

Research on Overseas Promotion Strategies of Traditional Chinese Medicine: Taking Fire Cupping as an Example

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Abstract: With the global revival of traditional medicine and the deepening of cross-cultural exchanges, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) fire cupping, an important part of Chinese traditional medicine, is receiving more and more international attention. However, Chinese medicine fire cupping faces challenges due to cross-cultural differences, language barriers, and promotion strategies in the process of promotion. This paper aims to optimize the promotion strategy of Chinese medicine fire cupping by deeply analyzing the cultural differences and health concepts of various regions, with the hope of providing a replicable path for the promotion of Chinese medicine overseas, contributing to the national "One Belt, One Road" strategy, and enhancing the confidence of the national culture as well as the recognition and influence of Chinese medicine in the global arena.

Keywords: Chinese medicine fire cupping; Cross-cultural communication; Promotion strategy; The Belt and Road Initiative

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1. Background and Significance of the Study

With the deepening development of globalization, reform and opening up, the world's exchanges and interactions become more and more in-depth, China's economy, culture and other aspects have moved to the center of the world stage, which makes Chinese medicine once again by the world's attention. There are two main reasons for this. One is the outstanding performance of Chinese medicine in fighting diseases, which provides cultural confidence for Chinese medicine to go out of the country. In recent years, China has been insisting on the combination of Chinese and Western medicines and the use of both Chinese and Western medicines to provide protection for the physical health of individuals. At the same time, TCM has actively participated in global health and wellness governance and has strengthened international cooperation in disease treatment. By sharing Chinese medicine diagnosis and treatment programs, sending Chinese medicine doctors overseas and assisting with Chinese medicine supplies, Chinese medicine has expanded its own international influence and contributed to building a human health and wellness community. Secondly, as the international community becomes more and more receptive to traditional medicine, the international recognition of TCM is also on the rise. It is estimated that about 80% of the world's population uses traditional medicine. To date, 170 of the 194 member states of the WHO

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have reported the use of traditional medicine, and on May 25, 2019, the 72nd World Health Assembly adopted the Eleventh Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), adding a chapter on “traditional medicine”, marking the inclusion of TCM in the international statistical system of mainstream medicine. The World Health Assembly adopted the Eleventh Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11), adding a chapter on “Traditional Medicine”, marking the inclusion of Chinese medicine in the international mainstream medical statistics system.

Since ancient times, TCM has been an important part of the exchanges and cooperation among countries along the ancient Silk Road, taking root in the countries along the route along with the early trade activities, and becoming a shared health resource for the people along the route in different forms. In recent years, with the transformation of health concepts and medical models, the efficacy and role of Chinese medicine in the prevention and treatment of common and frequent diseases, chronic diseases, and major diseases have been increasingly recognized and accepted by the international community. Researcher Tu Youyou was awarded the 2015 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for her discovery of artemisinin, demonstrating the outstanding contribution of TCM to human health. Acupuncture and moxibustion are on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and the Compendium of Materia Medica and the Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon are on the Memory of the World Register. How to promote Chinese medicine culture further out of the country, so that Chinese medicine has become one of the bridges between Chinese culture and the world culture, is a problem that we need to solve. As an important part of Chinese traditional medicine, the study of the dissemination and promotion strategy of Chinese fire cupping therapy overseas will be of great significance to the promotion of the whole Chinese medicine system overseas. In the context of the development of international cooperation programs such as “The Belt and Road”, the study of the overseas promotion strategy of Chinese medicine fire cupping will not only help to enhance the country's cultural soft power, but also strengthen the cultural self-confidence, and provide strong support for the excellent traditional Chinese culture to the world.

2. Research Methodology and Result Analysis

Through the field research of some Chinese medicine halls in Guangzhou province and the questionnaire survey of domestic and foreign groups, interviews with the technicians of Chinese medicine fire cupping and foreign consumers, the research results show that most of the foreign consumers try it based on curiosity, fire cupping has not yet formed enough market recognition and popularization, and lack of long-term stable customer groups, and their confidence in Chinese medicine is insufficient. The questionnaire shows that cultural differences are the primary factor that restricts TCM fire cupping from going out of the country. The acceptance of fire cupping is higher in Asia, and its consumers indicated that they are willing to try and recommend it to others, especially in Japan, Thailand, and South Korea, which have a certain degree of awareness of TCM culture. Consumers in Europe, America, and Africa, on the other hand, indicated that they had less knowledge of Chinese medicine culture, so fewer customers experienced fire cupping. However, some of the technicians at the Guangzhou Provincial TCM Center indicated that most of their foreign consumers were local entrepreneurs who brought their foreign clients to experience fire cupping and that although these foreign clients were surprised by the experience the first time, fewer foreign consumers came back to experience it again. Many respondents cited the lack of uniform international standards and qualified technicians for fire cupping as one of the reasons for their concern. This significantly affects the acceptance of fire cupping in overseas markets. In addition, there is a lack of sufficient TCM cupping technicians and professional equipment overseas, which has led to a significant decrease in the number of foreign consumers experiencing it. Health and wellness enthusiasts are the largest audience for fire cupping, accounting for 90.6% of the total, followed by middle-aged and elderly people, young people with better financial conditions, and athletes and other groups. However, there are some problems and challenges in the domestic and international fire cupping

market. Some unscrupulous merchants take advantage of the heat of fire cupping to conduct false propaganda and sales, which brings health risks to domestic and international consumers. Therefore, the promotion strategy of fire cupping should analyze specific problems and optimize the promotion strategy actively. People of different age groups and needs have different market demands for fire cupping, especially in health management and wellness. In response to these diverse needs, we believe that the overseas promotion strategy of Chinese cupping should be differentiated and adjusted. For example, regional promotion should pay attention to differentiation; 50% of the respondents called for TCM cupping to actively seek international certification, with standardization and talent training as breakthroughs; in the digital era, the trend of life integration with artificial intelligence provides more promotion channels for TCM cupping culture, and the use of new media is one of the most important ways to spread the word.

3. Overseas Promotion Strategy of Chinese Medicine Fire Cupping

(1) Regional promotion strategy

According to the results of the questionnaire survey and the consumption habits of foreign consumers, we have proposed targeted promotion strategies for consumers in different regions. In Asia, since some countries in the region, such as South Korea and Thailand, have certain knowledge of TCM fire cupping culture, we can rely on the existing TCM acceptance base in the region to increase a large number of offline experiential activities, and domestic TCM centers can cooperate with local TCM centers to set up regular experiential days to attract more potential customers. In addition, increases the publicity of online popularization videos, using new media promotion. Netflix promotion, on the other hand, leverages local influencers to enhance the popularity and attractiveness of fire cupping, thus further consolidating and expanding the market. In the European region, such as the UK and Germany. Adjust the strategy of promoting Chinese fire cupping according to the needs of the European middle class and health enthusiasts who pursue high-quality health services. Popularization of Chinese cupping on YouTube, Twitter, and other platforms can reduce their doubts about the scientific nature of cupping, and high-end marketing gives cupping a higher sense of value, which helps to enhance its status and image in the European market. In Africa, such as Nigeria and Tanzania, public welfare activities and cultural background promotion based on the Belt and Road Initiative can enhance the understanding and trust of African people in TCM culture. Community clinics can directly demonstrate the efficacy of fire cupping, and storytelling to the local people can make fire cupping more culturally appealing, increase its recognition and acceptance in Africa, and strengthen Sino-African exchanges and cooperation in medical and cultural aspects. In the Americas and Oceania, such as the United States, Australia, and other countries, the use of celebrity effect and cooperation with local organizations, with the influence of celebrities and the professional channels of local health organizations, attract the attention of the middle class and health enthusiasts. For example, the case of American athlete Phelps can arouse public interest, and cooperation with fitness centers can integrate fire cupping as a restorative therapy into daily health management and effectively promote fire cupping.

(2) Replicable key promotion strategies

With the deepening process of globalization and the gradual improvement of people's health awareness, traditional Chinese medicine culture, especially Chinese medicine fire cupping, as an important part of it, is gradually going out of the country and into the world. However, how to realize effective promotion in diverse cultures and markets around the world, how to overcome cultural differences, and language barriers, and how to address doubts about efficacy and safety have become the core challenges in the promotion process. In this process, digital media communication, offline experiential activities, popularization of science and culture, and standardization are not only key strategies for the internationalization of TCM fire cupping but also replicable paths for the promotion of

TCM culture as a whole. The implementation of these innovative strategies can not only enhance the international recognition of fire cupping but also provide a clear path for the promotion of other TCM content.

First, digital media communication is an important means of breaking through geographical and cultural boundaries. Through precise placement on social media platforms around the world, fire cupping can achieve personalized communication strategies in different cultural contexts. We propose that in Europe and the United States, we focus on releasing customized short documentaries and health articles through platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, and accurately reach health enthusiasts through the platforms' algorithmic recommendations. In regions such as Southeast Asia and the Middle East, localized platforms such as Line and VK can be used to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the message. In addition to social media dissemination, AI-driven personalized push with the help of wearable device data has become an innovative initiative. Through real-time collection and analysis of health data, personalized cupping regimens can be pushed to users with different needs, such as recommending cervical spine regimens for sedentary office workers and muscle recovery regimens for athletes, all of which allow cupping to more accurately serve consumers globally and increase its acceptance. In addition, partnering with international platforms such as Coursera and Udemy to launch an Introductory Course on Chinese Medicine Fire Cupping, which systematically explains the principles and operation of fire cupping through an online course, will not only attract global health practitioners but also use fire cupping as a node for global promotion. The multi-dimensional dissemination of this digital platform, not only allows more people to understand fire cupping therapy but also helps Chinese medicine culture to break the language and cultural barriers and expand its global influence. In terms of offline promotion, the flash mob clinic model and the in-depth cultural and tourism integration tour are innovative initiatives. Combining the flash mob clinic model, which is common in the retail industry, with traditional Chinese medicine services, provides consumers with a quick experience while making it easier for them to understand and accept such Chinese medicine services through one-on-one professional explanations. This model can not only be set up in high-end shopping malls, art exhibitions, and other venues in Europe and the United States but also provide foreign consumers with the opportunity to directly understand Chinese medicine cupping through short-term cupping experiences. At the same time, the design of the cultural and tourism integration in-depth tour combines health and wellness with tourism, so that tourists can not only enjoy the therapeutic effects of fire cupping during the trip but also participate in the whole process of experiencing TCM culture, from medicine picking, pot making to the whole process of fire cupping experience, forming a deep cultural memory point. Such activities not only allow tourists to understand the unique charm of fire cupping but also have a lasting impact on their daily lives. For the promotion of local TCM centers, through the Certified Experience Center Program, the unified logo, service flow, and bilingual explanatory materials can increase the trust of residents in fire cupping, and guide the flow of information through the APP to ensure the consistency and professionalism of TCM services, further increasing the recognition of fire cupping in overseas markets. In terms of scientific and cultural popularization, the theory and practice of fire cupping is spread globally with the help of modern technology, breaking through the traditional way of popularizing science. Through 3D animated short films and scientific films launched in cooperation with Netflix, we can demonstrate from a microscopic perspective how fire cupping improves blood circulation and regulates qi and blood by activating self-healing power, providing intuitive scientific evidence, and resolving overseas consumers' doubts about safety and efficacy. At the same time, with the dual narrative approach of podcast and comic IP, combined with youthful forms of expression, the complementary nature of TCM philosophy and modern medicine behind fire cupping is conveyed through storytelling content. In this way, it is possible to break through the stereotypical mode of traditional science popularization, so that fire cupping is not just limited to medical therapy, but becomes a cultural symbol that gradually penetrates the lifestyle of the younger generation. In addition, the cooperation between the high-end health package and the Swiss Anti-Aging Center has given fire cupping a higher-end market positioning, and through the trend of modern health management and anti-aging, fire cupping has gained recognition in the high-

end market as a luxury-like means of health maintenance. In the process of promoting the internationalization of Chinese medicine fire cupping, standardization and the construction of an ecological closed loop are indispensable links. By applying for ISO international standards and promoting them through the WTO framework, we can ensure the safety and uniformity of fire cupping operations globally, laying the foundation for promotion in overseas markets. The establishment of a compliance cloud database with real-time updates of regulatory requirements in each country can help TCM fire cupping service providers avoid legal obstacles when conducting business in different countries while providing compliance guidance to practitioners worldwide. This will not only enhance the credibility of fire cupping in overseas markets but also gradually promote it as one of the mainstream international health maintenance methods. Combined with the research and development of intelligent devices, the launch of multi-lingual electronic cupping apparatus, combined with the global supply chain for 48-hour delivery, the integration of fire cupping hardware and services can better meet the needs of consumers in different countries and regions, ensuring that consumers around the world can enjoy convenient and professional services.

To summarize, both regional promotion strategies and key strategies for replicable promotion will help TCM fire cupping go global. Digital media, innovative offline activities, reconstruction of cultural communication pathways, and the combination of standardization and technological innovation will lay a solid foundation for the international promotion of fire cupping. These innovative strategies will not only promote the global promotion of Chinese medicine fire cupping but also provide a replicable promotion path for other Chinese medicine content, helping Chinese medicine culture achieve wider dissemination and recognition on the international stage. Cultural self-confidence is the soul of Chinese medicine going global. Only by deeply recognizing and adhering to the core values of Chinese medicine culture can its unique charm be highlighted on the international stage, thus opening up a broader space for development. This all-round promotion strategy, combining the power of modern technology and traditional culture, will enhance our cultural confidence and promote the internationalization and global dissemination of TCM culture.

4. Conclusion and Prospect

As an important part of TCM culture, Chinese fire cupping has gradually entered the international market in recent years, but it still faces significant challenges in the promotion process. Although the awareness has increased in many countries and regions, especially among young people, the market stickiness is not strong and the conversion rate is low, mainly due to cultural barriers, difficult-to-understand theories, and doubts about the safety of therapeutic efficacy. The cognitive differences between the core concepts of Chinese medicine, such as qi and meridians, and the Western medical system make it difficult for audiences to understand the scientific principles of fire cupping, especially in non-Western cultures. Therefore, the promotion of fire cupping requires effective cultural translation and flexible communication strategies that take into account different cultural backgrounds. In addition, the lack of standardized practices and international accreditation further hinders its global popularity, as consumers are skeptical about its safety. Nonetheless, fire cupping has great potential in the global health industry, especially in countries along the "Belt and Road", and with the growing demand for health care, its promotion should take into account cultural differences and market demand. The key to promoting the internationalization of fire cupping is to build a scientific and global demand for a Chinese medicine culture translation system. Through digital technology and modern scientific means, Chinese medicine theories are visualized and quantified to help eliminate cultural barriers and cognitive differences. At the same time, the digital transformation of the industrial ecology, combined with smart devices, big data, and artificial intelligence, provides users with personalized health solutions and improves the repurchase rate and customer stickiness. The introduction of immersive cultural experiences can also attract more consumers and improve market competitiveness.

In the future, the international development of fire cupping will face more complex challenges, but also contains

great potential. With the rising demand for global health, Chinese medicine fire cupping is expected to become one of the pioneers in promoting global health management and the revival of traditional medicine. Through cultural innovation and technological empowerment, fire cupping can not only find wide market acceptance globally but also provide valuable experience and replicable promotion paths for the modern transformation of TCM culture. Through the comprehensive means of standardization, cultural translation, and digital empowerment, the promotion of Chinese medicine fire cupping will rely on these innovative paths to promote the recognition and dissemination of Chinese medicine culture in the world and provide important support for the Belt and Road Initiative and the national cultural self-confidence.

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