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Cross-Cultural Communication Pathways of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Spanish-Speaking World: A Case Study of Xiangxi Miao Embroidery

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Abstract

Amid the ongoing expansion of China's international cultural communication, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) has increasingly emerged as a vital medium for showcasing the diversity of Chinese culture and fostering cross-cultural understanding. Xiangxi Miao embroidery, a representative form of traditional embroidery art of China's ethnic minorities, is distinguished by its strong visual identity, rich historical memory, and profound cultural significance. These attributes endow it with notable advantages in symbolic communication and cultural interpretation in international contexts. This study takes the dissemination of Xiangxi Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world as its research focus, examining its communication pathways, modes of representation, practical challenges, and potential strategies for optimization. The findings suggest that its international dissemination has gradually developed a multi-channel model characterized by the coexistence of official exhibitions, commercial applications, and digital media platforms. However, several limitations remain, including insufficient articulation of cultural connotations, underdeveloped translation and interpretive mechanisms, a relatively narrow range of communication actors, and audience engagement that tends to remain at the level of surface aesthetics. To address these challenges, this study proposes strengthening cultural storytelling, improving translation and interpretive frameworks, diversifying communication stakeholders, and enhancing interactive communication capacities. These efforts are essential to advancing the global dissemination of Chinese ICH in the Spanish-speaking world—from mere visibility to deeper comprehensibility, and from passive viewing to meaningful cultural identification.

Keywords

intangible cultural heritage; Xiangxi Miao embroidery; Spanish-speaking world; cross-cultural communication; cultural symbols

1 Introduction

In the context of deepening globalization and the rapid development of digital communication, cultural exchange has long moved beyond the mere transmission of information and increasingly evolved into a complex process involving value expression, meaning negotiation, and cognitive construction. Culture constitutes the

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living soul of a nation and serves as a vital embodiment of its historical traditions and cultural spirit. Among its many forms, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) encapsulates a nation's values, aesthetic sensibilities, and practical wisdom, functioning as a crucial link for cultural identity and collective memory. For China, the international dissemination of its rich traditional culture is not only central to shaping the country's cultural image but also essential for fostering understanding, dialogue, and mutual learning among civilizations. As a key component of this cultural heritage, ICH carries historical memory, social experience, aesthetic values, and spiritual beliefs. Its global dissemination is therefore both a practical necessity for sustaining living heritage and an important pathway for enhancing China's international cultural communication capacity.

Existing research and practice indicate that China's international cultural communication has long been predominantly oriented toward the English-speaking world, while the Spanish-speaking world has received comparatively limited attention. In fact, Spanish is widely spoken across Europe and Latin America, encompassing a vast user base, extensive transregional communication networks, and strong cultural influence. It thus represents a critical yet underexplored arena for the global dissemination of Chinese culture. For ICH in particular, the Spanish-speaking world offers a diverse cultural landscape: it includes European traditions of cultural reception as well as Latin American experiences related to ethnic heritage, local identity, artisanal practices, and indigenous cultural traditions. Together, these contexts provide a valuable space for examining the mechanisms of cross-cultural communication of Chinese ICH.

Compared with cultural products such as literature and film, which benefit from relatively well-established translation and dissemination pathways, the international communication of ICH is inherently more complex. On the one hand, ICH is deeply embedded in specific local contexts, including social life, historical memory, belief systems, and embodied practices, giving it a strong sense of situatedness and locality. On the other hand, it often possesses striking visual forms and tangible manifestations, making it more readily accessible through exhibitions, audiovisual media, design, tourism, and social media platforms. This dual nature creates a fundamental tension: while the formal and visual aspects of ICH are relatively easy to perceive and appreciate, its deeper cultural meanings, symbolic logic, and historical contexts are far more difficult to fully convey and understand. Bridging the gap between "visibility" and "intelligibility" thus emerges as a critical challenge in the international dissemination of Chinese ICH.

This study takes Xiangxi Miao embroidery as a case to explore the cross-cultural communication pathways, practical challenges, and optimization strategies of Chinese ICH in the Spanish-speaking world. Xiangxi Miao embroidery is not merely a traditional handicraft; it is a cultural form that embodies the historical memory, social values, belief systems, and aesthetic experiences of the Miao ethnic group. Its patterns, colors, compositions, and materials are not simply decorative elements but are closely intertwined with collective memories of migration, nature worship, ancestral beliefs, ethical norms, and ritual traditions. As such, it possesses distinctive symbolic, narrative, and identity-related value. While the vivid visual characteristics and refined craftsmanship of Miao embroidery enhance its visibility in exhibitions, design adaptation, and digital media dissemination, the cultural meanings and historical depth embedded within it often face challenges of insufficient interpretation in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural contexts. Therefore, examining Xiangxi Miao embroidery as a case study not only helps reveal specific issues in the dissemination of Chinese ICH in the Spanish-speaking world but also contributes to broadening the linguistic scope and empirical basis of re-

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search on the international communication of Chinese intangible cultural heritage.

2 Cultural Characteristics of Xiangxi Miao Embroidery and Its Value in Cross-Cultural Communication

Xiangxi Miao embroidery is not merely a form of folk decorative art; rather, it serves as an important material carrier of the Miao ethnic group's historical memory, cultural values, and aesthetic experience. As a core component of Miao costume culture and traditional handicraft systems, it has, over the course of long-term historical development, evolved into a mode of cultural expression that integrates narrative, symbolism, and aesthetics. Particularly within a cultural transmission structure dominated by oral traditions, Miao embroidery not only fulfills functions related to clothing decoration and daily life but also plays a crucial role in preserving collective memory, transmitting mythological narratives, and sustaining cultural identity. In this sense, Xiangxi Miao embroidery possesses both distinct ethnic cultural characteristics and representative significance for cross-cultural communication research.

2.1 Xiangxi Miao Embroidery as a Carrier of Collective Memory and Historical Narrative

The Miao people have long relied on oral traditions to sustain historical memory and cultural identity. Experiences of migration, ancestral narratives, myths and legends, social institutions, and knowledge related to production and daily life are often preserved and transmitted through clothing, patterns, and handicraft practices. In this process, Miao embroidery is not simply decorative ornamentation applied to garments; rather, it constitutes a comprehensive expression of the Miao worldview, life philosophy, and value system. It serves as a crucial medium through which cultural experience is materialized and visualized.

From the perspective of its historical formation, the development of Xiangxi Miao embroidery is closely intertwined with the migration history and social life of the Miao people. In traditional Miao society, embroidery is both a practical daily skill and an important mechanism of cultural transmission. Through intergenerational learning, women transform ancestral memories, mythological narratives, nature worship, and lived experiences into relatively stable systems of patterns, thereby making clothing and textiles key carriers of cultural continuity. Particularly during festivals, weddings, and ritual ceremonies, elaborately embroidered garments and ceremonial practices are often closely integrated, jointly constructing a performative space in which ethnic history and cultural order are enacted. In this regard, Xiangxi Miao embroidery transcends its aesthetic function and embodies distinct mnemonic and narrative attributes. It can thus be understood as a form of "history worn on the body" by the Miao people.

2.2 Xiangxi Miao Embroidery as a Distinctive Visual Symbolic System with Rich Cultural Significance

The pattern system of Xiangxi Miao embroidery is not a random assemblage of decorative elements; rather, it is a symbolic structure grounded in long-term cultural accumulation. Its motifs, compositions, and color schemes all embody specific cultural meanings. For example, butterfly motifs are closely associated with the Miao myth of the "Butterfly Mother" and are often endowed with symbolic meanings related to the origin

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of life and the reproduction of the ethnic group. Bird motifs, by contrast, are frequently linked to ancestral beliefs, cosmological order, and nature worship, reflecting a worldview in which humans and nature are interdependent within Miao culture. In addition, many representations of natural elements, animal figures, and geometric patterns are not merely decorative but are the result of the interplay between historical experience, religious beliefs, and aesthetic psychology.

From an artistic perspective, Xiangxi Miao embroidery also exhibits a distinctive regional style. Influenced by the natural environment and local cultural ecology of western Hunan, its patterns, color combinations, and overall aesthetic often display qualities of delicacy and resilience, vivid harmony, freshness and elegance, as well as simplicity and innocence. This stylistic distinctiveness not only enhances its value as a form of decorative art but also increases its recognizability in visual communication. In this sense, Xiangxi Miao embroidery should not be understood as an isolated collection of motifs but rather as a visual symbolic system with cultural encoding functions. Through imagery, it condenses collective memory, conceptions of nature, and understandings of life into perceptible and transmissible cultural forms, thereby providing a visual entry point for cross-cultural communication.

2.3 Xiangxi Miao Embroidery: Communication Advantages and Interpretive Challenges

Unlike text-based communication, which primarily relies on linguistic translation, Xiangxi Miao embroidery operates as a more immediate visual medium through its use of color, patterns, materials, and composition. Its pictorial, representational, and aesthetic qualities enable it to transcend language barriers and enter the perceptual field of international audiences more readily. In contexts such as exhibitions, audiovisual media, social media dissemination, and the development of cultural and creative products, visual elements often play a primary role in attracting attention and stimulating interest. For overseas audiences lacking background knowledge of Chinese ethnic minority cultures, the visual appeal, rhythmic color schemes, and handcrafted texture of Miao embroidery can quickly generate sensory engagement, giving it considerable potential for cross-cultural communication. At the same time, Xiangxi Miao embroidery also possesses a degree of symbolic translatability. Certain bird motifs, natural patterns, and life-related imagery may exhibit visual similarities across cultures, thereby providing an initial basis for cross-cultural association and understanding.

In particular, within some Latin American cultural contexts—where nature worship, collective memory, and artisanal traditions are highly valued—certain symbolic elements of Miao embroidery may be more readily perceived and accepted at a sensory level. This suggests that Xiangxi Miao embroidery is not only an object through which Chinese traditional culture can be made visible, but also holds the potential to function as a medium for cross-cultural dialogue.

However, the communicative advantages of Miao embroidery do not necessarily translate into deep understanding. Precisely because of its strong formal aesthetics and visual impact, it is often reduced in cross-cultural contexts to an exotic style, a decorative symbol, or a generalized image of “Oriental” handicraft. When overseas audiences encounter Miao embroidery primarily through exhibition images, costume displays, short-form videos, or cultural and creative products, their engagement tends to remain at the level of surface appreciation—focusing on color, pattern, and style—while lacking access to the deeper layers of meaning embedded in migration histories, mythological narratives, ancestral memory, and systems of belief. In other

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words, a defining feature of Xiangxi Miao embroidery in cross-cultural communication lies in the coexistence of high visibility and a high threshold of interpretation.

Therefore, the international dissemination of Xiangxi Miao embroidery should not remain confined to visual display but must move toward deeper levels of explanation and understanding. On the one hand, its visual strengths should be fully leveraged to enhance global visibility through image-based, digital, and multimodal storytelling. On the other hand, it is equally important to construct interpretive frameworks that correspond to its patterns, craftsmanship, and cultural context, effectively translating the historical memory, mythological imagination, social ethics, and ethnic spirit embedded within it into narratives that are accessible and meaningful to international audiences. Only by integrating visual representation with cultural interpretation can Xiangxi Miao embroidery be transformed from a consumable exotic image into an intelligible cultural text, thereby enabling a shift in cross-cultural communication from aesthetic attraction to meaningful identification.

Overall, Xiangxi Miao embroidery simultaneously functions as a carrier of historical memory, an expression of cultural symbolism, and a medium of visual communication. It represents an important manifestation of the visualization, materialization, and aestheticization of Miao culture. Not only does it demonstrate the distinctive creativity of China's ethnic minority cultures, but it also provides a representative case for the international dissemination of Chinese intangible cultural heritage. It is precisely this dual characteristic—combining strong visual accessibility with demanding interpretive requirements—that makes Xiangxi Miao embroidery a valuable entry point for examining the mechanisms of cross-cultural communication, the pathways of meaning translation, and the logic of audience reception in the global transmission of Chinese ICH.

3 Communication Pathways and Modes of Representation of Xiangxi Miao Embroidery in the Spanish-Speaking World

The dissemination of Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world remains at a relatively early and limited stage. Although its reach has gradually expanded, it has yet to develop a systematic, large-scale, and stable discursive framework. On the one hand, Miao embroidery is often presented within broader categories such as traditional Chinese craftsmanship, excellent traditional Chinese culture, or ethnic minority costume art. As a result, in Spanish-speaking contexts, it rarely appears as an independent, coherent, and sustainably interpretable cultural object; instead, it is typically embedded within the broader narratives of Chinese cultural promotion, regional tourism branding, or art exhibitions. On the other hand, compared with the relatively mature mechanisms of museum curation, academic research, and digital dissemination in the English-speaking world, dedicated introductions, sustained media coverage, and scholarly interpretation of Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world remain limited. Its presence is more often characterized by episodic, event-driven, and platform-based exposure, and there remains considerable room for improvement in developing a communication model that combines continuity, interpretive depth, and audience retention.

More specifically, the dissemination of Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world can be categorized into the following four primary pathways.

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3.1 Policy Support and Official Promotion: The Institutional Foundation for Cross-Cultural Communication

The international dissemination of Xiangxi Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world is first grounded in China's national system for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage and its official cultural communication mechanisms. As an important component of China's ICH, the global promotion of Miao embroidery does not rely solely on market diffusion but is advanced through the combined effects of heritage listing systems, protection policies, and external communication frameworks. The Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage provides not only legal protection for the preservation and transmission of Miao embroidery but also an institutional foundation for its display, exchange, and dissemination.

Within this framework, official media outlets, promotional materials, museum exhibitions, curatorial narratives, and international cultural exchange programs collectively form the foundational network through which Xiangxi Miao embroidery is introduced to overseas audiences. This mode of dissemination is characterized by strong authority, standardized narratives, and clear cognitive entry points, which contribute to enhancing the legitimacy and credibility of Miao embroidery in the global communication arena. At the same time, however, official communication tends to prioritize national cultural representation and symbolic display, often resulting in a top-down, exhibition-oriented narrative. This approach may inadvertently underemphasize the ethnic histories, local experiences, and lived contexts embedded within Miao embroidery.

3.2 Exhibitions and International Exchange: Key Pathways for Enhancing Overseas Visibility

Exhibitions and international exchange activities constitute important pathways through which Xiangxi Miao embroidery enters the Spanish-speaking world. Compared with policy documents and promotional materials, exhibitions, forums, cultural festivals, and international exchange programs offer greater immediacy, experiential engagement, and integrative impact. Through physical displays, thematic presentations, and interactive communication, these platforms enable the concentrated presentation of the artistic characteristics and craftsmanship of Miao embroidery within a relatively short period of time.

For example, the "Chinese Miao Embroidery Cultural Exhibition" held in Paris in 2019 integrated cultural forums with official exchange activities and invited overseas scholars—including experts from Spanish-speaking countries—to participate in discussions. Such events not only enhance the visibility of Miao embroidery in international public cultural spaces but also, through forums, seminars, and cultural salons, provide high-level platforms for cross-cultural dialogue. In doing so, they promote a shift from purely craft-based display toward more interpretive and communicative forms of cultural dissemination.

3.3 Economic Cooperation and Commercial Transformation: Extending Communication into Everyday Contexts

With the increasing integration of intangible cultural heritage protection and industrial development, the dissemination of Xiangxi Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world has gradually expanded into domains such as economic cooperation, product export, and market circulation. At present, its communication in Spanish-speaking countries is primarily realized through channels including foreign trade orders, brand

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collaborations, international exhibitions, cross-border e-commerce, and diaspora business networks. This indicates that Miao embroidery is no longer merely an object of cultural display but is increasingly transforming into a hybrid medium that combines both cultural and commercial attributes.

In this process, products such as embroidered decorative paintings, garments, shawls, handbags, and cultural-creative items have entered markets in Spanish-speaking countries—including Spain and Mexico—through international trade fairs, cross-border e-commerce platforms, and overseas distribution channels.

For instance, the Shibing Shuiyuntai Miao embroidery decorative painting export project secured orders worth USD 700,000—including from Mexico—at the 134th Canton Fair. Supported by intelligent production lines, the project has created employment for more than 1,200 embroiderers and achieved a cumulative direct export value of USD 1 million. In another case, overseas Chinese entrepreneur Zhao Naihua facilitated the entry of Miao embroidery into the Spanish market and organized the "2022 Chinese Miao Embroidery Charity Exhibition" in Spain, where exhibited products such as clothing and accessories sold out on the same day. This initiative explored a production and sales model combining "studio + Party branch + cooperative + embroiderers," promoting export through an order-based mechanism. In broader international market expansion, entities such as Shibadong Village and Songtao Miao embroidery initiatives have sold products—including briefcases, notebooks, and shawls—through cross-border e-commerce platforms to over 60 countries. Some Miao embroidered shawls have even been selected as diplomatic gifts for officials from Spanish-speaking countries.

The significance of commercial transformation lies in its ability to move beyond exhibition-based viewing and symbolic representation, embedding Miao embroidery into the everyday consumption and lived experiences of overseas audiences. This enhances both its accessibility and its tangible presence. At the same time, driven by cultural empowerment and industrial innovation, Miao embroidery motifs are continuously adapted in collaboration with contemporary design, enabling them to better align with the aesthetic preferences of international markets, including those in Spanish-speaking regions. The combined efforts of official and non-governmental channels—such as the Canton Fair, cross-border e-commerce platforms, and diaspora business networks—have further strengthened the pathways through which Miao embroidery enters Spanish-speaking markets, gradually contributing to the formation of a relatively stable mechanism for economic and trade-based dissemination.

3.4 Digital Media and Platform-Based Dissemination: Front-End Gateways for Cross-Cultural Diffusion

In the contemporary landscape of cross-cultural communication, digital media have become a primary front-end gateway through which Xiangxi Miao embroidery enters the field of vision of Spanish-speaking audiences. With the widespread adoption of short-video platforms, social media, image-sharing sites, and cross-border e-commerce interfaces, the dissemination of Miao embroidery has increasingly become embedded in a communication environment characterized by platformization, fragmentation, visual orientation, and shareability. For an ICH form such as Miao embroidery—distinguished by strong visual features and artisanal aesthetics—digital platforms can significantly enhance dissemination efficiency, visibility, and topical relevance, enabling audiences from diverse national and cultural backgrounds to access related content with

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relative ease.

From a process perspective, the dissemination of Xiangxi Miao embroidery has gradually developed a composite communication logic of "online exposure—offline experience—renewed online diffusion." Overseas audiences often form initial impressions through social media posts, short videos, e-commerce pages, or event-related information, and subsequently engage more deeply through exhibition visits, product purchases, or further information searches. In this process, digital media function not only as entry points but also as connectors across multiple communication scenarios, thereby amplifying the overall impact of dissemination.

Overall, the dissemination of Xiangxi Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world has begun to take shape through a multi-channel approach encompassing policy support, exhibition-based exchange, economic and trade cooperation, and digital diffusion. Official communication provides institutional legitimacy and authoritative backing; exhibitions and exchanges enhance cultural visibility; economic cooperation extends dissemination into everyday contexts; and digital media increase efficiency and reach. The interplay of these pathways has laid the groundwork for Xiangxi Miao embroidery's integration into cross-cultural communication networks in the Spanish-speaking world. Nevertheless, its communication mechanisms still require further development and refinement.

4. Major Challenges in the Dissemination of Xiangxi Miao Embroidery in the Spanish-Speaking World

Although Xiangxi Miao embroidery has gradually entered the field of international cultural communication, its dissemination in the Spanish-speaking world remains at an exploratory stage. In terms of actual impact, a stable and in-depth mechanism for meaning construction has yet to be established; increased visibility has not naturally translated into enhanced comprehensibility. Specifically, the major challenges can be summarized as follows.

4.1 Insufficient Cultural Interpretation: Communication Confined to Surface Aesthetics

Xiangxi Miao embroidery is characterized by striking visual features, which enable it to attract attention in overseas contexts through its colors, patterns, and craftsmanship. However, existing dissemination practices tend to emphasize its artistic appeal and ethnic style, while offering insufficient explanation of the historical memory, mythological narratives, belief systems, and social logic embedded within it. As a result, although Miao embroidery is easily "seen," it is not easily "understood."

To some extent, this tendency reduces Miao embroidery to a decorative symbol of ethnic handicraft, leading audiences to remain at a perceptual level—appreciating it as exquisite, distinctive, or exotic—without engaging with its deeper cultural context. For intangible cultural heritage, prolonged confinement to formal display risks weakening its profound value as a living repository of cultural memory and meaning.

4.2 Inadequate Translation and Cultural Mediation: Constraints on Conveying Cultural Meaning

Another prominent issue in the dissemination of Xiangxi Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world

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lies in the relative inadequacy of translation and cultural mediation. The transmission of intangible cultural heritage is not merely a matter of lexical equivalence, but a process of reconstructing cultural meaning within a different linguistic and cultural context. Many culture-specific terms, symbolic systems, and technical vocabularies associated with Miao embroidery are difficult to render accurately through direct translation. When generalized expressions such as "traditional embroidery" or "ethnic handicraft" are used as substitutes, its locality, ethnic specificity, and historical depth are easily diluted.

More importantly, some existing dissemination texts prioritize functional description while neglecting the explanation of cultural background, emotional connotations, and symbolic logic. Consequently, although basic information may be conveyed, the essential meaning connections required for cross-cultural understanding are not effectively established. As a result, once introduced into the Spanish-speaking context, Xiangxi Miao embroidery tends to be generalized and typified, making it difficult to highlight its distinctive cultural identity.

4.3 A Relatively Narrow Range of Communicative Actors and Weak Internal Cultural Voices

In terms of communicative actors, the international dissemination of Xiangxi Miao embroidery is still largely driven by government agencies, museums, exhibition platforms, and cultural enterprises. While these actors possess clear advantages in resource integration, event organization, and image construction, their dominance tends to render communication more macro-level, explanatory, and display-oriented, often lacking detailed narratives and experiential expressions from within the culture itself.

In fact, Miao embroidery inheritors are not only practitioners of the craft but also custodians and narrators of cultural memory. Their accounts of pattern origins, production processes, usage contexts, and emotional meanings are better able to convey Miao embroidery as a lived cultural practice and social activity. However, within the current communication structure, these actors are often positioned as subjects to be displayed or represented, rather than as active voices. Their direct participation in narration remains limited. This imbalance among communicative actors directly affects both the depth and the human resonance of Miao embroidery's international dissemination.

4.4 Objective Cultural Distance and Limited Audience Knowledge Base

Xiangxi Miao embroidery also faces a significant issue of cultural distance in the Spanish-speaking world. For many Spanish-speaking audiences, Chinese ethnic minority cultures constitute a relatively unfamiliar domain, and there is limited baseline knowledge regarding Miao history, belief systems, clothing traditions, and social life. In this context, audiences tend to approach Miao embroidery primarily through its visual form, making it difficult to quickly access its underlying cultural logic.

At the same time, differences across cultures in color perception, decorative conventions, and systems of artistic classification further influence reception. The highly saturated colors, intricate patterns, and dense compositions characteristic of Miao embroidery carry specific symbolic meanings within Miao culture; however, in some Spanish-speaking contexts, they may be initially interpreted within frameworks such as exotic decorative art or ethnic-style handicrafts. While such interpretations are not without validity, they risk con-

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fining Miao embroidery to surface-level aesthetic appreciation and "othering" imaginaries, thereby limiting deeper cultural understanding.

4.5 A Persistent Gap Between Dissemination Outcomes and Cultural Understanding

Overall, although Xiangxi Miao embroidery has established a preliminary foundation for dissemination in the Spanish-speaking world, a noticeable gap remains between communication outcomes and cultural understanding. Current efforts have largely achieved the "visibility" of the object, but have yet to fully realize the processes of making its cultural meanings perceptible, comprehensible, and identifiable. In other words, while Xiangxi Miao embroidery has begun to enter the communicative horizon of the Spanish-speaking world, it has not yet developed a stable, in-depth, and sustainable mechanism for cross-cultural understanding. Therefore, future dissemination should move beyond the outward display of cultural symbols and shift toward deeper communication centered on meaning interpretation, cultural translation, participatory narration, and cognitive engagement. Only by addressing the issue of understanding—beyond mere visibility—can Xiangxi Miao embroidery truly enhance its effectiveness in cross-cultural communication.

5. Optimization Pathways for the Dissemination of Xiangxi Miao Embroidery in the Spanish-Speaking World

In response to the current challenges in the dissemination of Xiangxi Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world—such as insufficient cultural interpretation, weak translation support, a relatively narrow range of communicative actors, and limited depth in platform-based communication—optimization efforts should not focus solely on expanding communication channels. Instead, greater emphasis should be placed on systematically enhancing narrative strategies, meaning translation, actor collaboration, and audience engagement mechanisms. In other words, for Xiangxi Miao embroidery to transition in Spanish-speaking contexts from being merely "seen" to being truly "understood," and from symbolic display to cultural cognition, the key lies in constructing a more interpretive, participatory, and sustainable communication system. Specifically, the following approaches may be pursued.

5.1 Strengthening Cultural Narratives: Shifting from Formal Display to Meaning Construction

Xiangxi Miao embroidery is distinguished by its strong visuality and aesthetic craftsmanship, which enable it to enter audiences' perceptual field through visual forms in cross-cultural communication. However, if the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage remains confined to the external presentation of patterns, colors, and techniques, it is likely to be understood merely as a form of ethnically styled decorative art, rather than as a carrier of deeper cultural value. Therefore, dissemination targeting the Spanish-speaking world should move beyond visual display and strengthen cultural narrative capacity, shifting the focus from the presentation of symbols to the articulation of cultural meaning.

More specifically, narrative units with strong interpretive potential can be constructed around representative motifs, embroidery themes, and clothing contexts. Patterns such as butterflies, birds, animals, and plants may be connected to Miao mythological narratives, concepts of life, nature worship, and social customs, there-

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by establishing a meaningful correspondence between visual forms and cultural contexts. At the same time, greater attention should be given to explaining the usage contexts of Miao embroidery, its intergenerational transmission, ritual functions, and everyday significance. This would enable overseas audiences not only to recognize its external forms but also to understand its underlying logic and cultural positioning. Only when patterns, craftsmanship, and narrative are effectively integrated can Xiangxi Miao embroidery be transformed from a visually appreciable handicraft into an interpretable cultural text.

5.2 Improving Translation and Interpretive Systems: Constructing a Layered Mechanism of Cultural Mediation

Translation constitutes a foundational step in introducing Xiangxi Miao embroidery to the Spanish-speaking world. However, translation in the context of intangible cultural heritage is not merely a matter of terminological conversion, but rather a process of reorganizing and rearticulating cultural meaning within a different linguistic framework. Given that many culture-specific terms, symbolic systems, and technical concepts embedded in Miao embroidery are highly localized and ethnically specific, reliance on generalized categorical expressions can easily dilute cultural meaning. It is therefore necessary to refine existing translation and interpretive systems for Spanish-speaking audiences and to establish a layered mechanism of cultural mediation that balances recognizability with comprehensibility.

Effective translation in this context does not lie in literal equivalence, but in the ability to reconstruct a sufficiently clear and substantive framework of cultural understanding in the target language. To this end, a combined strategy may be adopted, integrating the retention of key terms, categorical explanation, and supplementary interpretation. Core concepts with strong cultural identification functions may be selectively preserved in their original form to maintain the distinctiveness and stability of the cultural object. At the same time, concise categorical descriptions can be provided to help audiences quickly form an initial understanding. Building on this, additional contextualization—through annotations, illustrated texts, short explanatory videos, or extended links—can supply relevant historical background, symbolic meanings, and usage contexts. Such an approach helps avoid the homogenizing effects of excessive domestication while also mitigating the comprehension barriers associated with pure foreignization.

5.3 Expanding Communicative Actors: Toward a Multi-Actor, Collaborative Structure of Cross-Cultural Narration

Effective dissemination of Xiangxi Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world requires moving beyond a single-actor-dominated communication model and gradually establishing a more layered and open structure of multi-actor collaboration. At present, dissemination efforts still rely primarily on government agencies, cultural organizations, exhibition platforms, and commercial entities. While these actors possess clear advantages in resource integration, event organization, and image construction, their narratives tend to emphasize macro-level presentation and generalized explanation, making it difficult to fully convey Miao embroidery as a lived and experiential cultural practice.

The participation of multiple actors not only enriches the layers of communication but also enhances the authenticity, immediacy, and emotional resonance of the narrative. Accordingly, future dissemination should

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further increase the involvement of inheritors, designers, young creators, and cross-cultural communicators. First, greater discursive authority should be granted to Miao embroidery inheritors in international exhibitions, cultural lectures, craft demonstrations, and workshops, enabling them to participate not only as practitioners but also as cultural interpreters and storytellers. Second, designers and young creators should be encouraged to explore integrative pathways between Miao embroidery and contemporary aesthetics, fashion design, and digital content production, while respecting cultural authenticity, thereby expanding both its expressive forms and audience reach. Third, the mediating role of bilingual and cross-culturally experienced communicators should be emphasized, as they are better positioned to facilitate interpretation, coordination, and translation across different cultural frameworks.

5.4 Enhancing Platform-Based and Interactive Communication: Deepening Audience Engagement and Understanding

In the digital media environment, the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication depends not only on whether information is disseminated, but also on whether it aligns with platform logics, stimulates user engagement, and sustains ongoing interaction. For Xiangxi Miao embroidery, digital platforms are not merely entry points for dissemination; they are also critical spaces for shaping cognition, connecting contexts, and extending influence. Therefore, communication targeting the Spanish-speaking world should further enhance platform-oriented expression and interactive capabilities, increasing both visibility and depth of audience engagement.

More specifically, serialized content may be developed around themes such as craft processes, symbolic meanings of patterns, clothing contexts, and inheritance narratives. Formats such as short videos, illustrated articles, interactive Q&A, virtual tours, and live-streamed workshops can be employed to improve both the continuity and participatory nature of communication. In platform-based expression, it is important to translate knowledge-based content into more narrative-driven and shareable formats, while avoiding excessive simplification of cultural meaning in pursuit of traffic. Interactive communication does not imply pandering to audience preferences; rather, it entails maintaining accuracy and necessary depth of cultural explanation within the affordances of the platform. Only when audiences are encouraged not merely to view content but to question, compare, interpret, and further disseminate it can digital platforms truly function as effective amplifiers of Xiangxi Miao embroidery's cross-cultural communication.

5.5 Strengthening Linkages Across the Communication Chain: Building a Progressive Mechanism from Exposure to Cognition

The optimization of Xiangxi Miao embroidery's dissemination in the Spanish-speaking world should also prioritize the articulation among different stages of the communication process. Although multiple pathways have begun to develop in parallel, there remain notable deficiencies in content coherence, narrative consistency, and audience conversion mechanisms. When policy communication, exhibition display, commercial dissemination, and digital diffusion operate in isolation, they tend to generate fragmented exposure, making it difficult to accumulate stable cultural understanding.

Accordingly, a stronger "chain-oriented" approach to communication design is needed—one that integrates

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the authority of official communication, the experiential quality of exhibitions, the everyday embeddedness of commercial dissemination, and the scalability of digital media. This integration can help establish a progressive mechanism that moves from initial exposure to deeper understanding, from emotional resonance to sustained engagement. For example, exhibition texts, digital content, and product narratives may be coordinated to deliver relatively consistent cultural information across different contexts. Similarly, the integration of online and offline channels can help transform short-term attention into more enduring knowledge accumulation and cultural interest. Only by constructing a coherent and continuous communication chain can the dissemination of Xiangxi Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world evolve from fragmented presentation to sustained accumulation, and from formal exposure to deeper cognitive engagement.

In sum, optimizing the dissemination of Xiangxi Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world does not primarily depend on increasing communication frequency or merely expanding channels. Rather, it hinges on enhancing its capacity for cultural narration, meaning translation, multi-actor collaboration, and platform adaptation. Only through coordinated advancement across content, language, actors, and mechanisms can the gap between visibility and intelligibility be effectively bridged, thereby enabling Xiangxi Miao embroidery to achieve deeper, more resonant, and more sustainable cross-cultural communication in Spanish-speaking contexts.

6. Conclusion

As a representative form of traditional embroidery art among China's ethnic minorities, Xiangxi Miao embroidery not only demonstrates distinctive craftsmanship and strong visual identity, but also embodies the historical memory, mythological narratives, belief systems, and lived wisdom of Miao society. It is both an art form that can be exhibited and a cultural text that can be interpreted. In the context of the deepening international dissemination of Chinese culture, Xiangxi Miao embroidery has entered the communicative horizon of the Spanish-speaking world through multiple channels, including official exhibitions, international exchanges, commercial transformation, and digital platforms, demonstrating considerable potential for cross-cultural communication.

However, in terms of actual communication outcomes, its dissemination in the Spanish-speaking world remains characterized by high visibility but limited comprehensibility. While its visual forms are readily accessible to overseas audiences, the underlying historical memory, mythological narratives, collective experiences, and cultural symbolism have yet to be fully translated and effectively interpreted. At the same time, factors such as an underdeveloped translation system, a relatively narrow range of communicative actors, and limited audience knowledge bases further constrain the depth of dissemination and the formation of cultural identification.

Therefore, future efforts to disseminate Xiangxi Miao embroidery in the Spanish-speaking world should move beyond symbolic display and surface-level aesthetic appreciation, shifting instead toward deeper communication centered on cultural narration, meaning translation, multi-actor collaboration, and platform-based interaction. Only by continuously strengthening its capacity for cultural interpretation and cross-cultural communication can Xiangxi Miao embroidery be transformed from a viewed handicraft into an intelligible cultur-

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al text. More broadly, the case of Xiangxi Miao embroidery suggests that the global dissemination of Chinese intangible cultural heritage requires not only an expansion of communicative reach, but also sustained improvements in the quality and depth of cross-cultural interpretation.

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