

HERITAGE AND INNOVATION OF MUSIC AND PERFORMANCE IN HANSHAN SILKWORM FLOWER FESTIVAL FROM TOURIST PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the integration of traditional performances and modern technologies in the Hanshan Silkworm Flower Festival, a significant representative of silkworm culture and China's intangible cultural heritage. With the changing times and the changing structure of tourists, festivals face challenges between attractiveness and cultural heritage. How to balance tradition and modernity through the innovative design of music and performing arts has become a central issue for research.

From the perspective of visitors, this study combines survey data and content analysis to examine strategies for optimizing the festival experience. A total of 169 valid survey responses were collected, along with an analysis of 2 social media entries. The results indicate that 62.7% of respondents recognize the value of performances that integrate traditional and modern elements. Younger visitors prefer technological features and interactive experiences, such as virtual reality (VR) and holographic projections, while older visitors place greater emphasis on preserving traditional cultural rituals.

Keywords: Silkworm flower festival, Tourist perspective, Music and performance, Modern innovation

INTRODUCTION

Traditional festivals, as periodic collective activities, serve as vital expressions of local culture and core carriers of intangible cultural heritage. However, in the context of globalization and rapid modernization, these festivals confront a paradoxical dilemma: how to preserve cultural authenticity while adapting to evolving audience expectations. Over-adherence to tradition may alienate younger generations and international tourists, while uncritical technological integration may dilute cultural symbolism and trigger intergenerational conflicts. Therefore, achieving a dynamic balance between heritage protection and innovation has become a key challenge for festival organizers and cultural scholars.

The Hanshan Silkworm Flower Festival, recognised as a national intangible cultural heritage in China, reflects this ongoing challenge. Dating back to the Ming Dynasty, the festival originated from the worship of the silkworm goddess and traditionally featured folk songs, ritual dances, and theatre performances expressing the expectation of a good harvest (Yang, 2019). Over time, it has developed into a cultural tradition that combines religious ceremonies, economic activities and community gatherings. In recent years, organisers have introduced modern elements such as contemporary music and virtual reality to make the festival more appealing to younger audiences. While these innovations have helped to attract visitors, they have also raised concerns about weakening cultural traditions and making it difficult for older participants, who value the authenticity of the rituals, to fully participate.

This study examines how the music and performing arts of the Hanshan Silkworm Flower Festival balance cultural heritage with modern innovation from a visitor's perspective, using survey and content analysis methods. While filling a gap in existing research on visitor needs and preferences, it also highlights differences among visitor groups and offers concrete suggestions for enhancing the festival's design. The goal is to strengthen both cultural transmission and audience appeal

OBJECTIVE

19. To explore the integration of traditional performances and modern technologies in the Hanshan Silkworm Flower Festival through visitor feedback and data analysis.
20. To propose actionable strategies that balance cultural authenticity with festival appeal.

METHODOLOGY

This study explores how traditional performances and modern technologies are integrated into the Hanshan Silkworm Flower Festival to enhance both cultural authenticity and attractiveness. A combination of survey research and content analysis was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The researcher has set guidelines, steps, and methods for conducting the study as follows

Research Design

Data Collection

Validation and refinement of research tools

Data collection methods, incorporating surveys and social media content analysis

Data analysis methods, including statistical analysis and content analysis

Research Design

A mixed method approach was used to analyze visitor perspectives and festival dynamics. Quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire, while qualitative data were obtained from social media content analysis

The research subjects were participants of the Hanshan Silkworm Festival, including local residents and out-of-town visitors. The target population was chosen to include individuals of different ages, genders, and occupations, ensuring that the data remains diverse and relevant. In addition to the questionnaire survey, the researchers also used social media platforms with a large number of users in China, such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu, to conduct supplementary analysis of the survey data. A total of 250 relevant social media posts were selected for content analysis to further understand tourists' perceptions and emotional attitudes towards the fusion of traditional and modern elements of the art festival

Data Collection

The primary research tool used in this study was a questionnaire, which was designed as follows

Part 1: Basic Information

This section collects demographic information such as gender, age, occupation, education level, and whether the respondent is a local resident

Part 2: Knowledge of the Festival

This section assesses the respondent's knowledge of the Hanshan Silkworm Flower Festival,

including its historical background, traditional cultural elements, festival features, and overall satisfaction

Part 3: Music and Performance Art Innovation

Attitudes towards the integration of traditional and modern music, acceptance of modern music elements (such as pop music, electronic music), and the impact on the festival's atmosphere

Validation and refinement of research tools

To ensure the quality of a research instrument, it is necessary to follow a systematic approach.

Below are the steps for creating and validating research tools:

Literature Review and Question Design .1

The design of the questionnaire was based on a thorough review of relevant literature on cultural tourism, music performances, and cultural heritage. This ensured that the questionnaire effectively measured respondents' perceptions of the traditional and innovative elements of the festival

Expert Review .2

Three experts in the fields of cultural tourism and intangible cultural heritage were invited to review the initial draft of the questionnaire. Their feedback helped refine the questionnaire to ensure its accuracy and relevance to the research objectives

Pre-test and Revision .3

A pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted with 30 individuals whose characteristics were similar to the target sample. The feedback from the pre-test was used to revise and improve the clarity of the questionnaire, ensuring that it could effectively capture respondents' views

Final Implementation .4

After revising the questionnaire, it was distributed during the Hanshan Silkworm Flower Festival. Data collection was carried out through both online and offline methods

Data collection methods

Data collection consisted of two main sources: primary data and secondary data

1.Primary Data

Primary data were collected directly through the questionnaire survey. The surveys were conducted online and offline to festival participants. After collecting the responses, the data were screened, resulting in 1 valid questionnaire 69

2.Secondary Data

Secondary data were gathered from social media platforms, including Weibo and Xiaohongshu, which are popular among Chinese users. By analyzing relevant content on these platforms, the researcher gained further insights into visitors' emotional attitudes and cultural understanding of the festival, complementing the questionnaire data and providing multi-dimensional support

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS and other statistical tools. The analysis process involved the following methods

Part 1: Descriptive Statistics

Frequency analysis was used to describe the basic demographic characteristics of the sample, and percentages were calculated to summarize the distribution of responses

Part 2: Festival Participation Perception

Respondents' views on the integration of traditional and modern elements in the festival were analyzed, using percentages and standard deviations to measure the variability in responses

Part 3: Cultural Knowledge and Understanding

Respondents' knowledge of cultural elements was analyzed using frequency, percentage, and average scores

Additionally, we conducted content analysis on the social media data to identify key themes and sentiments related to the festival's innovative use of technology and its cultural significance. We used the Jieba tool to perform text segmentation and word frequency analysis on the data

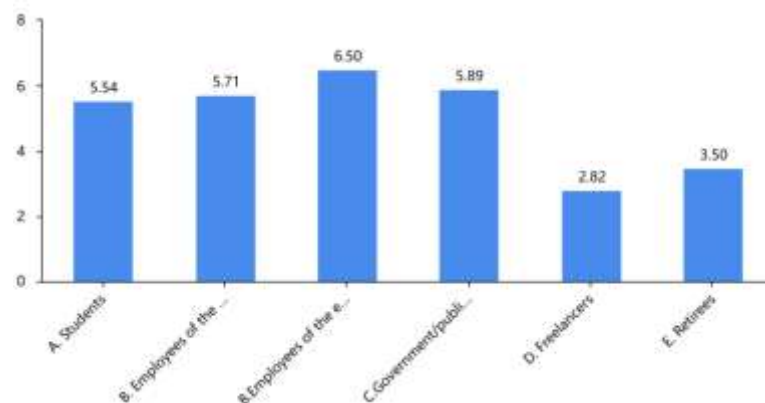
RESULTS

The study employed analysis of variance (ANOVA) to statistically examine the differences in expectations for various types of musical performances at the Silkworm Flower Festival among different occupational groups. The study variables included occupational categories (government/public institution employees, corporate employees, students, freelancers, and retirees) and different types of musical performances (traditional folk performances, modern artistic performances, interactive performances, and immersive multimedia performances)

A higher score indicates a greater expectation for festival music performances, reflecting stronger interest in musical performances. Conversely, a lower score suggests lower expectation levels, indicating a weaker interest in music performances or a preference for other forms of cultural experiences

The results demonstrate that occupational background significantly influences audience expectations for musical performances. From Figure 1

Figure 1
Distribution of expectations of different occupational groups for music performances at the Hanshan Silkworm Flower Festival



The findings reveal the following trends

Government/public institution employees (6.50 points) place greater emphasis on cultural value and prefer performances that integrate traditional and modern elements

Corporate employees (5.89 points–5.71) favor performances that combine cultural depth with entertainment, such as modern adaptations of traditional folk music or immersive experiences

.Students (5.54 points) show a stronger preference for interactive and modernized performances

Freelancers (2.82points) and retirees (3.50points) exhibit lower expectations for music performances, possibly preferring more static cultural experiences, such as exhibitions or social events

In addition, social media data analysis showed that visitors generally had a positive attitude towards the festival's innovative elements, such as digital art and immersive experiences. However, some concerns remain, including the dilution of traditional culture and the challenge of maintaining the engagement of young audiences. Therefore, festival design needs to strike a balance between cultural heritage protection and modern artistic expression. Table 1

Table 1

Results of Social Media Sentiment Analysis

Keyword	Sentiment Tendency	Example/Sentiment Context
Lively, Grand	Positive	"The Hanshan Silkworm Flower Festival was truly grand," "The huge crowd was astonishing."
Aesthetic, Spectacular	Positive	"So beautiful! The atmosphere of spring is so strong," "Folk performances are dazzling," "A series of great shows one after another."
Innovation, Modernity	Positive	"Integrating modern digital technology with traditional blessing culture," "Immersive performances," "The establishment of the Digital Art Tourism Alliance."
Cultural Heritage	Positive	"This is our traditional culture. The more people come, the more it can be carried forward."
Limited Youth Engagement	Neutral/Challenging	"The way rural culture is presented is quite traditional, which may not be very attractive to young people."
Traffic Concentration	Neutral	"Almost all the traffic is concentrated during the Qingming Festival period every year."

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This study explores the modern development of music performances at the Huzhou Silkworm Flower Festival, revealing the complex relationship between musical innovation, audience interaction, and cultural inheritance. The findings indicate that audience preferences for musical performances are influenced by factors such as age, occupation, and cultural background. Specifically, Young audiences tend to prefer interactive performances with modern elements, while older audiences prefer traditional styles. In addition, the study also shows that incorporating innovative technology into music performances can enhance audience immersion and participation, and digital media is an important tool for promotion and audience expansion

Based on the above research findings, it can be further concluded that optimizing the content and dissemination of music performances is crucial to improving the audience experience and enhancing the appeal of festivals. To better align performances with audience preferences, festival organizers should design diverse musical programs that accommodate the needs of different age and occupational groups. This includes integrating both traditional folk music and contemporary popular elements. In addition, emerging technologies such as AI-generated music, immersive sound effects, and virtual reality (VR) performances should be utilized to create a more interactive and immersive experience. In addition, social media and short video platforms play a key role in the dissemination of music performances; therefore, future efforts should focus on refining digital communication strategies to expand audience reach and enhance the brand influence of the Huzhou Silkworm Flower Festival

Although this study reveals the importance of musical performances in festivals, there are still some limitations. Future research can explore several areas in more depth. First, while this study mainly relied on questionnaires, future surveys can combine in-depth interviews, focus groups, and long-term follow-up studies to more fully understand the audience's perceptions and preferences. Second, further exploration is needed to evaluate the long-term impact of technological applications, especially in balancing musical innovation with traditional cultural protection. Ensuring that technology complements rather than undermines cultural authenticity remains a key challenge. In addition, future research should evaluate the economic and social impact of musical performances and study their role in the local economy, tourism, and community cohesion. These studies will provide theoretical support for the modernization of the Hanshan Silkworm Flower Festival and other traditional festivals.

In conclusion, this study provides a foundation for future research on the modernization of Huzhou Silkworm Festival music performances. Further exploration of the key issues discussed will be conducive to the sustainable development of festival music and provide more practical guidance for the modernization and innovation of traditional festivals.

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