

Article

Crisis and breakthrough: Exploring the path to revitalize the Zhuang Ethnic's Molan culture from the perspective of communication

Yuyin Lin¹, Ratanachote Thienmongkol^{1,*}, Aolin Xiang²¹ Faculty of Informatics, Mahasarakham University, Maha Sarakham 44150, Thailand² Communication and Media School, Guangxi Minzu University, Nanning 530008, China* **Corresponding author:** Ratanachote Thienmongkol, ratanachote.t@msu.ac.th

CITATION

Lin Y, Thienmongkol R, Xiang A. (2024). Crisis and breakthrough: Exploring the path to revitalize the Zhuang Ethnic's Molan culture from the perspective of communication. *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development*. 8(16): 9863. <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd9863>

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 24 October 2024
Accepted: 22 November 2024
Available online: 31 December 2024

COPYRIGHT



Copyright © 2024 by author(s).
Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development is published by EnPress Publisher, LLC. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Abstract: Molan, an intangible cultural heritage of the Zhuang nationality in China, faces a crisis due to traditional communication and inheritance models. In the digital era, leveraging advanced digital technology is crucial for revitalizing this ancient heritage. From a communication theory perspective, this paper uses field investigation and applies the classic 5W communication model by Lasswell to deeply analyze the crisis facing Molan culture. Integrating the media evolution theory of Levinson, it explores the benefits and methodologies of digital dissemination for ancient intangible cultural heritage and proposes a digital communication model. The paper emphasizes adopting the PGC (Professional Generated Content) + UGC (User Generated Content) production model and strictly adhering to the “Content is King” principle. It advocates for models such as “Social Media + Molan,” “Short Video + Molan,” and “Algorithm + Molan” to enhance communication effectiveness. These viewpoints aim to revitalize and preserve Molan culture in the digital age.

Keywords: intangible heritage; Molan; digital communication; new media

1. Introduction

Molan, a cherished national intangible cultural heritage of China, is a treasure trove of Zhuang culture, embodying unique national characteristics and profound artistic allure. This captivating art form, which combines narrative, singing, and dancing, boasts a rich history and is extensively practiced, particularly in Zhuang settlements in southwestern Guangxi, from the Qing Dynasty until the 1950s. Its popularity among locals is evident, with people holding it in high esteem. Scholars Yuan and Gu (2017) have emphasized that intangible cultural heritage serves as an ancient cultural memory and represents the most enduring cultural DNA of a nation. Therefore, preserving and promoting such heritage is not merely a gesture of historical respect but also crucial for maintaining cultural diversity, enhancing national cultural confidence, strengthening national unity, and fostering cultural exchanges. Within the realm of communication, Lasswell (1948) emphasized three key functions of communication: environmental monitoring, social coordination, and cultural inheritance. Notably, the cultural inheritance function underscores the significance of cultural communication, including intangible cultural heritage. The advent of the new media era has ushered in digital communication of intangible cultural heritage as a burgeoning field of both theoretical and applied research. Molan, as a national intangible cultural heritage, faces significant challenges with its traditional modes of communication and inheritance. These shortcomings have contributed to a grave crisis, prompting the need for greater attention to research and practical implementations in

digital communication. Upon reviewing relevant literature, it is evident that the majority of scholars have primarily focused on the historical origins, titles, types, artistic features, songbooks, cultural values, survival statuses, and protective measures of Molan. From a communication perspective, there is a dearth of research, especially on its digital communication. Hence, there is a pressing need for more scholars and experts to delve into this vital area of study.

In the context of new media, this paper delves into the present scenario and future trajectory of digital communication for Molan culture, viewed from a communicative perspective. By employing relevant communication theories and methodologies, it uncovers the underlying patterns of Molan culture's digital dissemination. This study offers fresh perspectives and approaches for the transmission and preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Employing qualitative research techniques involving in-depth interviews and questionnaires, the research undertakes fieldwork in Jingxi and Chongzuo, key locations for Molan culture in Guangxi. Drawing from Lasswell's (1948) renowned communication function and model theory, the study identifies flaws in the traditional communication model. Furthermore, it integrates Levinson's (2003) media evolution theory to advocate for leveraging new media technology to bolster intangible cultural heritage like Molan. The paper emphasizes a people-centered approach and advocates for adopting digital communication frameworks to accomplish more effective dissemination. This holistic approach aims to revitalize and sustain Molan culture in the digital age.

2. Crisis in Molan culture communication and inheritance

Under the traditional communication model

To comprehend the communication and inheritance status of Molan culture, we visited Jingxi City, Guangxi, a pivotal locale for this heritage. Our investigation revealed multiple limitations in the traditional means of communicating Molan cultural heritage. Utilizing Lasswell's (1948) classic 5W communication model, we analyzed the challenges Molan faces within the traditional communication framework. (See **Figure 1**).

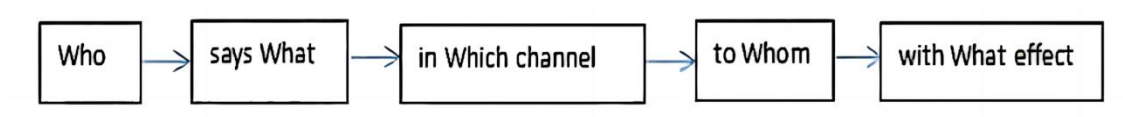


Figure 1. Lasswell's 5W linear communication model.

Note: Design: Yuyin Lin.

The crisis of discontinuity in the disseminators and inheritors of Molan culture poses a significant threat to its survival. From the disseminator's perspective, traditional communicators primarily consist of Molan inheritors and mass communication agencies. Our survey in Jingxi City in June 2004 revealed that many provincial Molan inheritors have passed away, with only about ten remaining, and most of them are elderly. Additionally, few young people have shown interest in learning the art. Consequently, Molan faces the risk of being lost. The primary methods of inheritance and communication for this intangible cultural heritage are live

performances and verbal transmission, which are transient and difficult to revisit for learning and appreciation. The main mass communication agency is also limited to locally operated radio and television stations. Traditional communication methods frequently prioritize the role and status of the disseminator while neglecting the needs and feedback of the recipient. This discrepancy can result in communication content that diverges from the audience's actual demands, failing to achieve the intended communication effect. While new media presents numerous emerging disseminators, their professional competence often lags behind that of traditional mainstream media. This crisis is also prevalent in other minority traditional cultures akin to Molan, such as Zhuang Opera. With the original cultural inheritors aging and passing away, the inheritors encounter a gap crisis. Meanwhile, mass media organizations, another key communication subject, are undergoing restructuring and have yet to fully harness their advantages in disseminating these traditions.

Regarding the communication content of Molan culture, traditional methods face challenges in both quantity and quality. The limited number of content production and dissemination entities, primarily local radio and television stations, restricts the richness of content. Additionally, geographical and economic constraints result in small staff sizes at these stations. Their main responsibility as official news agencies is to produce and disseminate local news, leaving less attention for promoting local folk culture. For instance, Jingxi Radio and Television Station had only 12 content production staff in June 2004, and they produced no more than five Molan programs annually. Furthermore, the quality of Molan cultural content is not consistently high, rendering it difficult for many to comprehend. Our survey in Jingxi, Guangxi, a birthplace of Molan culture, explored the understanding of Molan content among young people aged 13–30. Of the 57 responses received, only 9% could fully understand the meaning expressed in Molan performances, while 21.1% understood most of the content. Seven percent guessed some content despite not fully understanding it, 30% did not understand it at all, and 33% had never heard or seen Molan. Given that Molan performances primarily use the local Zhuang language in Jingxi, where the culture is prevalent, the fact that 30% of the respondents still do not understand the content indicates room for improvement in content production. There is a need for more accessible content that facilitates comprehension. Additionally, advanced digital communication technology should be harnessed to allow repeated appreciation and deepened understanding of the content among the audience (For detailed survey data, refer to the accompanying **Figure 2**. For statistical convenience, figures have been rounded off. This applies throughout the text).

The evolving landscape of communication channels in traditional Molan cultural dissemination is a central focus in today's digital age. As we observe the shift towards new media platforms, such as the Internet, social media, blogs, and video platforms, the once dominant role of traditional media like local radio and television stations is being challenged. This shift highlights the growing trend of power decentralization within the realm of cultural communication. The reliance on government-controlled traditional media to convey Molan culture has limited the reach and impact of its message. While radio and television still hold sway, the emergence of new media has provided an alternative avenue for cultural dissemination. However, due to the lack of research and application of new media channels by official mainstream media, the

production and dissemination of Molan programs have been limited, with an average of less than 5 programs produced annually in recent years. The importance of selecting appropriate communication channels, platforms, and community activities to effectively spread Molan culture cannot be overlooked. The failure to embrace new media has resulted in missed opportunities to engage a wider audience and preserve traditional minority cultures like Zhuang Opera. As society continues to gravitate towards new media, it is essential for traditional cultural communication channels to adapt and diversify in order to ensure the continued relevance and vitality of Molan culture in the modern world.

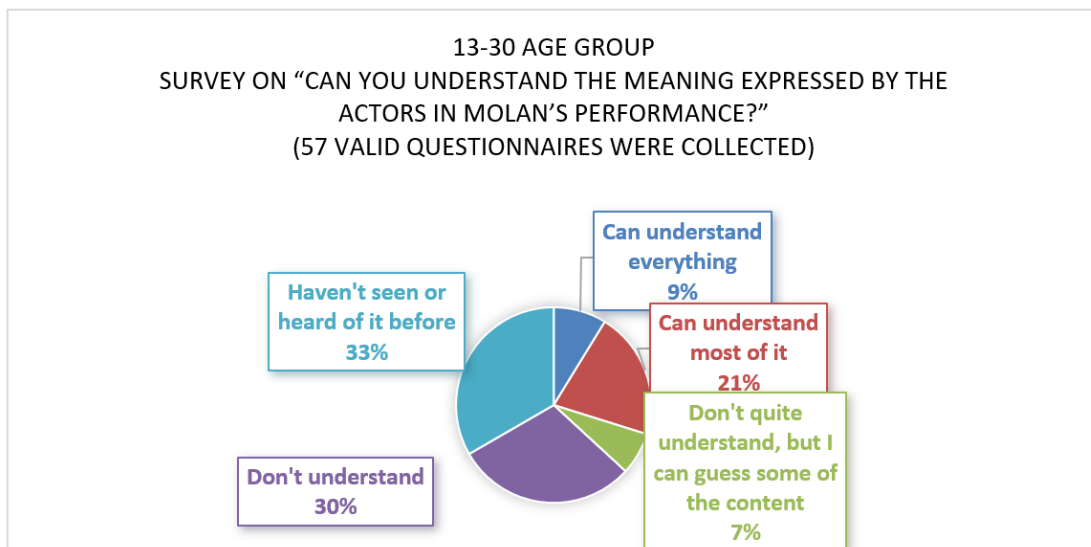


Figure2. Survey results "Do you understand Molan's performance?".

Note: Data comes from the author's field research.

Young people today are facing a growing disconnect from their traditional cultural roots. The pervasive influence of Western popular culture through various media channels has alienated many young individuals from their own heritage. In places like Jingxi and Chongzuo in China, rural youth are particularly affected as they migrate to economically developed cities and are exposed to external cultural influences. A study conducted in Jingxi City, Guangxi, revealed the concerning reality that a majority of young people aged 13–30 were unaware of or had never heard of Molan culture, an important intangible cultural heritage. In fact, 53% of respondents indicated that they had no knowledge of Molan, while only 47% had some familiarity with it. These findings highlight a significant knowledge gap among the youth, even in areas where Molan culture is traditionally celebrated. The lack of exposure and education surrounding traditional cultural practices is a major factor contributing to this disconnection. Schools prioritize academic achievement, placing little emphasis on promoting traditional ethnic culture education. As a result, young people are more likely to gravitate towards Western popular culture, which they perceive as modern and relevant, while dismissing their own heritage as outdated. It is crucial to address this cultural divide and foster a renewed appreciation for traditional practices among young generations. Without meaningful efforts to promote and preserve intangible cultural heritages like Molan, there is a risk of losing these valuable aspects of cultural

identity. By integrating cultural education into school curricula and increasing awareness through community initiatives, we can bridge the gap and instill a sense of pride and understanding of our rich cultural heritage among young people. It is essential to preserve our cultural roots and ensure that future generations carry forward these traditions with knowledge and respect (see **Figure 3**).

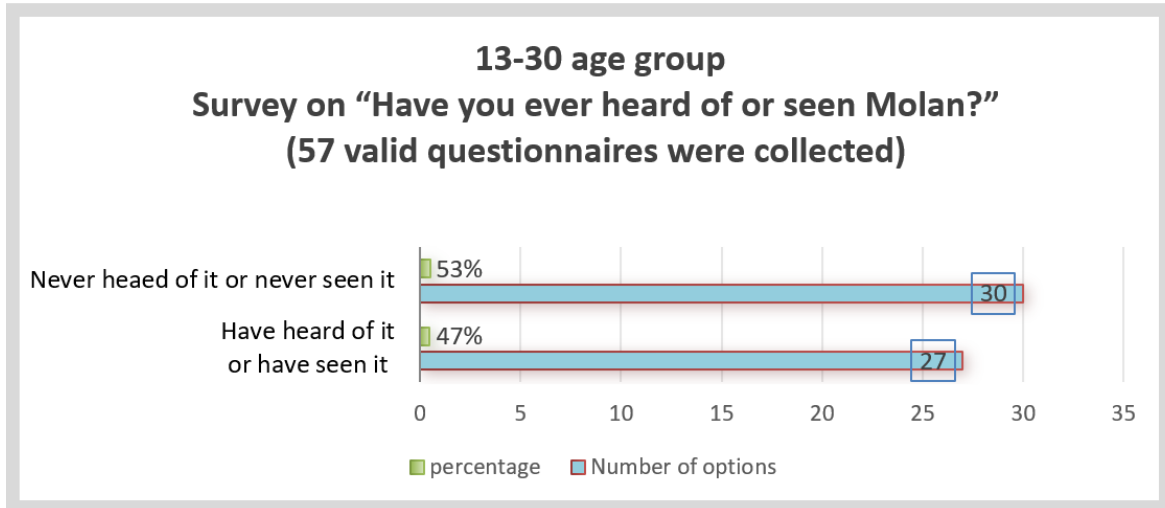


Figure 3. The survey results of "Have you heard of or seen Molan".
Note: Data comes from the author's field research.

In Thailand's Isan region, the traditional folk art of Molam has gained significant popularity, drawing comparisons to the Chinese Zhuang ethnic group's Molan. Despite the similar pronunciation and origins (Li, 2016), Molam has emerged as the more well-known and revered art form, capturing the hearts of audiences in the region. Its widespread popularity is a testament to its cultural significance. (For detailed survey data, refer to the accompanying **Figure 4**.)

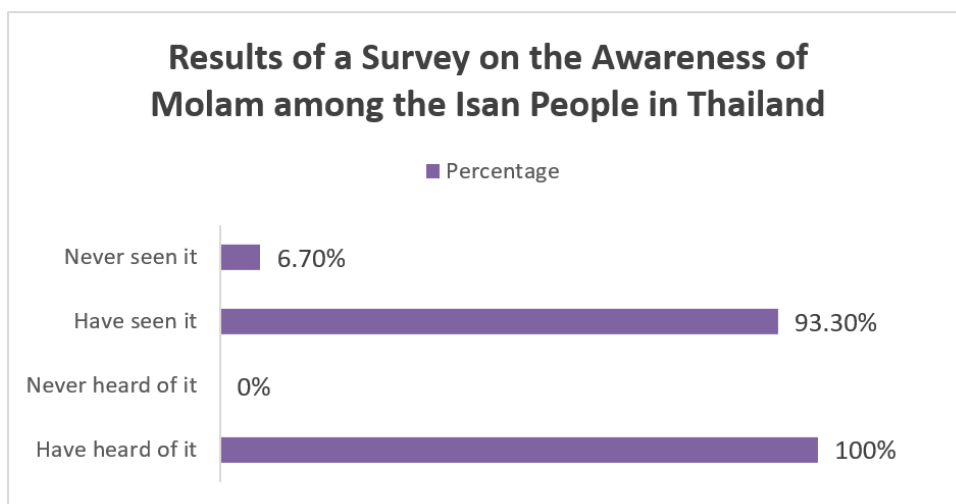


Figure 4. Results of a survey on the awareness of Molam among the Isan People in Thailand.

Many inheritors of intangible cultural heritage have expressed their concerns about the younger generation's lack of interest in traditional folk art. They have observed that some young people find the lyrics of traditional songs to be outdated and

difficult to understand, preferring instead the simplicity of pop music. A recent survey conducted in Jingxi City, Guangxi, China, revealed interesting insights into the reception of Molan, a traditional art form, among teenagers and young adults aged 13–30. Out of the 57 responses received, only 9% expressed a strong liking for Molan, while 37% indicated a general interest. Surprisingly, 17% did not express any preference, raising questions about the cultural awareness and appreciation among the youth in this region. These findings highlight the importance of introducing innovative ways to engage young people in preserving and celebrating their cultural heritage. (For detailed survey data, refer to the accompanying **Figure 5**.)

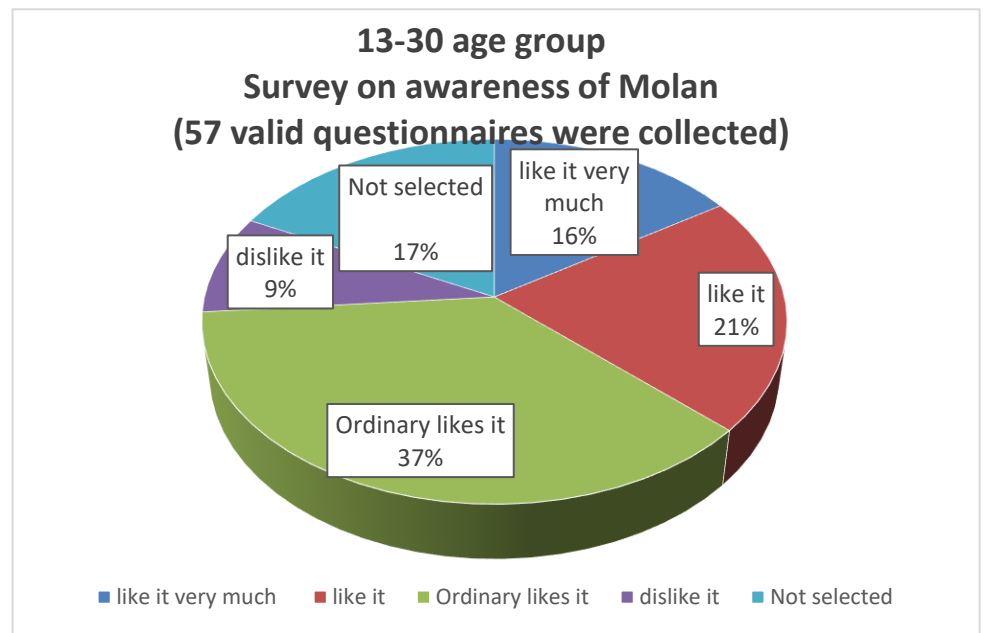


Figure 5. Survey results of “Do you like Molan” for adolescent and young people.
Note: Data comes from the author’s field research.

The limitations of traditional communication methods hinder the effective dissemination of cultural heritage, such as Molan, to diverse audiences. These methods lack flexibility in adapting to the varied needs and preferences of different audience groups, resulting in certain individuals missing out on important cultural experiences. Furthermore, the static nature of traditional communication methods restricts the location of cultural activities to specific venues, limiting audience participation based on geographical constraints. Moreover, traditional communication methods heavily rely on outdated media channels like radio and television, which may not effectively engage modern audiences or adequately convey the significance of cultural heritage, such as Molan. Additionally, one-way communication models utilized in traditional methods fail to facilitate meaningful interaction between communicators and audiences, hindering the efficacy of cultural heritage transmission. In order to address these shortcomings and enhance the communication and preservation of cultural heritages like Molan, it is imperative to innovate and improve communication strategies. By implementing modern technologies and interactive platforms, cultural heritage communication can be made more accessible, engaging, and inclusive for a wider range of audiences. Embracing innovation in communication methods will

ensure the continued relevance and appreciation of cultural legacies for future generations.

Lasswell's (1948) 5W traditional mass communication model has shed light on the crisis faced by traditional ethnic cultures, highlighting the need for innovation in cultural communication. However, while it is important to address the challenges, it is equally crucial to recognize the strengths of the traditional mass communication model. In today's digital age, traditional communication platforms can still play a significant role if integrated with new media platforms, leading to successful communication outcomes. A prime example of this integration is seen in the success of Henan TV, a local television station that has effectively popularized its cultural programs by leveraging both traditional and new media platforms. Programs such as "Tang Palace Night Banquet," "Lantern Festival Wonderful Night," "Qingming Festival Wonderful Journey," and "Dragon Boat Festival Wonderful Journey" have captivated audiences, with the topic reading volume during the 2021 Spring Festival surpassing 2.5 billion. The success of Henan TV's cultural programs can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the incorporation of high-tech elements like 5G and AR has allowed for the seamless blending of virtual and real scenes, offering viewers a fresh and immersive experience. Secondly, the use of stage lighting, sound effects, and special effects has further enhanced the audience's appreciation of traditional culture. Additionally, the strategic utilization of multiple new media platforms such as Bilibili, TikTok, Kuaishou, and Weibo Blog has enabled the continuous update of program content snippets, while also fostering emotional connections with the audience through professional and cultural interpretations. Furthermore, Henan TV's engagement strategy on Weibo Blog, where they initiated a #Dragon Boat Festival Wonderful Journey Hand-drawn Competition#, exemplifies a proactive approach in inviting netizens, illustrators, and designers to participate in the creation of program content. This collaborative effort not only promotes interactive engagement but also showcases the timeless appeal of traditional culture. The experience of Henan TV serves as a valuable lesson for traditional media outlets looking to revitalize their presentation of traditional cultural content. By embracing innovation and integrating new media platforms, traditional communication models can continue to resonate with audiences, perpetuating the celebration and preservation of our rich cultural heritage.

The Molan culture stands out for its distinct communication strategies and effectiveness when compared to other intangible cultural heritages. Central to Molan culture is the preservation and celebration of local traditions, with communication relying heavily on the active participation of community members through oral traditions and ritual experiences. In contrast, other cultural heritages leverage social media and digital platforms to engage with younger audiences and showcase their unique cultural charm, focusing on innovation and adapting to modern society's needs. While Molan culture may initially struggle to compete with the reach of digital communication, its emphasis on traditional modes of communication ensures its longevity and uniqueness in the long run. It is crucial to strike a balance between tradition and modernity to effectively pass on the rich heritage of Molan culture. By embracing both traditional communication methods and modern technology, Molan culture can thrive and continue to be a valuable asset in preserving the cultural diversity of our world.

3. Digital communication: An effective way to revitalize Molan culture

Levinson’s (2003) theory on the evolution of media technology suggests that the development of media has always been driven by a desire to meet human needs and preferences, ultimately evolving towards a more human-centered approach. In today’s digital age, the communication of intangible cultural heritage, like Molan, is experiencing significant transformations, with the rise of digital communication models that are gaining popularity. The digital communication model, as illustrated in the **Figure 6** below, exhibits several key characteristics. It facilitates rapid dissemination and real-time updates of information, reaching a global audience. It offers a diverse range of communication subjects and channels, allowing even the audience to actively participate in the communication process. Furthermore, it promotes high levels of interactivity, enabling users to express their thoughts, opinions, and emotions freely. The model also incorporates a personalized recommendation feature, tailoring content to users’ specific interests and needs. One of the most significant impacts of the digital communication model is its ability to engage younger generations in the preservation and innovation of cultural heritage, such as Molan. By rejuvenating traditional intangible cultural heritage in this new era, the model brings fresh energy and drive to the sustainable development of cultural heritage. Ultimately, it breathes new life into age-old traditions, ensuring their continuity and relevance for generations to come.

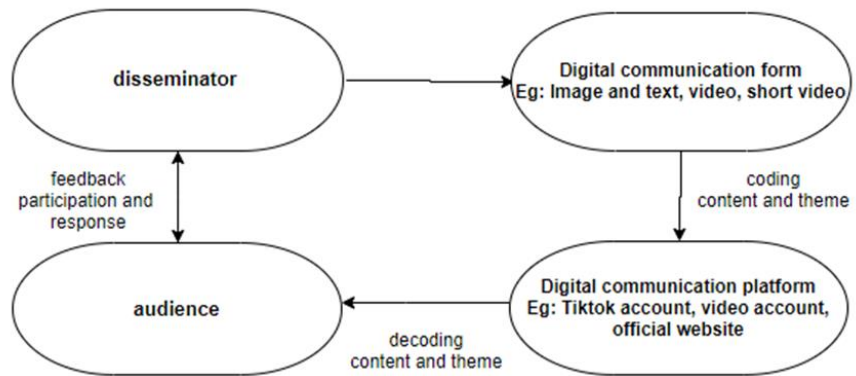


Figure 6. Digital communication process model.

Note: Designed by Lin Yuyin.

3.1. Regarding content production, the PGC + UGC production model is implemented, and the principle of “content is king” is strictly adhered to

3.1.1. PGC + UGC creates content that is both professional and popular, ensuring that content information appeals to both refined and mass audiences

Professional Generated Content (PGC) is curated by experts with specialized knowledge and skills in a particular field, while User Generated Content (UGC) is created by amateur users utilizing online platforms and user-friendly tools. PGC showcases the expertise and professionalism of seasoned professionals, while UGC reflects the diverse perspectives and creativity of everyday individuals. Both types of

content contribute to the rich tapestry of online information and entertainment, catering to a wide audience.

In the realm of content production, the traditional method of PGC creation guarantees accuracy and effectiveness, which in turn elevates the visibility and reputation of information platforms. On the flip side, UGC offers a diverse user base, limitless creativity, and increased engagement, cultivating a vibrant and united community spirit. While both PGC and UGC have their individual strengths and weaknesses, it is vital to merge them strategically to maximize benefits, minimize drawbacks, and implement a hybrid PGC plus UGC content strategy. This innovative approach enriches content by combining authoritative information with content that resonates with a wide range of audience preferences, thereby optimizing the overall user experience.

Utilizing the professional expertise and high-quality standards of PGC, we can draw in industry experts, cultural practitioners, and skilled performance teams to the platform. This move will help to attract and retain users seeking top-notch professional content. Simultaneously, implementing an incentive program will boost the creativity of users, while the community and media platform vigilantly monitor and manage user-generated content (UGC). Additionally, a Content Cooperation Fund has been set up to encourage partnership projects between PGC and UGC, facilitating joint content creation and promotion. Through these combined efforts, the strengths of PGC and UGC can be maximized to collaboratively establish a content ecosystem that is rich in diversity, expertise, and professionalism. This strategic integration aims to engage users more effectively and enhance the platform's overall appeal.

Amazon set up the "Amazon studio" in 2010 as a prime example of fostering user participation through the sharing and uploading of ideas. Amazon carefully selects popular creative scripts, refines them for feasibility, and then opens up a public vote on the optimized scripts, giving users the power to determine the direction of future filming projects (Dai, 2014). This successful model can be applied to Molan content by incorporating officially produced PGC from the local integrated media center and UGC generated by Molan culture enthusiasts. By following the footsteps of the "Amazon studio," we can inspire and motivate more authors to create high-quality content that resonates with a larger audience.

3.1.2. Create high-quality content and extend the IP value chain

In today's digital age, the fundamental truth that "content is king" remains as relevant as ever. The demand for high-quality content that resonates with the public has always been a constant throughout history. Given this, it is imperative that we continue to champion the idea that content reigns supreme. By actively delving into the rich tapestry of intangible cultural heritage, we can unearth valuable narratives that embody the essence of our national spirit, offering both breadth and depth. Efforts should be made to consolidate intangible cultural heritage resources, transforming them into high-quality Intellectual Property (IP) that holds significant intrinsic worth. Leveraging the power of new media platforms, we must disseminate this content to a wider audience, bridging the online and offline realms to maximize its reach and impact. Take, for example, Molan's acclaimed performances such as "Mrs. Wah" and "One Canal and Two Country Smile," which have garnered numerous prestigious

awards at both provincial and national levels. These works represent premium products with the potential to evolve into high-quality IP. There exists a compelling opportunity to nurture these creations, establishing robust IP brands that can span across various mediums including film and television, audiovisual publications, gaming, and commercial performances at tourist destinations. By expanding the IP value chain, we can unlock the full potential of these cultural treasures, ensuring their enduring legacy and cultural significance.

3.2. In terms of communication channels, the models of “social media + Molan” “short video + Molan” and “algorithm + Molan” have been adopted to enhance the communication effect

3.2.1. “Social media + Molan” to realize immersive interactive communication

Utilizing social media platforms is crucial for promoting and preserving intangible cultural heritage. Community websites, forums, blogs, and popular platforms like WeChat, QQ, Facebook, and Twitter are essential for reaching a global audience. The Royal Shakespeare Theatre’s innovative approach of launching Shakespeare’s classic “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” on social media exemplifies the power of technology in engaging audiences. By blending real actors with virtual characters, nearly 50 million individuals worldwide embraced a new level of participation and immersion in the play (Sohu Entertainment, 2014). This successful strategy not only amplified the reach of intangible cultural heritage but also sparked widespread interest and involvement. In today’s digital age, harnessing the potential of social media is key to preserving and celebrating our rich cultural legacies.

To foster interest in Molan culture and engage audiences, leveraging popular emoji packs and internet slang commonly used by modern netizens can be a compelling strategy. By tapping into these familiar forms of communication, we can spark lively discussions and encourage active participation from online communities. Additionally, by involving celebrities and influential social media figures (big V’s) as opinion leaders, we can attract a larger audience and strengthen fan loyalty through their interactions. This approach not only promotes Molan culture but also enhances user engagement and generates excitement among followers.

3.2.2. “Short video + Molan” to realize visualized vivid communication

Short video media has become a powerful tool for sharing information due to its ability to deliver rich visual content and facilitate interactive communication. It is also known for its strong social communication capabilities, attracting a vast user base and fostering high levels of engagement. Recently, short video platforms have been increasingly utilized to promote intangible cultural heritage. One notable example is TikTok, a leading new media platform in China, which launched the “intangible cultural heritage partnership” program in April 2019. This initiative aims to empower partners involved in intangible cultural heritage by equipping them with modern communication skills, exploring the market and cultural value of their heritage, and providing a platform for nationwide appreciation of intangible cultural heritage (Zhou, 2019). TikTok has emerged as the primary short video platform in China for the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage content. In 2019, the platform covered 88.4% of the 1372 national intangible cultural heritage projects (Liu, 2019). Moreover,

the “2022 Intangible Cultural Heritage Influence Report on Overseas Short Video Platforms” revealed that Chinese intangible cultural heritage content on TikTok has garnered over 30.8 billion video views overseas (Ran, 2022). The success of using short video platforms like TikTok to promote intangible cultural heritage highlights the effectiveness of utilizing modern communication tools to preserve and share cultural traditions with a global audience.

Molan’s presence can be felt across various social media platforms in China, including TikTok and Kuaishou, where his performances and information are widely shared. These platforms showcase Molan’s traditional witchcraft ceremonies, as well as his incorporation of modern music and Zhuang folk songs. The content ranges from traditional repertoires to new creations that reflect the spirit of the present era. Various accounts on TikTok contribute to the dissemination of Molan’s legacy. The Jingxi Converged Media Center manages an official account, while Molan’s inheritors and fans also share their own accounts. Currently, there are hundreds of TikTok accounts dedicated to Molan, each offering a unique perspective on his cultural heritage. Among these, “Xiao Xiao Zhang” stands out with over 18,000 followers and 180,000 likes for their Molan performances. The use of short videos has enabled the rich and diverse content related to Molan to reach a wide audience. The interactive nature of these platforms enhances the engagement between creators and viewers, surpassing the limitations of traditional media communication. Overall, the widespread presence of Molan on social media has proven to be an effective way to preserve and promote his cultural significance in the digital age.

3.2.3. “Algorithms + Molan” to achieve personalized and precise communication

Recommendation algorithms are a powerful tool that websites across various domains have utilized to enhance user experience. These algorithms analyze user behaviors to infer preferences and provide personalized recommendations in fields like books, music, videos, news, movies, and more (the Office of the Central Cyber Security and Informatization Committee of the Communist Party of China, 2019). The integration of recommendation algorithms in e-commerce platforms has seen a surge in popularity, with industry giants like Amazon, Ebay, and Alibaba leveraging these systems to drive user satisfaction and loyalty (Zhao et al., 2015). In addition to e-commerce, recommendation algorithms have also made a significant impact on platforms focusing on intangible cultural heritage information, such as TikTok, Kuaishou, and Aiqiyi. These platforms utilize recommendation algorithms to deliver more precise and personalized content to users, enhancing their overall experience. For example, Aiqiyi has successfully implemented a personalized homepage feature that caters to individual preferences, offering users a unique and tailored browsing experience. Given the success of recommendation algorithms in various industries, Molan Culture should embrace this technology to achieve more personalized and effective communication with its audience. By leveraging recommendation algorithms, Molan Culture can tailor content to individual preferences, leading to increased engagement and satisfaction among users.

4. Discussion

The integration of digital communication platforms has undoubtedly facilitated the promotion of national culture, like the esteemed Molan tradition, offering numerous advantages and conveniences. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that along with these benefits come potential drawbacks and risks that must be considered. One significant concern is the issue of excessive commercialization and trivialization. Cultural elements with deep historical and cultural significance may be excessively packaged for commercial gain, diluting their true value and meaning. This shift towards entertainment-centric content creation may alienate younger generations from the authentic essence of traditional culture. Another pressing challenge is the fragmentation of information that digital communication platforms propagate. This fragmented approach to cultural transmission can lead to shallow and one-dimensional perceptions of national heritage, fostering misunderstanding and bias among audiences. Moreover, an over-reliance on technology may limit individuals' direct engagement and hands-on experience with cultural practices such as Molan, hindering the organic evolution and preservation of cultural traditions in real-life settings. To mitigate these potential adverse effects, it is imperative to approach the promotion of national culture through digital platforms with caution and mindfulness. Striking a delicate balance between leveraging the positive impacts of digital outreach while mitigating the negative repercussions is essential. By actively safeguarding against commercialization, trivialization, and misinformation, we can ensure that the rich tapestry of our cultural heritage, including revered traditions like Molan, is preserved and nurtured for future generations to embrace and cherish. Ultimately, by promoting a healthy and sustainable approach to cultural promotion, we can foster the continued flourishing and vitality of our national heritage.

In today's modern media landscape, we find ourselves in a complex and diverse ecosystem of media technologies. The digital preservation and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage raise important considerations. As we navigate through the digital age, we observe a decreasing threshold for media use, an increasing number of communication channels, and a wealth of information being shared. However, amidst this abundance, crucial questions arise. How can we ensure the authenticity of information in this digital era? How do we prevent information from becoming fragmented, superficial, or reinforcing existing biases? Furthermore, how can we address issues such as the prioritization of entertainment, the risk of information becoming oversimplified, copyright conflicts, and excessive commercialization in digital media? These are ongoing challenges that require continuous research and exploration for effective solutions in the future.

5. Conclusion and suggestions

In today's digital era, the transmission of intangible cultural heritage, such as Molan, has transcended traditional forms of oral communication. The advancement of technology has opened up a plethora of opportunities for sharing this heritage through engaging mediums like videos, social media, and virtual reality platforms. It is crucial to acknowledge the significance, urgency, and feasibility of digitally disseminating intangible cultural heritage and leveraging modern technologies for this purpose.

While upholding the authenticity of this heritage and adhering to ethical principles in technology development and communication, we should actively seek pioneering methods for digital outreach and advancement of intangible cultural heritage. By exploring innovative digital communication models, we can facilitate a creative transformation and progressive evolution of intangible cultural heritage for future generations to appreciate and cherish.

As we embrace new digital communication tools for preserving traditional culture, it is crucial to remain mindful of the potential drawbacks and risks they may pose. We must proactively tackle these challenges to ensure the seamless transmission and safeguarding of our cultural heritage.

One potential solution to the issue of authenticity and tampering of information on digital platforms is the implementation of a fact-checking mechanism. This mechanism would leverage emerging technologies like blockchain to safeguard the integrity and validity of information. Blockchain's inherent immutability ensures that content on media platforms remains unchanged and complete. By registering works on the blockchain, copyright protection is bolstered as the ownership becomes indisputable. Additionally, blockchain's traceability and digital signature capabilities enable the verification of information sources, further enhancing authenticity. This proactive approach not only safeguards information integrity but also protects copyrights, offering a robust solution to digital platform vulnerabilities.

To combat the issue of information fragmentation, the suggestion is to create an all-encompassing content platform that consolidates various information sources on the same topic. This platform will offer users a seamless experience with easy access to all related content. Powered by advanced algorithms, the platform will intelligently recommend content based on user preferences, enhancing their browsing experience. Furthermore, users will be encouraged to contribute their own insights and experiences, fostering a community of knowledge sharing and collaboration. By implementing this integrated approach, we can effectively tackle the hurdles brought about by information fragmentation and promote extensive communication and profound knowledge exchange among users. Ultimately, this platform will not only facilitate easy access to information but also cultivate a thriving community of active learners and contributors.

In addressing the complexities surrounding information entertainment and commercialization, it is crucial to establish industry norms and standards to ensure ethical practices. Collaboration between the government, industry associations, and media entities is key in upholding these standards. Enhancing media professional ethics education and improving regulatory mechanisms are essential steps in maintaining integrity within the industry. By strengthening supervision and encouraging public involvement in oversight, we can improve information identification skills and enhance public awareness and judgement. Ultimately, these efforts will bolster information literacy and contribute to a more transparent and reliable information environment.

Author contributions: Conceptualization, YL and RT; methodology, YL; software, AX; validation, RT, YL and AX; formal analysis, RT; investigation, YL and AX; resources, RT; data curation, AX; writing—original draft preparation, YL; writing—

review and editing, RT; visualization, AX; supervision, RT; project administration, RT; funding acquisition, RT. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Acknowledgments: In preparation for this article, we conducted firsthand research in Chongzuo and Jingxi cities, both significant hubs of the Zhuang Molan culture in Guangxi, China. The local community graciously welcomed and supported our research team, facilitating on-site observations, in-depth interviews, group discussions, questionnaire distribution, and overall data collection for this article. Noteworthy individuals and organizations involved in this collaborative effort included Teacher Lan and Teacher Ling from the School of Culture and Communication at Chongzuo Nationalities Normal College, Huang Mingdong (Vice Chairman of the Jingxi CPPCC), Huang Manni (Deputy Director of the Jingxi Culture, Tourism, Radio, and Television Bureau), Director Mo of the Jingxi Cultural Center, and Teacher Li and Teacher Lu (inheritors of the intangible cultural heritage of the Jingxi Zhuang Opera Troupe. The unwavering support and assistance extended by these entities and key figures were greatly appreciated by our team as we delved into the rich tapestry of the Zhuang Molan culture.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- “Fingertip stunts” were watched by TikTok netizens: short video platforms bring more than just traffic to intangible cultural heritage. https://cul.sohu.com/a/556175164_391398
- Dai Zhiqiang. 2014. Big Data in Film and Television: The Fundamentals of Interactive Experience and Quantitative Cognition in Film and Television. *Modern Communication*. No. 9, 2014
- Edited by the Office of the Central Cyber Security and Informatization Committee of the Communist Party of China. 2019. Algorithms: fully integrated into the regulatory field. May 21, 2019
- Harold Lasswell, 1948. *The Structure and Function of Communication in Society*. translated by Xie Jinwen, in *Classical Texts of Communication in the 20th Century*. edited by Zhang Guoliang, Fudan University Press, 2003
- Liu Yuwei. 2019. When Intangible Cultural Heritage Meets Short Videos, Sleeping Traditional Culture Is Awakened. *Lizhi.com* <http://news.jstv.com/a/20190416/c1d7fbdc7b71468f885e4d771840adcf.shtml>
- Paul Levinson. 2003. *Replay of Human History: The Theory of Media Evolution*, translated by Wu Jianzhong, Southwest Normal University Press, 2003 edition
- Ran Xiaoning, 2022. TikTok helps intangible cultural heritage gain popularity overseas. <https://cj.sina.com.cn/articles/view/2810373291/a782e4ab02002dig5>
- Sohu Entertainment News. 2014. International performance production management master class opens, experts and scholars gather in China Opera. <https://yule.sohu.com/20140919/n404465397.shtml>
- Yuan Li and Gu Jun. 2017. Three Standards for Scientific Evaluation of Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection. *Journal of Original Ecological Ethnic Culture*. September (1), 2017, 137-139
- Zhao Shouxiang, Tang Huxin and Xiong Haitao. 2015. *Big Data Analysis and Application*. Aviation Industry Press, December 2015
- Zhou Runjian. 2019. Douyin “Intangible Heritage Partner” plan is launched, 50 inheritors are recruited nationwide. *Xinhuanet* http://www.tj.xinhuanet.com/jz/2019-04/18/c_1124382876.htm