

The Origin and Development of Interethnic Shared Ritual Culture: Grabbing Huapao

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Abstract

As a cross-regional interethnic shared ritual culture, Grabbing Huapao deeply influences people's social lives, becoming a significant means to connect and enhance family and social relationships. The purpose of this study is to investigate the ritual process, origin and development of the Grabbing Huapao ritual culture in different situations. This study adopted the literature research method to investigate the original ritual process and cultural origin of Grabbing Huapao, and the development of Grabbing Huapao ritual culture from the perspectives of primitive survival needs, inter-ethnic communication under ethnic unity, traditional minority sports, and commercial development. The research showed that the ritual culture of Grabbing Huapao has become a cross-regional and cross-ethnic folk entertainment culture, and in the process of development, it has gradually exceeded the scope of folk entertainment and become a regional and even ethnic minority sports competition activity. Grabbing Huapao has evolved from a traditional ritual into a cross-regional folk entertainment culture, transcending its roots to become a commercial activity with ethnic characteristics. Its journey reflects adaptability and cultural enrichment. The study implies Grabbing Huapao's potential for fostering inter-ethnic unity, contributing to the preservation of traditional minority sports, and serving as an economic driver. Recommendations include cultural preservation, sports development, and responsible commercialization. Promote cultural preservation, inter-ethnic collaboration, and responsible commercialization. Support Grabbing Huapao as a recognized sports activity, integrate it into education, and ensure its economic benefits align with community and cultural values.

Keywords: Ritual Culture, Grabbing Huapao, Origin and Development, Interethnic, Shared

Introduction

Grabbing Huapao is a traditional cultural activity characterized by strong regional traits, popular in the ethnic minority regions at the junction of Guangxi, Hunan, and Guizhou provinces, particularly in various mountainous areas. This cultural event typically takes place during specific festivals, celebrations, or rituals, involving interactions, competitions, and social engagements among the community members. It serves as an Interethnic shared ritual culture. The discussion in this paper regarding Grabbing Huapao encompasses not only the preservation of its original ceremonial essence but also encompasses restructured ethnic minority sports events and commercial cultural activities imbued with ethnic characteristics within the context of modern economic development.

The Grabbing Huapao activity involves acquiring blessings and transmitting good fortune. "Qiang Pao" represents seizing good fortune, "Jie Pao" symbolizes receiving blessings, "Huan Pao" signifies thanking the divine for bestowed blessings, and "You Pao" carries the essence of transmitting blessings. Through the processes of seizing, receiving, returning, and transmitting, the essence of "good fortune" is passed on to villages and individuals who receive the Huapao, transferring from the fortunate to those seeking blessings. This activity takes place once a year or every few years, continually perpetuating the tradition.

Grabbing Huapao is a manifestation of folk wisdom, where people experience both the primal joy of competition and aesthetics, elevating it to a level of belief. Through this activity, villagers express their longing for a happy life. In preparation for the Huapao Festival, organizers announce the event well in advance. Subsequently, community organizers begin gathering resources, contacting fellow villagers, and villages prepare for performances such as the reed pipe bands. Mothers in every household dye clothes and weave fabrics for their children, creating new garments and shoes. As the Huapao Festival approaches, individuals of all ages within the village engage in discussions, collectively devising strategies for the Grabbing Huapao competition.

On the day of the Huapao Festival, residents of all ages within the village don their finest attire to enjoy the Huapao procession and the grand Grabbing Huapao competition. Throughout the festival, families and friends visit each other's homes, hosting celebratory banquets and congratulations for those who have succeeded in the Grabbing Huapao competition. This serves as a significant means of connecting and fostering family and social relationships.

The process of Grabbing Huapao strengthens village cohesion and collaboration. Through this ancient sporting activity, villagers receive blessings from deities while showcasing their village's prowess to the external world, promoting cross-regional and cross-ethnic interactions. Over time, the ritual culture of the Huapao Festival has transcended the boundaries of mere folk entertainment, evolving into a regional, and even national, ethnic minority sports competition. Furthermore, it has expanded into commercial activities, becoming a locally distinctive commercial venture that contributes to the region's economic development.

The Original Ritual Process of Grabbing Huapao

In "Grabbing Huapao," the term "Huapao" refers to both the barrel and the ring. The barrel, usually referred to as the iron barrel in folk terms, is made of iron. The ring is a small iron hoop with a diameter similar to that of a teacup, resembling a bracelet, wrapped in red cloth. It carries various symbolic meanings, signifying well-being, good fortune, fertility, and

prosperity. The Grabbing Huapao activity is organized on a village basis, with each village forming a team to participate. The number of participating teams is unlimited, but the number of participants in each team must be the same.

During the firing, the ring is placed on top of the iron barrel. The force of the gunpowder propels the iron ring into the air. Once the ring lands, the teams compete by surrounding the ring. Techniques such as squeezing, separating, threading, guarding, passing, and intercepting are used in the process of contesting for the ring. However, actions like kicking, hitting, crossing, and stomping, which could potentially cause harm to others, are strictly prohibited (Yishan & Wenyi, 1986). People will gather tightly, some may dive into the crowd, others may pass the ring, while others may intercept opponents, showcasing their individual skills. The person who successfully grabs the ring will stand on the platform, lift the ring, and strike gongs and drums to signify victory. The acquired ring is then placed on the shrine or rack and carried back to the village.

The number of fired Huapao varies slightly in different regions, generally ranging from 3 to 5. The Grabbing Huapao ceremonies also differ from place to place; some areas have simplified versions of the ritual. However, the overall sequence of the activity typically includes the following steps: returning the Huapao, parading with the Huapao, seizing the Huapao, receiving the Huapao, and nurturing the Huapao.

Returning the Huapao. On the eve of the Huapao Festival, typically the day before the Grabbing Huapao event, families, clans, or villages that secured the Huapao in the previous year will deliver the newly crafted Huapao and corresponding gifts to the venue for use in the current year's Huapao-grabbing activity.

Huapao Parade. Pertains to the ceremonial procession of Huapao between villages. This encompasses carrying the shrine of the Huapao, transporting offerings of meat and fruits, and showcasing a parade of adorned participants. Along the route, gongs and drums reverberate incessantly, firecrackers are ignited, and the parade culminates with the placement of the Huapao shrine at the Huapao-grabbing site.

Huapao Delivery and Reception. In certain areas, the Huapao Organizing Committee enthusiastically delivers the Huapao to the winner accompanied by drumming and celebrations. In other instances, the previous year's Huapao recipient orchestrates a vibrant delivery procession on the second day of the Grabbing Huapao event. They carry the Huapao shrine to the village that newly acquired the Huapao. A symbolic handover ceremony transpires before the drum tower. The recipient of the Huapao places it in their own home's hall or ancestral hall, extending hospitality to guests.

Huapao Maintenance. Upon receiving the Huapao, the recipient often positions it in their hall or household shrine, accompanied by daily incense offerings. On the first and fifteenth day of the lunar calendar, incense is ignited, and paper offerings are presented.

Cultural Origins within Commercial Prosperity

The origin of Grabbing Huapao can be traced back to regions like Guangdong and Fujian, and subsequently spread to provinces such as Guangxi, Guizhou, and Hunan (Zongxi, 2011). In Guangdong, some laborers and porters near the ports turned Grabbing Huapao into a form of entertainment. In Fujian, it took on a more faith-oriented aspect, used to seek good fortune from deities and express wishes. With the increasing frequency of commercial interactions, traders from Guangdong and Fujian gradually ventured to the trade hubs in the border regions of Guangxi, Guizhou, and Hunan, engaging in business activities.

Some of these traders settled in the local areas and, driven by the desire to attract more participants to trade and a sense of nostalgia for their native culture, introduced Grabbing Huapao to the region. As major commercial activities were predominantly conducted through waterways at that time, the practice of Grabbing Huapao expanded along the Pearl River to areas like Congjiang County and Liping County in Guizhou, Sanjiang County and Cangwu County in Guangxi, Tongdao County in Hunan, and beyond. As time passed, the tradition gradually spread to various ethnic minority regions at the junction of the three provinces. Notably, the Grabbing Huapao activity in Fulu Town of Sanjiang County, Guangxi, flourished the most (Zongxi, 2011).

In many instances, these Huapao events are hosted in locally significant river ports, both major and minor, which were historically hubs of commercial activity. These regions were prosperous centers of trade. In order to entertain the deities and attract customers, as well as to enhance commercial interactions, astute businessmen from Guangdong introduced the practice of Huapao grabbing. This activity gained exceptional popularity due to its fervor, grandeur, and entertainment value. During an era when entertainment options were limited, Huapao grabbing emerged as one of the few collective sports activities accessible to the masses, requiring no specific training. It garnered immense popularity among the people. Gradually, the Huapao grabbing activity intertwined with local culture, establishing geographical and cultural connections with Guangdong's own Huapao grabbing traditions.

According to the literature, it is evident that a significant number of Guangdong residents continue to travel to the Sanjiang region to witness the Huapao festivities. Some are even willing to incur expenses to enlist local assistance in participating in the Huapao-grabbing process, reflecting their deeply rooted cultural sentiments (Xiaokang, 2011). In the ethnic minority areas at the confluence of the three provinces, various ethnic groups coexist with a foundation of respect and understanding, fostering a richly distinctive culture of Huapao-grabbing that bears strong characteristics.

Cultural Development within Primitive Survival Needs

In the border region of Guangxi, Guizhou, and Hunan provinces, Grabbing Huapao has evolved into an intercultural phenomenon fostering ethnic harmony, with underlying natural and socio-historical reasons. In these provinces' convergence zone, where various ethnic minority communities reside and make their livelihoods, early merchants actively sought friendly interactions with local villagers. Simultaneously, driven by dual needs for faith and business activities, they initiated and organized this event. The hosting of temple fairs aided in alleviating tensions between ethnic groups and promoting amicable relations with the ethnic minorities (Yuping, 2017). This not only brought more business opportunities but also catered to the merchants' spiritual needs. It's within this context that Grabbing Huapao was introduced from Guangdong and gradually spread.

Local villagers have a significant need for goods exchange. During festivals, the venue for the Grabbing Huapao transforms into an open-air trading hub. The beach is adorned with various agricultural and sideline products produced by farmers from neighboring villages in Guangxi, Guizhou, and Hunan provinces, who personally sell their goods. There are also an array of agricultural tools, furniture, crop seeds, embroidery, brocade, and handicrafts. Additionally, merchants display light industrial products such as clothing, fabrics, footwear, hats, and fishing gear. In the tri-province border area, when festivals approach, villagers from various ethnic groups come to trade goods, exchange resources, stroll through the market, and meet friends and relatives. This ingrained habit, deeply rooted, demonstrates the strong

demand of local ethnic communities for this activity, underscoring its popularity and resonance within the community.

Upon its introduction to ethnic minority regions, Grabbing Huapao gained acceptance and continued to be passed down among the local population due to its alignment with local belief systems and its ability to fill the void of large-scale entertainment activities that were lacking in the area.

First and foremost, the Huapao is regarded as an auspicious object, with the belief that whoever obtains the Huapao will be blessed with good fortune throughout the year. The Huapao holds a complex system of meanings represented by "Person, Wealth, Nobility, Blessing, Prosperity, Longevity." Those who acquire the Huapao use it to pray for favorable weather for agricultural activities and the prosperity and safety of their families, among various other positive wishes. Local folklore abounds with stories of families that received the Huapao experiencing the birth of male offspring, successful business endeavors, and financial gains. People associate these occurrences with the Huapao, and as these stories spread from person to person, the superstitious aspect of grabbing the Huapao becomes even stronger. Although the Huapao-grabbing is initiated and organized by business associations, the local ethnic communities have come to regard it as their own festival and view the Huapao as a manifestation of their wishes.

Furthermore, settled merchants and local ethnic minorities believe in multiple deities, without exclusivity between them. The notion that each additional deity adds a layer of safety and peace is a prevalent concept among local residents. It appears that these additional deities provide them with an extra sense of security, a greater likelihood of acquiring wealth, happiness, and tranquility. This idea laid the ideological foundation for the swift acceptance of the Grabbing Huapao activity introduced by Fujian and Guangdong merchants among the local population.

As Grabbing Huapao came to represent this belief system and carried people's hopes and prayers, coupled with its unique connection to the holder, it grew more intimate compared to other deities. It transcended being merely a form of belief to becoming a vessel for emotions. Thus, it deeply resonated with people and was embraced by individuals from different ethnic groups and diverse belief systems, catering to the needs of various groups. Consequently, the Grabbing Huapao activity managed to spread widely, establish roots within its sphere of influence, and pass down through generations.

In the ethnic minority regions at the confluence of three provinces, many places did not have temple fair activities in the past. It wasn't until the introduction of Grabbing Huapao that similar temple fair-like events emerged. This activity provided them with an opportunity to seek divine protection and express gratitude for blessings, while also bringing moments of entertainment and revelry. Compared to traditional deity worship, the role of entertaining the crowd played a more significant role. Living in remote mountainous areas for extended periods, they had a pressing need for entertainment. Simultaneously, they yearned for interaction and communication with the outside world.

With the development of the external commodity economy, local elites realized that rural areas also needed to engage in commercial trade and cultural exchanges. This prompted them to break down ethnic boundaries and the constraints of small self-sufficient communities, strengthening connections and promoting collaboration. Grabbing Huapao became the most attractive activity, drawing people from all directions. Bird enthusiasts could observe and compete in bird calls, middle-aged and elderly individuals could use this opportunity to visit relatives and reunite with friends, young men and women could pursue

romantic interests, and children could enjoy the excitement, fireworks, and firecrackers. Everyone found satisfaction in their own way, making the event a source of fulfillment for all.

The act of Grabbing Huapao is a village-based activity that serves as an opportunity to showcase the strength of each village. The competitive process of Grabbing Huapao reflects the village's power. Successfully obtaining the Huapao not only demonstrates the residents of that village possess significant abilities and strength but also signifies their unity, harmony, and strong cohesion (Liyi, 2022).

The procession of the Huapao parade also becomes an opportunity for the village to showcase itself, evaluating aspects like the village's wealth, social status, cohesion, as well as the authority and role of the elderly association. During the parade, girls adorn themselves with silver flowers, silver necklaces, and silver bracelets, while young men wear large headscarves, along with blue clothing and white trousers. Many of these garments are made from cotton they have grown, spun, woven, and handcrafted themselves, showcasing their excellent craftsmanship. People can gauge the competence and abilities of a household's women and daughters-in-law from their attire, comparing them to others in the community.

Additionally, Grabbing Huapao is characterized by its lack of intricate rules, requiring no prior technical training to participate. Furthermore, it does not impose any limits on the number of participants; it can involve 100, 300, or even 400 people all grabbing together. This accessibility ensures the maximum level of community engagement in rural areas, often resulting in spectacular scenes of hundreds of people simultaneously grabbing Huapao.

Furthermore, Grabbing Huapao can serve as an activity that strengthens community cohesion. In ethnic minority villages, nearly all cultural activities are collective in nature. Traditional community organizations, such as the Elderly Association, exhibit extraordinary dedication to activities that enhance village connections, bolster community cohesion, and reinforce their own authority. They continue to uphold these practices as a customary tradition.

Expanding Interethnic Exchange Under Ethnic Unity

The ethnic minorities living in the border regions of these three provinces have, to a significant extent, adopted lifestyles that are no different from the local Han Chinese population. Nevertheless, they still maintain their ethnic identity, which is facilitated through various mediums such as clothing, food, and ceremonial activities. Grabbing Huapao, on the other hand, serves as a ritualistic event that transcends geographical and ethnic boundaries. This medium not only reinforces people's identification with their respective ethnic groups but also expands interactions and exchanges among different ethnicities.

Every culture possesses its unique system of symbols, sometimes with meanings that transcend their literal content. These symbols form the foundation for constructing collective memories (Zhiqing, 2007). Through ritualistic presentations, collective memories are continuously reinforced. Take Grabbing Huapao as an example: within the context of a national emphasis on ethnic unity, grassroots organizers among ethnic minorities have enthusiastically responded, placing greater emphasis on the ethnic characteristics of Grabbing Huapao and the participation of multiple ethnic groups.

In regions inhabited by ethnic groups such as the Dong, Zhuang, and Miao, cooperation with the state in promoting Grabbing Huapao has gradually imbued this activity with a meaning of fostering friendly interactions among multiple ethnic groups. The nation has incorporated Grabbing Huapao into the National Traditional Ethnic Minority Sports Games, viewing it as a symbol of ethnic unity. At the grassroots level, this symbolism is leveraged to

strengthen a sense of ethnic identity, concurrently safeguarding and expanding the space for the survival of this activity by emphasizing its ethnic distinctiveness. Grabbing Huapao has become a symbol of ethnic identity, sparking and awakening the self-awareness of ethnic groups like the Dong, Zhuang, and Miao, regarding their own identities.

Grabbing Huapao, as a ritual cultural symbol, serves as a medium for the collective memory and shared culture of ethnic groups (Zhiqing, 2007). In the ethnic minority regions at the junction of three provinces, Grabbing Huapao is intricately interwoven with people's surnames, religious beliefs, customs, and more, collectively shaping and perpetuating their sense of identity. Grabbing Huapao has indeed become a potent village-based collective ritual, employed to maintain ethnic cohesion.

Anthropologist Anderson (2006) points out that ethnic identity is constructed through mediums such as lifestyle, food, clothing, cultural rituals, and more. In the activities of the Huapao Festival, the display of ethnic characteristics is a natural expression by the participants. For a long time, people did not focus on its ethnic aspects. However, the Grabbing Huapao activity has been incorporated into the competition events of the National Ethnic Minority Games. This activity, prevalent among various ethnic groups in Dong, Zhuang, and Miao regions, has transformed into a symbol of national unity advocated by the state. Simultaneously, with the rapid development of tourism, local governments have started to seek and unearth their own ethnic characteristics. In this context, the ritual culture of Grabbing Huapao has quickly been promoted as an ethnic feature to foster local development. As a cultural ceremony, Grabbing Huapao has evolved in the course of social development, gradually becoming a carrier of ethnic distinctiveness and extending to symbolize ethnic unity.

Grabbing Huapao has played a significant role in promoting ethnic unity in Dong, Zhuang, and Miao ethnic areas, continuously reinforcing the awareness of ethnic unity. People from different ethnic backgrounds, including Dong, Miao, Zhuang, and Han, actively participate in Grabbing Huapao. They come together to dance, sing, and play the reed pipe during the evening festivities. This serves as a tangible symbol of ethnic unity, demonstrating that shared folk activities across different ethnic groups are an effective means to break down barriers and promote interethnic communication.

Expansion and Growth in Traditional Sports among Ethnic Minorities Nationwide

For centuries, the tradition of Grabbing Huapao has thrived as a folk sport in ethnic minority communities in regions such as Hunan, Guangxi, and Guizhou. The Fulu Grabbing Huapao in Sanjiang County, Guangxi, played a pivotal role in elevating Grabbing Huapao to the national stage of the Ethnic Minority Games (Zhiqing, 2006). Fulu Grabbing Huapao made a significant impact in the neighboring provinces, drawing enthusiastic participation from various ethnic groups and garnering widespread media attention. It was often referred to as the "Oriental Rugby" by the media, attracting the attention of relevant government departments. In 1982, Grabbing Huapao performed as an exhibition sport at the 2nd National Ethnic Minority Sports Games, and by 1986, it had officially become a competitive event in the 3rd National Ethnic Minority Sports Games.

In 1982, the nation reinstated the hosting of the National Traditional Ethnic Minority Sports Games. Provinces across the country intensified their efforts to explore and unearth traditional ethnic minority sports in their respective regions. Any sport deemed suitable for inclusion as a competitive event was organized, refined, and promoted. Being selected as a recommended event for the National Ethnic Minority Sports Games was a prestigious honor

that provinces actively sought. Once included in the National Traditional Ethnic Minority Sports Games, these sports were recognized as national symbols representing the diverse ethnicities of the country in the realm of sports.

Each event in the National Ethnic Games represents a different ethnic group. The Grabbing Huapao event has a historical tradition among various ethnic groups such as the Dong, Zhuang, and Miao. It is specifically identified as a Dong ethnic event due to historical reasons. At that time, the influence and visibility of the Grabbing Huapao event in Fulu Township, Sanjiang County, were the greatest. Many, including the organizing committee, were not aware that other ethnic groups also held similar activities. Consequently, Grabbing Huapao became associated with the Dong ethnic group, and it became an exclusive symbol of the Dong ethnic group.

Subsequently, the traditional Grabbing Huapao of other ethnic groups such as the Zhuang, Miao, and Mulao gradually came to light. Descriptions of Grabbing Huapao in the Ethnic Games were revised to state, "Grabbing Huapao is a popular folk sports activity among our compatriots of various ethnic groups, including the Dong, Zhuang, Miao, and Mulao."

In 1985, Grabbing Huapao was officially designated as a competitive event during the Third National Ethnic Minority Games, complete with established competition rules, marking its formal recognition as a sports event. Subsequently, Grabbing Huapao underwent a series of reforms and innovations Zongxi (2011), evolving into a modernized athletic activity with heightened competitiveness and entertainment value (Zhiqing, 2006).

In 1986, Grabbing Huapao made its official debut as a competitive event during the Third National Ethnic Minority Traditional Sports Games. Its influence quickly expanded, leading to the inaugural National Grabbing Huapao Competition held in Chongzuo County, Guangxi, in 1987. This sport received support from various regions, prompting provinces to establish training centers for athlete development. In 2002, competition rules and referee standards underwent revision, and in 2006, equipment usage regulations were further refined. Since then, Grabbing Huapao has entered a new phase of development.

As it has become a competition category within the National Ethnic Minority Traditional Sports Games, Grabbing Huapao has gradually transcended the realm of folk ritual cultural activities, inter-village cultural exchanges, and interactions among ethnic groups in the border regions of the three provinces. It has evolved into a symbol of fostering ethnic unity and even the overall national identity. Each hosting of the Ethnic Minority Games is a practical effort to strengthen national identity and enhance ethnic unity.

The competitive Grabbing Huapao event in ethnic sports festivals has evolved and shed the superstitious elements present in the original Huapao rituals. Although there is a gap compared to the original ritual culture, the Grabbing Huapao competition and the original ritual culture can still mutually benefit each other (Zhiqing, 2006). The competitive Grabbing Huapao event has its roots in the original ritual culture, serving as the most fundamental symbol of ethnic unity within that culture. As a competitive event within ethnic sports festivals, Grabbing Huapao further amplifies the influence of its ritual culture within rural communities.

Collaboration Between the Local Community and Government in Economic Development

As rapid economic development surged across the nation, the tourism industry swiftly emerged as a new focal point for local economic growth. In this context, local governments and grassroots residents in certain ethnic minority regions also harbored strong desires for development. Whether it be among the local populace or government entities, there was a

shared recognition of the immense potential and economic value of the Grabbing Huapao ritual culture. They approached this with a cooperative mindset, collectively planning and preparing for the activities.

Unearthing and harnessing unique local cultural resources to drive regional development has become a shared consensus among researchers, government officials, and the general population (Zhiqing, 2007). Each locality needs to cultivate its distinctive cultural identity. While remote geographic locations in ethnic minority areas may lack the economic advantages found in other regions, they possess unique ethnic flavors that characterize their local identity. For instance, the Water-Splashing Festival symbolizes Xishuangbanna, while the Huapao Festival is a hallmark of ethnic minority regions at the border of Guangxi, Hunan, and Guizhou. With the deepening of the market economy and regional economic development, the value of these cultural symbols has gradually gained recognition. People aspire to promote local development through cultural activities.

In regions where the cultural attractions of ethnic minorities such as the Dong, Zhuang, Miao, and others serve as tourism focal points, there is a consensus between grassroots organizers of the Huapao Festival and the government regarding the exploration of ethnic culture and the enhancement of ethnic characteristics. Grassroots organizers, driven by the goal of attracting tourists, continually strengthen the ethnic elements of the Huapao Festival, while local governments provide increased support for the festival for similar reasons.

In recent years, grassroots organizers have consciously added "distinctive" decorations to the Grabbing Huapao ritual activities. For instance, during the Huapao Festival in Congjiang County, Guizhou Province, elements of Dong ethnic group's grand songs, folk song duets, reed pipe competitions, bullfights, cockfights, bird fights, and other folk cultural activities have been integrated, enhancing the liveliness of the event to attract more out-of-town tourists. Additionally, in Meilin Town, Sanjiang County, Guangxi, Dong ethnic group's grand songs and the "Taiguanren" performance have been showcased, while Fulu Town has highlighted ethnic features such as a thousand-person song and dance and the "Damulashan" program. These initiatives have increased the visibility of the local Grabbing Huapao event, facilitated foreign investments, promoted tourism development, and transformed the local landscape. Whether from grassroots or governmental perspectives, there is a shared recognition that successfully hosting the Huapao Festival contributes to local development, and people maintain a consensus on this objective.

The hosting of the Huapao Festival can showcase local characteristics, attract external investments, and stimulate the growth of the tourism industry (Bui et al., 2020). Reality also demonstrates that through the collaborative efforts of the government and local grassroots organizations, government authority and credibility can be accumulated, effectively implementing the government's economic development strategies. The ceremonial activities of Grabbing Huapao not only sustain folk sports culture but also extend their influence beyond, promoting economic prosperity and the flourishing of the tourism industry (Zhiqing, 2007).

Discussion and Conclusion

The Grabbing Huapao event at the National Games has made the most impactful promotion for the grassroots Grabbing Huapao activities. Many people have now become acquainted with this tradition, and the grassroots communities have used this opportunity to shape their own image while emphasizing their ethnic distinctiveness. This ancient ethnic minority ritual sports activity has undergone a series of changes, revealing new characteristics: a reduction

in superstitious elements, a greater emphasis on modern elements, and a more organized and standardized nature of the event. All of these changes reflect a conscious transformation by cultural participants, demonstrating the resilience and adaptability of ethnic culture, as well as the modern value of the Grabbing Huapao ritual culture.

As a cross-regional interethnic shared ritual, Grabbing Huapao profoundly influences people's social lives, fostering ethnic unity and social stability. With the rise of the tourism industry and the need for commercial promotion, these invaluable cultural resources continue to receive attention (Lin & Chang, 2020), support, exploration, and utilization. This is the result of collaboration between the grassroots and the government in pursuit of common goals. Influenced by market economics, regions such as Cangwu County and Sanjiang County in Guangxi, Tongdao County in Hunan, and Congjiang County and Liping County in Guizhou have successively promoted ethnic tourism. As a result, the organizers of various Huapao Festivals increasingly incorporate tourism elements into their objectives. People in the hosting regions have also gradually recognized the commercial value of the Grabbing Huapao brand.

Frequent commercial activities have fostered connections between remote ethnic minority regions and relatively prosperous areas, strengthening economic and cultural exchanges among different ethnic groups. Grabbing Huapao is a cultural activity brought about by commercial activities, serving as a fusion of local traditional rituals and interaction with external cultures. The process of Grabbing Huapao ritual culture entering Dong, Miao, and Zhuang ethnic communities reflects the conscious and natural cultural borrowing and transformation by the local population. The modified foreign culture has been successfully integrated into the local culture, forming a stable mode of transmission and becoming a successful cultural reconstruction.

In sum, the study on the ritual process, origin, and development of the Grabbing Huapao ritual culture reveals a fascinating evolution from its traditional roots to its current status as a cross-regional and cross-ethnic folk entertainment culture. Through a literature research method, the investigation explored the original ritual process and cultural origin of Grabbing Huapao, shedding light on its development from primitive survival needs to a regional and ethnic minority sports competition activity. The findings emphasize the cultural significance and transformative journey of Grabbing Huapao, demonstrating its evolution beyond mere folk entertainment into a commercial activity with distinctive ethnic characteristics.

Contribution

Interethnic Shared Ritual Culture Grabbing Huapao significantly contributes to both cultural preservation and education. Culturally, it preserves the rich traditions of ethnic minorities in Guangxi, Hunan, and Guizhou, fostering a strong sense of identity. Educationally, it offers hands-on learning experiences, teaching intricate techniques, teamwork, and cultural significance. The Huapao Festival becomes a platform for intergenerational knowledge transfer, promoting community cohesion and shared learning. In essence, Grabbing Huapao is a dynamic cultural and educational resource that enriches lives and contributes to the appreciation of diversity and heritage.

Interethnic Shared Ritual Culture Grabbing Huapao offers theoretical insights in cultural anthropology, sociology, and heritage studies, providing a deeper understanding of ethnic minority traditions. On a practical level, it contributes to community development by fostering economic activities, attracting tourism, and enhancing community cohesion through collaborative efforts in organizing the Huapao Festival. The tradition serves as a dynamic

bridge between tradition and contemporary needs, ensuring its cultural and economic sustainability. This study not only enriches existing knowledge but also provides valuable lessons for the sustainability of cultural heritage in the face of modern challenges.

Implication

The implications of this research are multifaceted. Firstly, the cross-regional and cross-ethnic nature of Grabbing Huapao highlights its potential as a unifying force, fostering inter-ethnic communication and unity. Secondly, the evolution of Grabbing Huapao into a sports competition activity suggests its adaptability and relevance in contemporary society, contributing to the preservation and promotion of traditional minority sports. Additionally, the incorporation of Grabbing Huapao into commercial activities signifies its economic potential, serving as a unique selling point for local development. The study implies that further exploration and promotion of Grabbing Huapao can lead to cultural enrichment, social cohesion, and economic growth.

Recommendation

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations can be made to enhance the Grabbing Huapao ritual culture include (i) Cultural Preservation and Promotion, (ii) Inter-Ethnic Collaboration, (iii) Sports Development, (iv) Commercial Integration, and (v) Educational Initiatives.

(i) Cultural Preservation and Promotion

Implement initiatives to preserve and promote the traditional aspects of Grabbing Huapao to ensure that its cultural roots are maintained amid its commercialization. Efforts to preserve Grabbing Huapao's traditional aspects amid commercialization involve documenting practices, educating communities, collaborating with experts, and promoting cultural participation. Dissemination through various channels, integration into education, and protection policies safeguard its heritage. Additionally, a cultural preservation fund provides vital financial support for sustaining Grabbing Huapao's unique cultural tradition.

(ii) Inter-Ethnic Collaboration

Encourage collaborative events and exchanges between different ethnic groups, utilizing Grabbing Huapao as a medium for fostering understanding, unity, and cultural appreciation. To promote inter-ethnic collaboration, initiatives should encourage collaborative events and exchanges between diverse ethnic groups, utilizing Grabbing Huapao as a medium for fostering understanding, unity, and cultural appreciation. This involves organizing events where practitioners from different ethnic backgrounds can share their experiences, collaborate on performances, and engage in cultural exchange programs. By facilitating these interactions, Grabbing Huapao can become a unifying force that bridges cultural gaps, fosters mutual respect, and strengthens the bonds of unity among diverse ethnic communities.

(iii) Sports Development

Support the continued development of Grabbing Huapao as a recognized sports competition activity, providing infrastructure, training programs, and platforms for athletes to excel at regional and national levels. To propel the sports development of Grabbing Huapao, it is crucial to support its recognition as a competitive activity. This involves the provision of necessary infrastructure, including suitable venues and equipment, to facilitate high-quality

competitions. Additionally, investing in comprehensive training programs for athletes ensures the refinement of skills and techniques, contributing to their excellence in Grabbing Huapao. Establishing platforms for regional and national competitions not only provides a stage for athletes to showcase their talents but also elevates Grabbing Huapao to a broader audience. By fostering a competitive environment, this approach contributes to the sustained growth and recognition of Grabbing Huapao as a legitimate and thriving sports competition at various levels.

(iv) Commercial Integration

Foster responsible commercialization by collaborating with local businesses and authorities to ensure that Grabbing Huapao's economic potential benefits the community without compromising its cultural authenticity. Incorporating Grabbing Huapao into commercial activities requires a strategy that emphasizes responsible commercialization. This entails collaboration with local businesses and authorities to align economic ventures with community interests while preserving cultural authenticity. By establishing partnerships, initiatives can be developed that generate economic opportunities while respecting the traditional roots of Grabbing Huapao. This approach ensures that commercial endeavors contribute positively to the community's economic development without compromising the cultural integrity of this ritual. Balancing economic growth with cultural preservation is essential for sustainable and meaningful commercial integration of Grabbing Huapao.

(v) Educational Initiatives

Incorporate Grabbing Huapao into educational programs to raise awareness among the younger generation about the cultural significance and historical roots of this ritual, fostering a sense of pride and identity. To instill awareness and appreciation among the younger generation, educational initiatives should integrate Grabbing Huapao into programs. By doing so, the cultural significance and historical roots of this ritual can be effectively communicated, fostering a sense of pride and identity. This involves developing curriculum materials, organizing workshops, and collaborating with educational institutions to ensure that Grabbing Huapao becomes a meaningful part of students' learning experiences. Through these initiatives, the younger generation can actively engage with and understand the cultural heritage embedded in Grabbing Huapao, contributing to its continued relevance and significance in the community.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can contribute to the sustainable development of Grabbing Huapao, balancing its cultural heritage, sportsmanship, and economic prospects for the benefit of local communities and broader society.

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