

Inheritance and Development of Yaoba Oil-Paper Umbrellas: A Study of History, Current Status, and Innovation Strategies

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Abstract: *The Yaoba oil-paper umbrella is an important component of oil-paper umbrella making in the Luzhou area. However, its development now faces difficulties, and no previous research has been conducted on the preservation and development of the Yaoba oil-paper umbrella. This paper systematically examines the historical origins, significant value, current development status, and existing problems of the Yaoba oil-paper umbrella, exploring strategies for its inheritance and development in modern society.*

Keywords: *Yaoba oil-paper umbrella; cultural value; inheritance and innovation; cultural and tourism integrations*

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I. Research Background

1.1 Historical Origins of Yaoba Oil-paper Umbrellas

As an outstanding representative of traditional Chinese handicrafts, the oil-paper umbrella embodies profound cultural heritage and exquisite craftsmanship. The Yao Ba oil-paper umbrella boasts a long-standing production tradition, with origins traceable to the Ming and Qing dynasties. In the mid to late Ming dynasty, the rise of trade along the Ancient Salt and Tea Route turned Yao Ba into a distribution hub for goods between Sichuan and Guizhou. The demand for oil-paper umbrellas surged as rainproof tools. From the Qing dynasty to the Republic of China era, the craft reached its peak, with umbrella workshops concentrated in Yao Ba's old street, and products sold across Yunnan, Guizhou, and Sichuan^{Error! Reference source not found.}.

With over 400 years of historical accumulation and development, Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas have completely preserved the manual umbrella-making craftsmanship from the Ming and Qing dynasties, making them a 'living fossil' for studying ancient Chinese umbrella-making technology. Over the long years, the craftsmanship of Yao Ba oil-paper umbrellas has never been interrupted. Instead, it has been passed down from generation to generation, carefully preserved and inherited by artisans, becoming an indispensable symbol in the historical and cultural heritage of Yao Ba Ancient Town.

As the core inheritance site for oil-paper umbrella making in Luzhou, Yao Ba was included in the second batch of National Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2008 along with "Luzhou Oil-paper Umbrella Making Techniques." It is currently the only project related to "umbrella art" among China's intangible cultural heritage. Each Yao Ba oil-paper umbrella embodies the dedication and wisdom of craftsmen. Its unique production process and exquisite craftsmanship not only demonstrate the superb level of Chinese traditional handicrafts but also contain rich cultural connotations and historical value.

1.2 The important value of Yaoba oil-paper umbrella

1.2.1 Economic value

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, Yaoba Town became the most prosperous commercial hub in the Sichuan-Guizhou region due to its superior geographical location and convenient transportation conditions. Merchants gathered there, and trade activities were frequent. As one of the most important commodities in Yaoba Town at that time, oil-paper umbrellas first demonstrated their significant economic value.^{Error! Reference source not found.} As a historical and cultural town in Sichuan and Guizhou, Yaoba Ancient Town attracts numerous tourists with its profound historical heritage and unique cultural charm. To promote local economic development, the local government vigorously develops tourism, and oil-paper umbrellas have become one of the most popular tourist souvenirs in Yaoba Ancient Town. According to the owner of an oil-paper umbrella shop, tens of thousands of oil-paper umbrellas are sold each year.

1.2.2 Aesthetic value

Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas preserve the complete traditional craftsmanship of handmade umbrella making, requiring 70 to 96 steps including bamboo selection, rib shaping, pasting, painting, and tung oil

application, each strictly following ancient methods. Drawing inspiration from techniques like “Eight Trigrams Painting” and “Thread Dipping” from Fenshui oil-paper umbrellas, Yaoba umbrellas employ the core “Full Thread Weaving” technique, using five-colored silk threads to weave through the umbrella ribs over 2,000 times, forming an exquisite mesh structure that enhances durability while imparting visual rhythm.

The design of the oil-paper umbrella integrates the aesthetic essence of southern Sichuan folk art. The umbrella surface is painted using the traditional “Eight Immortals technique,” employing freehand brushwork to depict patterns such as peonies, blue-and-white porcelain, and cartoons. This not only continues the tradition of meticulous color painting from the Ming and Qing dynasties but also further enhances its aesthetic value, gradually transforming it from an ordinary everyday item into an artwork with profound cultural heritage. It has become a unique cultural symbol of Yaoba Town and an important representative of regional culture. Error! Reference source not found.

1.2.3 Humanistic value

The oil-paper umbrella has become the spiritual totem of Yaoba Ancient Town, deeply integrated into the local life and cultural fabric. The oil-paper umbrellas hanging on the ancient town's streets serve both as practical rain gear and poetic cultural symbols. Their homophonic meaning of “More children bring more blessings” is particularly prominent in traditional wedding customs—in the past, women were required to include oil-paper umbrellas as part of their dowry when getting married, symbolizing peace, auspiciousness, and family prosperity Error! Reference source not found..

In addition, oil-paper umbrellas frequently appear in film and television productions (such as “The Rice Store” and the recreation of the poetic scene in “The Lane in the Rain”) and in literary works, further reinforcing their status as a symbol of local culture. At the same time, oil-paper umbrellas are interwoven with the history and folk beliefs of ancient towns. For example, in one ancient town, the memorial archway of a martial scholar stands next to an oil-paper umbrella shop—the former symbolizing the patriotic spirit of “a sword’s energy piercing the sky,” and the latter representing the life wisdom of “an umbrella shielding all households.”

Together, they embody the balanced blend of firmness and gentleness in the spirit of the town’s people. In addition, the ability of the oil-paper umbrella to open and close freely in wind and rain has been endowed with the philosophical connotations of “overcoming hardness with softness” and “sheltering all beings,” becoming a spiritual support for local people when facing the challenges of nature and life.

II. Development Status of Yaoba Oil-paper Umbrellas

Industrial umbrellas are increasingly becoming popular and convenient durable rain gear, replacing the daily functions of traditional oil-paper umbrellas. Consumers mostly regard them as “craft products” rather than daily necessities, compressing market space. To some extent, this has impacted the development of traditional oil-paper umbrellas commercially. The production cycle of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas is long, and the time-consuming and labor-intensive process leads to young people's reluctance to enter the industry, resulting in a generational gap in inheritance.

On the other hand, the prices of raw materials such as bamboo and tung oil required for Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas continue to rise. Moreover, the entirely handmade production process has low efficiency, making it difficult to achieve large-scale production. As a result, costs cannot be diluted through bulk sales, leaving them at a disadvantaged position in the umbrella market competition. Due to high production costs, Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas are priced significantly higher than industrial rain gear, leading to sales challenges for shops selling these umbrellas in Yaoba Town.

These are unavoidable difficulties in the development of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas. Through on-site visits and observations, it was found that oil-paper umbrella shops in Yaoba Town are mainly concentrated in the old street. However, many artisans have changed professions, resulting in a significant reduction in the number of shops compared to before. The shops appear relatively deserted, with tourists being the primary customers. With the Yaoba Town government vigorously developing tourism, Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas primarily rely on ancient town tourism promotion, forming a distinctive cultural tourism chain combined with local snacks like old street tofu pudding and yellow cake Error! Reference source not found..

2.1 The challenges faced by the current development of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas

2.1.1 Market Contraction: Survival Crisis Amid Changing Consumer Scenarios

In the traditional bustle of everyday life, craftsmanship was never a distant exhibit locked away, but a presence intertwined with the lifeblood of daily living. The elders often said: “Only with the existence of craftsmanship can we live,” a simple phrase that captures the symbiotic relationship between craft and life in traditional society.

Yaoba Ancient Town was once a lively post station along the ancient path between Sichuan and Guizhou, and back then, oil-paper umbrellas were the most common “hard currency” road in the town, the standard gear

for families in southern Sichuan venturing out on rainy days. According to the Gazetteer of Hejiang County, during the Ming and Qing dynasties up to the Republic of China period, Yaoba, as an important post station on the Sichuan-Guizhou Ancient Path known as the “Ancient Salt and Tea Route”, saw more than a hundred mule caravans pass through the town daily, with porters constantly shuttling back and forth, and oil-paper umbrellas being an indispensable item in merchants' travel kits^{Error! Reference source not found.}. It depicts the thriving scene of oil-paper umbrellas in traditional consumption.

Hundreds of years later, the everyday rain-shielding function of the Yaoba oil-paper umbrella has been replaced by modern nylon folding umbrellas, which have become mainstream due to their light weight and low price. In contrast, the oil-paper umbrella, being bulky, fragile, and lacking waterproof upgrades, has gradually degraded into a purely artisanal or decorative item, disconnecting from everyday use by the general public.

The consumption of traditional handicrafts and their service scenarios are rapidly changing, with the structural disappearance of consumption scenes. This has caused oil-paper umbrellas to shift from daily necessities to niche cultural products: According to a 2023 survey report from the Luzhou Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection Center, among the annual sales of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas, tourist purchases account for 83%, while daily use by local residents only accounts for 7%; among purchase purposes, decorative ornaments account for 62%, while practical rain protection only accounts for 11%.^{Error! Reference source not found.}; Meanwhile, the consumption scenario of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas highly relies on Yaoba Ancient Town tourism and specific events held in the ancient town. The usage scenarios are mainly concentrated in the cultural tourism sector, with limited daily application scenarios.

Non-essential demand restricts market growth, resulting in a limited market size. It is evident that the consumer scenarios and uses of oil-paper umbrellas have undergone a structural shift—a core displacement from “embedded in daily life” to “detached from daily life.” This transformation signifies that oil-paper umbrella consumption no longer relies on “deep integration with local life” but instead depends on “ancient town tourism consumption.” The locality of the scenario has been replaced by mobility, leading to a decline in stability. The rapid development of the times has led to changes in consumer scenarios, and oil-paper umbrellas are no longer essentials. Their traditional functional uses have been replaced, and the shift in consumer groups has caused the development of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas to face a systemic disconnection between their value system and modern contexts.

This separation is not accidental but reflects the dilemma faced by intangible cultural heritage handicrafts amid social transformation: when the “soil for survival” of traditional scenarios disappears, if they cannot rebuild connections with daily life in new contexts, even if their symbolic value is briefly consumed, it is hard to hide the underlying concern of a loosening foundation.

2.1.2 Lack of Successors: The “Life-and-Death Exam” of Ancient Skills

Yaoba oil-paper umbrella, a national intangible cultural heritage with four hundred years of inheritance, involves intricate and rigorous traditional craftsmanship. From bamboo selection, splitting bamboo strips, pasting umbrella paper to applying tung oil, the process requires nearly a hundred steps, embodying the ultimate craftsmanship of artisans through generations.

However, this ancient craft is now facing a severe inheritance crisis: in Yaoba Town, only a few elderly intangible cultural heritage inheritors like Zhang Qixiu remain steadfast, with young practitioners accounting for less than 5%, and a significant gap has emerged among inheritors around 35 years old^{Error! Reference source not found.}.

The core reason for this predicament lies in the structural contradiction between traditional craftsmanship and modern society: the production method of Yaoba paper umbrellas requires “slow work and meticulous craftsmanship,” where apprentices need to spend over ten years to master the essence of nearly a hundred processes. However, contemporary young people generally find it difficult to endure the loneliness of “sitting on a cold bench for ten years” required by traditional skills and the long-term lack of stable economic returns.

Secondly, pipeline steel frame umbrellas rely on high efficiency and low cost to quickly capture the market, leaving increasingly limited space for handmade oil-paper umbrellas; with restricted sales volume and thin profit margins, practitioners struggle to obtain decent income commensurate with their craftsmanship;

Meanwhile, the lack of successors to carry on the tradition has led to a disconnect between cultural heritage and realism. The value assessment system in modern society leans more towards pragmatism, with consumers focusing more on the “lightweight, waterproof, and affordable” aspects of umbrellas. Potential inheritors have a weak perception of the cultural value of “century-old craftsmanship” and “artisan spirit,” while the market prioritizes “sales volume and profit margin” as core indicators, showing little patience for cultural added value that cannot be quickly monetized. This value disconnection leads to the cultural value of oil-paper umbrellas not being fully transformed into consumption motivation, with most people merely viewing them as “nostalgic ornaments”; Under the dual squeeze caused by value misalignment, the profound cultural capital of oil-paper umbrellas struggles to convert into sustainable consumption momentum; while potential inheritors

cannot rely solely on “craftsman spirit” to withstand economic pressures. When the high status of culture and the low status of economy persistently clash, the appeal of traditional skills to young people consequently diminishes.

Furthermore, the inheritance of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas relies on the traditional master-apprentice system characterized by “oral transmission and hands-on guidance,” lacking standardized teaching materials or quantifiable indicators. This inheritance model, which “depends on individual comprehension,” forms a sharp contradiction with the “systematic, short-cycle, and quantifiable” nature of modern education systems. For young people accustomed to modular learning and certificate-based evaluation, it is difficult to overcome the high entry barrier caused by the lack of a system, and they are unwilling to endure the long reward cycle of “three years of miscellaneous tasks, five years of becoming proficient, and ten years of mastering the craft.” This seemingly endless journey deters many potential inheritors.

2.1.3 Industry Dilemma: Development Challenges under a Single Industry

As an economic production form, traditional folk handicrafts have long adopted family-based individual or workshop-style production organization models, operating either through self-management or by conducting production activities with the support of national policies⁰. “The Sustainable Development Dilemma and Path of Intangible Cultural Heritage Workshops” points out that 70% of China's intangible cultural heritage projects are facing development bottlenecks due to closed production models and broken industrial chains.

Although Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas have been inherited for a hundred years, they still have not formed a large-scale production model. They mainly rely on self-operation, lack modern enterprise awareness, and have not achieved scale or batch production. The industrial chain is incomplete, with insufficient coordination between upstream and downstream enterprises. Raw materials have not been fully localized, bamboo processing still primarily involves rough sorting, while refined cutting, mildew prevention, and other processes depend on external suppliers, resulting in high raw material costs.

2.1.4 The Dilemma of Paper Umbrellas: A Survival Puzzle Amid Insufficient “Soft Power”

Only by following a sustainable path of inheritance and innovation can intangible cultural heritage projects, like a brilliant galaxy, traverse history, shine into reality, and shape the golden brand of “Luzhou Intangible Cultural Heritage.” Although Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas are intangible cultural heritage products, their brand influence mainly relies on the tourism context of Yaoba Ancient Town. This tourism-dependent consumption makes it difficult for the brand to break through geographical limitations and escape the low-end positioning of tourist souvenirs.

Through an interview with Zhang Qixiu, the ninth-generation inheritor of the intangible cultural heritage of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas, it was learned that her family's sales platforms for these umbrellas include both online and offline channels. The offline sales rely on government efforts to promote tourism development, while online brand promotion is insufficient, resulting in low awareness.

Currently, only simple e-commerce sales are used as a supplement to offline sales. Short video promotional content mostly showcases “craftsmanship demonstrations, lacks memorable highlights, has an interaction rate below 3%, fails to leverage internet IPs and hot topics, lacks topical appeal, and e-commerce platform sales remain stagnant at a certain level. Due to insufficient exploration of the power of “Internet+”, it failed to leverage the enabling role of the internet in breaking geographical limitations, aggregating niche demands, and shaping brand recognition⁰.

Meanwhile, the Yaoba oil-paper umbrella brand suffers from low recognition and a lack of innovative design. The patterns on Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas number less than a hundred, with 80% of designs still concentrated on themes like flowers, birds, and landscapes. Integration with modern Chinese trendy elements is less than 15%. In contrast, the Fenshui oil-paper umbrella from the same Luzhou area has achieved annual sales exceeding 100,000 units through innovative designs such as “panda-themed umbrellas” and “Sichuan opera mask umbrellas”.

The Yao'ba oil-paper umbrella industrial chain remains stuck in the production-sales phase, with cultural and creative derivative development accounting for less than 5%. Cultural symbols are only conveyed through the umbrella surface, and the lack of cultural derivatives restricts the creation of regional cultural IP. With low product recognition, it is difficult to enhance industrial added value. The deficiency in soft power causes Yao'ba oil-paper umbrellas to miss out on high value-added markets.

III. Research on Sustainable Development Strategies for Luzhou Yaoba Oil-Paper Umbrellas

“The vitality of cultural heritage lies in keeping pace with the times. Only by continuously endowing it with new contemporary connotations and modern forms of expression can we stimulate lasting vitality.” General Secretary Xi Jinping's important exposition on intangible cultural heritage protection has pointed out the direction for the modern transformation of traditional crafts. As representative intangible cultural heritage oil-paper umbrellas from the Luzhou region, the Fenshui oil-paper umbrella has established a sustainable development

model through creative transformation and innovative development, while the Yaoba oil-paper umbrella faces dual crises of inheritance and market challenges amid changing times. Behind this development gap lies not only the common challenges faced by traditional crafts in modern society, but also the deep-seated logic behind differentiated path choices.

Therefore, it is highly necessary to deeply explore the sustainable development path of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas, and considerations regarding their existing problems should be approached from the following aspects.

3.1 The Sustainable Development Path of Yaoba Oil-Paper Umbrellas under the “Intangible Cultural Heritage + Cultural Tourism” Integration Mechanism

As a national 4A-level scenic area, Yaoba Ancient Town features winding bluestone-paved paths on its century-old streets, with a long stretch of well-arranged residences typical of southern Sichuan. The antique charm accumulated over time blends harmoniously with the natural texture of the surrounding mountains and waters. This unique cultural and natural ecology not only provides the most suitable “growth environment” for oil-paper umbrellas, but also creates fertile ground for their transformation from traditional craftsmanship inheritance to “intangible cultural heritage + cultural tourism,” becoming a natural barrier and sustainable driving force supporting the enduring development of oil-paper umbrellas.

The “14th Five-Year Plan for Intangible Cultural Heritage Protection” clearly proposes promoting the deep integration of intangible cultural heritage with tourism, and supporting the construction of intangible cultural heritage themed tourism routes and experience bases Error! Reference source not found.; Sichuan Province's “South Sichuan Cultural Tourism Integration Development Plan” lists Yaoba Ancient Town as a core node of the “Sichuan-Guizhou Ancient Road Cultural Experience Belt,” encouraging the activation and utilization of intangible cultural heritage resources. Therefore, unique tourism resources can be leveraged to create new consumption scenarios, and the development mechanism of “intangible cultural heritage + cultural tourism” can be used to promote the development of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas.

Due to the solid tourist flow in Yao'ba Ancient Town, leveraging the appeal of the characteristic ancient town to automatically build new consumption scenarios, establishing an Oil-paper Umbrella Making Experience + Custom Workshop: During the hands-on process of making oil-paper umbrellas, tourists can not only gain an in-depth understanding of their history and culture but also enhance their experience and add fun through personal involvement. They can also provide their own design patterns to the workshop for customization, eventually taking home a unique oil-paper umbrella that belongs exclusively to them. This model aligns with the consumption concepts of contemporary young consumer groups and meets the market demand for experiential consumption.

Secondly, promoting the integration of culture with regional characteristics, oil-paper umbrellas can be combined with Yaoba's Red Culture and Folk Culture to develop themed products such as “Red Army Umbrellas” and “Ancient Tea-Horse Road”, avoiding homogenized competition with oil-paper umbrellas from other regions; With strong government support, the ancient town has created the “Ancient Town Umbrella Shadows” themed tour route by organizing various contemporary cultural tourism and folk activities during holidays, forming a characteristic culture-driven development model that attracts more tourists and traditional culture enthusiasts to check in and experience the oil-paper umbrella culture Error! Reference source not found..

This innovative development has facilitated the deep integration of “intangible cultural heritage + cultural tourism”, not only increased the annual tourist volume year-on-year but also transformed oil-paper umbrella consumption from passive purchasing to active experiential engagement. This development model, which takes distinctive culture as its soul and cultural-tourism integration as its bridge, not only allows oil-paper umbrellas to find new fertile ground in contemporary life, but also creates a virtuous cycle where intangible cultural heritage protection and economic development mutually nourish each other, truly achieving a sustainable development leap from survival to thriving.

3.2 Strengthen Protection Awareness and Follow the Path of Modernizing the Inheritance of Oil-paper Umbrella Craftsmanship

Given the multicultural attributes of intangible cultural heritage, including its ethnic, unique, and diverse characteristics, its protection paths inevitably exhibit differentiated features. However, it must be clear that the diverse exploration of protection methods must take maintaining its cultural authenticity and following its inherent evolutionary laws as the fundamental premise, avoiding the extinction of this fragile cultural form due to human intervention or environmental changes. Given the non-renewable nature of intangible cultural heritage, establishing the protection first principle has always been the core logic of inheritance practices Error! Reference source not found..

To address the shortage of inheritors for the Yaoba oil-paper umbrella, digital storage and video simulation technologies can be utilized. 3D scanning technology can permanently preserve the exclusive skills of the umbrella artisans, while 4K slow-motion videos can record the hand force techniques of the craftsmen,

resolving the ambiguity of traditional oral instruction. Even decades later when the inheritors retire, future generations can still accurately replicate the techniques through digital storage; Video virtual technology can create “interactive tutorials” that transform the complex process of oil-paper umbrella making into virtual courses that are “pausable, zoomable, and annotatable” Learners can repeatedly watch key steps, lowering the threshold for inheritance and shortening the learning cycle for young learners to master the craft.

Secondly, we can utilize the policy of bringing intangible cultural heritage into campuses and scenic spots to cooperate with local universities on intangible cultural heritage projects. Using 3D projection technology, we can offer art appreciation courses on oil-paper umbrella patterns in universities to stimulate students' interest Error! Reference source not found.. Simultaneously establishing an oil-paper umbrella research and learning base locally, launching both online and offline research activities to break through time and space constraints, allowing remote visits to oil-paper umbrella workshops through VR equipment, and providing an immersive understanding of the production process and historical heritage of oil-paper umbrellas.

The combination of these approaches forms a dual-wheel inheritance model of “skill experience and cultural dissemination,” which not only allows the younger generation to get close to intangible cultural heritage through immersive experiences but also lays a solid talent foundation for the intergenerational inheritance of oil-paper umbrella craftsmanship Error! Reference source not found.. Intangible cultural heritage, as a “living culture” flowing through time, is being revitalized through digital tools such as the Internet, big data, and artificial intelligence. This enables traditional crafts to continuously gain new life through digital empowerment, achieving the contemporary translation of cultural memories on the bridge built by technology, and ensuring that living heritage truly progresses steadily and enduringly.

3.3 Industrial Chain Collaboration: The Ecological Development Path of Oil Paper Umbrella's “Intangible Cultural Heritage + Rural Revitalization”

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping has attached great importance to the protection of intangible cultural heritage and rural revitalization. He emphasized the need to “effectively inherit intangible cultural heritage and promote the effective connection between consolidating and expanding the achievements of poverty alleviation and comprehensive rural revitalization.” Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas should use industrial chain collaboration as a link to transform intangible cultural heritage skills into vibrant momentum for rural revitalization Error! Reference source not found..

As the core material for the frame of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas, producing these umbrellas requires a large quantity of moso bamboo. Yaoba Town boasts exceptional bamboo forest resources, with naturally grown bamboo accounting for over 60% of the mountain forests. This provides suitable climate and soil conditions for large-scale moso bamboo cultivation, laying a natural foundation for localized and sustainable supply of raw materials. The government can take the lead in establishing an integrated “planting-processing-supply” system:

On one hand, combining with rural revitalization industry support policies, encourage farmers to plant moso bamboo, transfer land through the “village collective + farmer households” model, provide free high-quality moso bamboo seedlings and planting technical training to farmers, ensuring the quality and stability of oil-paper umbrella raw materials;

on the other hand, build preliminary processing bases for moso bamboo, purchase moso bamboo from surrounding farmers, while bamboo processing also creates many job opportunities, providing farmers with stable income. Processed nan bamboo can be sold to other oil-paper umbrella workshops in Luzhou, thus forming an upstream raw material sales network of “Yaoba raw material supply + regional workshop production”.

The oil-paper umbrella industry drives the coordinated development of other industries, which not only strengthens the foundation of the local oil-paper umbrella industry but also enhances the overall competitiveness of the Luzhou oil-paper umbrella industry through regional industrial coordination, closely linking the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage skills with rural prosperity.

3.4 Youthful Expression + Multi-dimensional Communication: The Innovative Promotion Path to Revitalize Oil-paper Umbrellas

Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas should use youthful expression as the brush and multi-dimensional communication as the bridge, breaking down regional and demographic barriers. Through cross-boundary dissemination, they can continuously amplify cultural recognition and inject new momentum into the living

inheritance of intangible cultural heritage ^{Error! Reference source not found.}. Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas should follow the national trend by innovating boldly with umbrella surface patterns, catering to the aesthetic demands of younger, more popular, and contemporary tastes, thereby designing unique thematic umbrellas that embody the ancient charm of Yaoba.

Secondly, we can deepen cross-border collaborations with youth-oriented brands such as clothing and bubble tea, integrating core elements of oil-paper umbrellas—such as the fragrance of bamboo frames, the texture of tung oil, and Sichuan patterns—into product design. This approach aims to create aesthetically pleasing cultural and creative products that are widely appreciated by the public. Examples include “Oil-Paper Umbrella Study Blind Boxes,” “Rain Alley Patterned Bubble Tea Cup Sleeves,” and “Oil-Paper Umbrella Printed Hanfu,” which combine aesthetic quality with practical value ^{Error! Reference source not found.}.

Expanding communication channels through the integration of “intangible cultural heritage + short videos”: Utilizing new media platforms like Douyin and Xiaohongshu, employ new methods and communication approaches acceptable to the general public to help traditional handicrafts break out of their established circles, Leveraging the viral effect of online communication not only allows oil-paper umbrellas to transcend time and space constraints, amplifying the cultural exposure of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas, but also more precisely reaches Generation Z consumers, transforming century-old craftsmanship from a symbol of ancient towns into cultural trendy products pursued by young people.

IV. Limitations of the research

At the time of writing this article, through extensive literature research and field investigations, we have objectively analyzed the historical and cultural connotations of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas and the challenges they face in development, while also proposing relatively appropriate directional strategies for solutions. However, there are still some limitations in the research process:

Firstly, the paper focuses solely on the Yao Ba oil-paper umbrella itself, with a relatively narrow research scope, failing to fully incorporate external factors such as the overall intangible cultural heritage protection policies in Luzhou (e.g. funding support, industrialization planning for intangible cultural heritage) and the competitive environment of local tourism (e.g. the substitution effect of intangible cultural heritage products from other ancient towns).

Secondly, the proposed strategy primarily analyzes based on the current situation and short-term research data, lacking long-term tracking and forecasting of the development trends of Yaoba oil-paper umbrellas.

Thirdly, the solution strategies in the research have methodological limitations, failing to examine the practical experiences of modernization development of oil-paper umbrellas in other regions through field surveys, relying solely on literature review and online data analysis, resulting in a lack of depth in the analysis of implementation difficulties, cost-effectiveness, and local adaptability.

Fourthly, the research findings are only applicable to the specific context of Yaoba Town's oil-paper umbrellas, and their generalizability is limited to non-scenic-area-driven oil-paper umbrella development regions within Luzhou.

V. Conclusion

With the continuous advancement of modernization, how to achieve the modern transformation of intangible cultural heritage and keep pace with the times has become an important issue. As a significant part of oil-paper umbrellas in the Luzhou region, the Yaoba oil-paper umbrella carries profound cultural connotations and historical value. To address the development challenges of Yaoba Oil-Paper Umbrellas, it is imperative to achieve multi-dimensional resonance among the government, society, and the market, seamlessly integrating traditional craftsmanship with modern aesthetics to create a favorable environment for sustainable growth. I believe that when policy attraction, capital momentum, and cultural influence resonate in harmony, Yaoba Oil-Paper Umbrellas will transcend temporal and spatial boundaries, accomplishing a magnificent transformation from craftsmanship to cultural memory and ultimately to industry in the fertile cultural soil of Luzhou, allowing ancient Eastern artistry to continually rejuvenate with contemporary vitality.

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