the core content is interpersonal interaction and community building; the value expression is a cultural bond that promotes social harmony; and the target audience is community residents.

5.2 Brand IP Development and Visual Identity System

The development of brand IP is an effective means to explore the value of diabolo sport and enhance its brand influence. A brand IP for diabolo sport should be created, encompassing elements such as brand name, logo, slogan, and image. The brand name may be selected as "China Diabolo" or the like; the logo should integrate diabolo elements with cultural symbols; the slogan may adopt phrases such as "Twirling Diabolo, Inheriting Culture"; and the image may be developed as a cartoon character or a virtual spokesperson.

The visual identity system is an important carrier of brand image. A unified visual identity system for diabolo sport should be established, including both basic elements and application elements, so as to enhance the professional image and recognizability of the brand.

5.3 Brand Activity Planning and Event Operation

Brand activities are an important carrier of brand communication, and it is necessary to plan brand activities with sustained influence and construct an exclusive activity matrix. First, create brand competition events such as the "China Diabolo Championship" and improve the event system and operation mechanisms; second, hold brand festivals such as the "China Diabolo Cultural Festival" and integrate diverse activities; third, carry out brand roadshows and enter multiple scenarios.

Event operation is a crucial part of brand building, and a professional operation mechanism should be established. First, improve the multi-level event system; second, standardize event standards; third, innovate event formats; fourth, strengthen event communication; fifth, expand the commercial value of events.

5.4 Industry Integration and Value Extension

Industry integration is an important path for brand value extension, and efforts should be made to promote the integrated development of diabolo sport with related industries. There are four main directions for industry integration:

- a. Cultural tourism industry: products/services include cultural experience tours and study tours; the target market is the cultural tourism market, with high development potential.
- b. Education industry: products/services include training courses and teaching materials and equipment; the target market is the physical education market, with high development potential.
- c. Health industry: products/services include fitness courses and wellness services; the target market is the nationwide fitness market, with medium development potential.
- d. Cultural and creative industry: products/services include cultural and creative products and digital collectibles; the target market is the cultural consumption market, with medium development potential.

Value extension is the key to sustainable brand development, and a value extension mechanism

should be established. First, establish a brand licensing mechanism; second, develop brand derivative products; third, expand brand services; fourth, explore brand internationalization. Efforts should also be made to promote the international dissemination of diabolo sport and expand its international brand influence. Diabolo has reached the world through the "Belt and Road" initiative. In 2019, the "Belt and Road" International Diabolo Cultural Industry Development Summit Forum was held, during which guests proposed preparing for a federation and holding international competitions. Diabolo has been introduced to over one hundred countries and regions, with nearly ten national-level and nearly one hundred city- and regional-level diabolo associations worldwide. In 2018, the "Golden Bamboo Award" Invitational Tournament attracted more than 1,000 participants from 12 countries. Through industry integration and value extension, a commercial ecosystem can be built to achieve sustainable brand development.

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study, based on the theoretical framework of "integration of multiple scenarios - new media empowerment - brand value co-creation," systematically analyzes the current promotion status and core problems of diabolo sport in the new media environment, and proposes targeted promotion strategies and a brand innovation plan. The research shows that diabolo sport faces multiple dilemmas in the new media era, including the aging of its inheritor group, fragmentation of communication content, unbalanced regional development, and lagging brand construction. These dilemmas need to be addressed through strategies such as building a hierarchical and categorized precision promotion system, creating a multi-scenario integrated promotion model, innovating the content and forms of new media communication, and establishing a data-driven collaborative development mechanism. Meanwhile, brand innovation efforts should be strengthened in areas such as brand positioning and core value shaping, brand IP development and visual identity system construction, brand activity planning and event operation, and industry integration and value extension, so as to promote the transformation and upgrading of diabolo sport from a mere fitness activity into a cultural brand with cultural influence and market value.

Based on the above research, the following suggestions are proposed: First, it is essential to strengthen top-level design, formulate a medium- and long-term plan for the development of diabolo sport, and clarify development goals, key tasks, and safeguard measures. Second, improve policy support, increase financial investment and policy preference for the inheritance and development of diabolo sport, and create a favorable policy environment for its promotion and development. Third, strengthen talent cultivation, establish a talent cultivation system for diabolo sport, and train a group of high-level inheritors, coaches, referees, and management personnel. Fourth, promote collaborative development, establish a multi-stakeholder collaborative development mechanism, integrate resources from all parties, and form a synergy for development. Fifth, strengthen brand construction, unify the brand image, create brand activities, and enhance the social influence and market competitiveness of diabolo sport. Sixth, deepen international communication, leverage platforms such as the "Belt and Road" to promote the international dissemination of diabolo sport, and enhance the international influence of China's outstanding traditional culture.

As a treasure of China's fine traditional culture, the inheritance and development of diabolo sport is not only about the survival of a sports event, but also about the construction of national cultural identity and the manifestation of cultural confidence. In the new media era, diabolo sport faces both challenges and opportunities. As long as we adhere to cultural inheritance as the foundation, innovative development as the driving force, and brand building as the guidance, we will certainly be able to promote the creative transformation and innovative development of diabolo sport, enabling this ancient folk art to regain new vitality and vigor in the new era.

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